

Good News

There is a new movement in marketing circles that promotes using public relations as a substitute for advertising. The notion is that PR is less expensive, has the credibility of being presented as news (not as an ad with commercial objectives), and can also be distributed more broadly.

Tudog recognizes the validity of these claims but thinks the press – who sell advertising to survive and profit – won't be all that eager to see their ad revenues drop, while they all the while provide coverage for products that might otherwise be advertising.

Moreover, the notion that every product is newsworthy is a stretch at best. Sure the press covers products, giving them a tremendous boost. But these products are either so distinctive that they deserve the press, or, more cynically, backed by a huge ad budget that serves to “encourage” the press coverage.

Rule one in PR is that the product be newsworthy. If it's not newsworthy, there at least needs to be news surrounding it (such as it being featured at a trade show). Without some sort of hook, the press won't cover the product, leaving the company with no exposure at all (since they opted out of advertising in favor of PR).

The answer, as Tudog always likes it, is an integrated approach, meaning advertising and PR. Once the PR kicks in, you can scale back your ads, perhaps lowering costs. But Tudog does not support putting all your exposure hopes in the PR basket.

Exposure means awareness, which can be converted into interest. Sure it's nice to be in the news. But without advertising, you'll find no one remembers you once your 15 minutes of fame have passed.