

How to Select a Media Relations Specialist

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So, you've got a book. Now what? If you have any desire to sell your book, you should consider hiring a media relations specialist. But, which one? Read this article to get some tips on choosing the right media relations specialist for your book.

Real Media Relations Requires a Professional's Hand

Let's get one thing straight from the beginning. I am not a book publicity specialist, although I've learned a thing or two about book PR and book marketing. PR, or media relations as it is often called, is the practice of getting picked out in a crowd.

Media relations (PR) specialists come in many flavors, and whom you choose depends a lot on what you want to accomplish.

For example, one media relations specialist may only act as a consultant, charging you sometimes exorbitant fees (names withheld to keep me out of court), to tell you what could just as easily be found in one of the hundreds of great books on media relations.

Another media relations specialist might focus on public speakers, helping them to be seen and heard on TV or radio, thus giving them more exposure to the general public for their message. These PR specialists might have many of the skills you need, but may lack an intimate knowledge of the publishing industry.

There are a few media relations specialist who do focus on helping people like you to sell your book, and this is the primary focus of this article.

One such specialist with whom I've worked, Marika Flatt of PR By the Book (<http://www.prbythebook.com>), has worked with dozens of authors, many of them first-time authors. As Marika says on her web site, "The mission of PR by the Book, LLC is to attain, or aid in attaining, as many quality media 'hits' as possible.

The real mission of media relations is to help you sell books

Sure, it would be nice to be on a live radio show, but not if it makes you look like a fool. A great media relations specialist won't just help you get on TV or radio - she or he will help you to prepare for your 30 seconds or fifteen minutes of fame.

There are many ways to present yourself and the message about your book on TV and radio, and most of them are wrong. Someone like Marika will help you craft a compelling message and let you know what to expect when you're on the news.

Preparation is the key to success

Few authors go to the trouble of hiring a media relations specialist, which leaves them lost in the crowd of published, but unread authors. Those that do hire someone to help with book PR will find that the real work has just begun. A good media relations specialist will help you to prepare for your contact with the media. And, media contact is critical to selling a book.

One good word from Oprah or The Today Show, and your book becomes a best seller. Even two minutes on a local radio station can help launch the career of an author. A slight mention on one broadcast media leads to inquiries from others because your story has been deemed newsworthy by a member of the media clan.

Thus, you need to prepare, and quite honestly, you can spin your wheels for months with nary a sale without the right kind of preparation.

Email isn't the answer, either

The answer to your sales woes isn't to blast a million email messages out to an unsuspecting public. Be methodical - create a good list of media contacts, and nurture that list until they love you and see you as the "expert" they've been needing. You've got to be patient, and slowly pepper them with newsworthy sound bytes that will help keep your name at the top of the list.

Again, this is one of the things a good media relations specialist will do for you. They've got the connections and contacts, and if they are well-established, they know how to get the attention of the right media contacts so that you get the publicity you need and want.

Don't scrimp on media relations. Maybe you saved a bundle by getting your book printed through one of the so-called free book publishers. Now what? You want to sell your book, and the absolute best way is through good media contacts.

Unless you've got a rabid fan base ready to buy your book, people won't know who you are (or care for that matter) without the right publicity at the right time. That's when you call someone like Marika - a media relations specialist.