

Update

NPMA LIBRARY UPDATE

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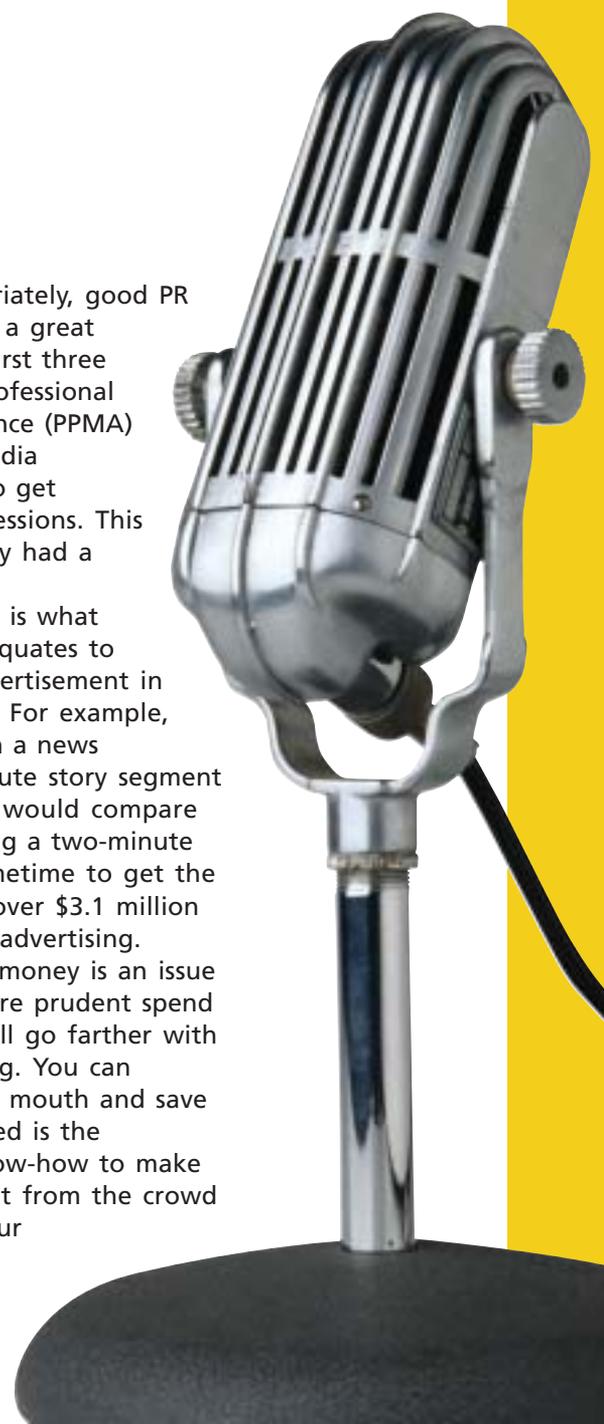
Public Relations & Pest Management

According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), "public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other." It enables you to communicate key messages and promote your company's sound reputation to your publics through the media. Publics can be the general public, or more specifically, customers, consumers, investors, etc. You can also use PR to communicate internally with your employees.

Using PR effectively can give your company a serious advantage over the competition. It can also create awareness and need where it would have otherwise gone unnoticed by the customer. By using the media to spread your company messages, not only will you see increases in public awareness, but you will enjoy market growth as well.

PR is an inexpensive way to drum up business for your company. Unlike advertising, there is no out of pocket expense to get your company mentioned in the press. When your company is referenced in the media, it is known as an impression or a hit. Each impression in the media will generate the same, if not more interest, than advertising because you will have the credibility of the publication or program behind it.

When used appropriately, good PR can save your company a great deal of money. In the first three months of 2006, the Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA) generated waves of media coverage by using PR to get 69,147,789 media impressions. This amount of free publicity had a combined ad value of \$3,100,414.82. Ad value is what the media impression equates to in dollars spent for advertisement in the same media outlet. For example, if you were featured on a news program for a two-minute story segment during primetime, you would compare that to the cost of airing a two-minute commercial during primetime to get the ad value. PPMA saved over \$3.1 million by using PR instead of advertising. Whether or not saving money is an issue for your business, a more prudent spend of marketing dollars will go farther with PR than with advertising. You can generate good word of mouth and save money, too. All you need is the knowledge and the know-how to make your company stand out from the crowd by using PR tools to your advantage.



It is also important to note that your company's story viewed in an editorial context through PR is most often perceived as being more credible than if it was displayed in an advertisement, which was obviously paid for, allowing the company to completely control the message.

Putting PR to work for you can be a lot easier than you think. This *Library Update* will show you two ways you can effectively deliver your organization's key message points through the media, as well as offer some important communication tips for your added convenience. The examples in this update will focus solely on bed bugs, but can be used similarly with other pests and pest management issues.

News/Press Release

A news release is one of the easiest ways to generate proactive PR for your company. The objective of a news release is to provide newsworthy information to various publics that will be of interest to them. The goal of a news release is to get coverage in the press. News releases are used when you want to communicate a specific message, like "bed bugs are back," and are sent to daily newspapers, television stations, radio stations and various online news outlets. Sometimes, your release will be published in a newspaper or posted online in its entirety. Other times, a reporter may find your release interesting and will call for an interview to develop a more detailed story using both your release and the answers obtained in the interview.

A news release is intended to deliver all the essential information in a succinct fashion. You also want to grab the reader's attention from the beginning. Editors are swamped with hundreds of releases a day. If you don't peak their interest within the first paragraph, there is a solid chance that your release won't make it off the news desk. Here are some tips for structuring your release to keep it short and to the point:

Structured Format:

See Figure 1 for clarification

- Keep all information aligned to the left or justified for a neat appearance.

- Include a heading stating that this is a "NEWS RELEASE" that is available "For Immediate Release."
- Include as much contact information as possible so that the media can get in touch with you. Include your name, title, company name, phone, fax and cell numbers, as well as e-mail, if possible.
- Create a headline that is newsworthy and grabs attention. Try to include your company's name and the subject (bed bugs) of the release
- Begin paragraph one with the date of the release and the location (City and State) of the company's headquarters
- Get straight to the point! Focus on one key message point per release and include the Five W's: Who, What, Where, When, & Why
- Write the body of the release using the upside-down triangle theory. Put the most important information up top and work your way down
- Be sure to end with a call to action. For example, "Call here for more information," "Visit our Web site to learn more..." etc.
- Avoid jargon and excessive adjectives
- Use quotes sparingly and where appropriate
- Try to keep the release to one page and signify the end of the release with five # symbols: #####

Pitch Letters

A pitch letter is another great way to get your company mentioned in the media. Pitch letters are sent to editors or producers and are designed to capture their interest and to motivate them to cover your company or story. This tool is typically used for more general interest/feature type stories as opposed to hard news stories. Unlike news releases, this method allows you to be witty, creative, and entertaining. You don't need to tell the whole story, but you do need to keep it short and aim to plant a seed for a great story.

Follow these tips for writing a pitch letter and you will be sure to peak the media's interest:

- Be funny, entertaining, witty, etc.
- Show how your story will help/benefit the public, readers, or viewers of the specific outlet you are trying to hit

FIGURE 1

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:
Cindy Mannes
National Pest Management Association
(610) 585-3203

**NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION REPORTS
RECENT RESURGENCE IN BED BUG INFESTATIONS**

*Bed Bugs Infesting Residential and Multifamily Homes, Apartment
Complexes, Residence Halls, Hospitals and Hotels*

May 8, 2006 (Fairfax, Va.) — According to the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), pest control companies nationwide are reporting a significant increase in the number of calls regarding bed bug infestations. Renowned hitchhikers, bed bugs catch rides in luggage, shoes, port ferns, and any other mobile material. Although there is no way to determine the actual cause of the resurgence, experts are attributing the increase to several things, which include global travel and the mobility of the pest.

These infestations can be difficult to detect due to the elusive, nocturnal and transient nature of the pest. Although their name suggests otherwise, bed bugs can be found in carpets, peeling wallpaper, light fixtures, and any crack small enough for a thin insect to hide. According to NPMA Public Affairs Director Cindy Mannes, bed bug infestations are not a sign of unsanitary or unclean living areas.

"The good news about bedbugs, if there is any," says Mannes, "is that they are not disease-carrying pests." Although they enjoy feeding on human blood, there is no record of them transmitting any sickness to humans.

"Bed bug infestations should only be treated by trained, licensed professional pest management companies," says Mannes. "This is not an infestation that can be treated by do-it-yourself measures. Professionals know where to look and can offer the most up to date methods of bed bug control."

The NPMA, a non-profit organization with more than 5,000 members, was established in 1933 to support the pest management industry's commitment to the protection of public health, food and property, reflected both in the continuing education of the pest control professional and the dissemination of timely information to homeowners and businesses.

For further information, please visit www.pestworld.org.

- Create a sense of urgency
- Be aware of lead time and deadlines
- Tie into bigger news
- Only send attachments upon request
- FOLLOW UP with a telephone call

Structure of a pitch letter is also very important. Like the news release, keep the letter neat by aligning it to the left. Here are some more tips to help you in

constructing the letter: See Figure 2 for clarification.

- Address the editor/producer by their first name, but be respectful with the salutation. Example: Dear (name):
- Pen a catchy first line. Have some fun with it!
- Tell them why this is important NOW and how it benefits/pertains to their particular audience. Create a sense of

FIGURE 2

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urgency and be sure to include what you are offering — an interview, giveaway, exclusive, etc.?

- If you are offering an interview, be sure to give details as to who the person is and what credentials and experience they have
- Give them all the contact information to get in touch with you: phone, fax, and email

Now you have the two essential tools for effective PR. By using news releases and pitch letters along with good communication skills, you will be able to create awareness of your

company and communicate your company's key message points from bed bugs and other pests to a company goodwill project in your local community.

It is also important stay current on what is in the news. If you hear about bed bugs on *Good Morning America*, it would be an opportune time to bring awareness of the pest to your local area as well. Remember, timing is everything with effective PR.

Good luck with your newfound media relations knowledge and have fun using it to create awareness and increase business for your company. ●