



Berbay
Marketing
& PR

turning how? into wow!

white
paper

Professional Series
Volume III

How to be your own PR firm



buzz

appearances

video clips events

networking

advertising presentations

press coverage internet presence

promote communication concept

audience target social media

About Berbay Marketing and Public Relations



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*We create the visibility and credibility
that fuel revenue growth.*

Berbay Marketing & Public Relations creates the visibility and credibility that fuels revenue growth. For nearly 20 years, Berbay has worked on behalf of professional services firms, including law firms, financial services firms, real estate companies, A/E/C, B2B companies and more to develop and implement strategic marketing and public relations programs that get the phone to ring and produce results. We work with professional services firms throughout California and across the country.

Questions? Contact us at info@berbay.com

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introduction

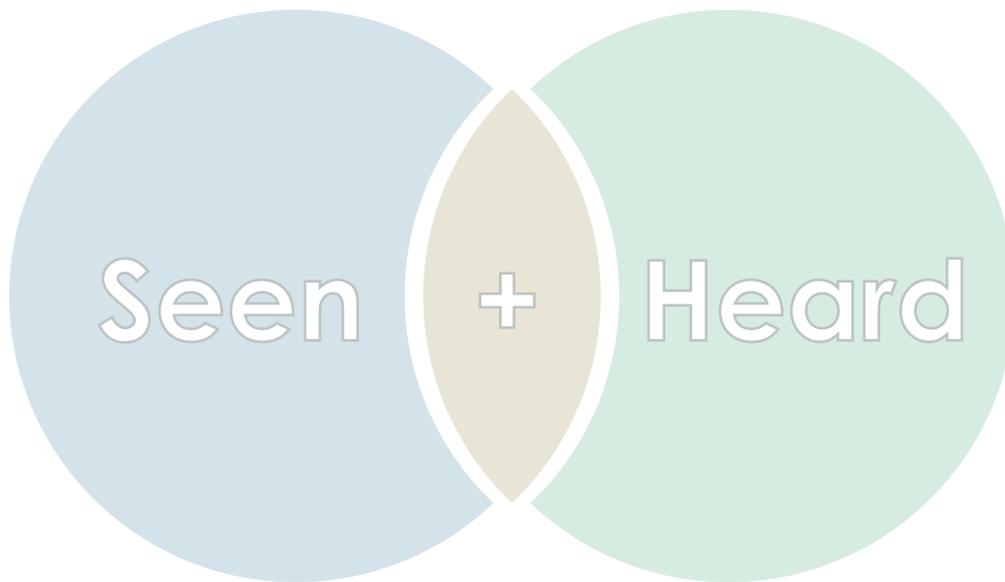
Why Do You Need PR?

Whether or not you choose to invest in professional PR, you can benefit from learning how to get the recognition you deserve.

Meet Joe. He is an average guy, working in your area of professional expertise. In fact, he does the exact same type of work you do. You see him at networking events and you like him, although he has never stood out from the crowd. Really, there is nothing particularly remarkable about Joe at all—except for the fact that he is constantly quoted by the media.

You open *The New York Times* and see that Joe has been quoted as an expert. You browse the *LA Business Journal*, and there is a quote from Joe again! He gets shared on Facebook posts and retweeted on Twitter. Whatever communication channels your profession uses, Joe seems to always be there. You have even seen him as a “talking head” on TV. Time and again, you see Joe interviewed in your area of expertise, and every time you see him, you ask yourself, “Joe? Why are they talking to Joe? I know more than he does. The guy barely made it through law school! We do better deals, bigger deals, more interesting work. Why are they talking to Joe and not me?”

They are talking to Joe not because he knows more than you or because his firm is bigger or better than yours but because, whether it is broadcast, online or print, Joe understands how the media works. He knows how to advocate for himself, or he has a public relations firm—like Berbay—that advocates for him. But whether or not you choose to invest in professional PR, you can benefit from learning how to get the recognition you deserve. You CAN be your own PR firm—and reap the benefits of increased visibility and credibility.



Building VisiCredibility®

Creating visibility and reinforcing credibility—what we at Berbay call “VisiCredibility”—should be the ultimate goal of any PR effort. Why is this so important?

1. It gives you powerful third-party credibility. Being quoted in an article, interviewed on TV, shared or referenced in social media, or having an article published with you named as the author confers credibility from an independent source and substantiates your expertise.
2. It creates familiarity with your name. When you receive a referral, it helps immensely if the prospective client has already heard of you. This heightened name recognition puts you way ahead of the game and helps to make you the obvious choice for prospective clients.
3. It provides marketing material you can leverage. Appearing in the media is worthwhile in its own right, but the real power comes from letting your markets know about the publicity you have received via your website, email and social media.

CHAPTER 1

Laying the Foundation

To achieve the best results in building your VisiCredibility, it is important to do some homework first. Building a strong foundation and laying the groundwork is one of the secrets to successful PR.

Put Together Your Target Media List

Knowing your intended audience is the most basic aspect of marketing, and the same is true of public relations. Your goal is to reach one target market (your end user) via another market (your target media). To do so, it is critical that you first understand which media outlets will be most receptive to your contact and where your expertise will be most effective in reaching prospective clients and bolstering your public profile. For example, if you practice family law, being quoted in *People* magazine regarding a high-profile celebrity divorce or child custody case could be a coup. On the other hand, if your field is project finance, as nice as it may be for your ego, your business may not benefit from appearing in *People*.

Create a Database

Begin by making a list of all publications that may be able to use your contributions, including print, broadcast and social media. Consider these questions:

- Which media are your current and prospective clients looking at?
- What industry/professional/business media do you look at?
- What are the journalists' names who are writing about subjects in your field of expertise?
- Who are the editors deciding which articles get published?
- Which bloggers in your area of expertise have a large following?



Compile multiple lists for various industries or practice areas, such as a real estate media list, a general business list and a financial list. Create a database and carefully identify which contact falls under which category to avoid confusion and inappropriate submissions. In addition to names, your media list should also include as much contact information as you can find, including phone, email, Twitter handle and which method of communication the contact prefers. Most publications include the author's contact information on the masthead or at the end of the article. Google and social media websites such as LinkedIn are also valuable tools.

In addition, there are several media databases, such as Meltwater and Cision, that many PR professionals subscribe to. These databases may be available at some public libraries, either in print or online.

What About News Wires?

Using a news wire service to disseminate your message has its place, particularly if you want to quickly and easily achieve blanket exposure for a press release or other announcement. However, targeted media lists are still essential because a critical aspect of getting in front of media is following up—and you can only follow up if you know who to contact.

Make Yourself a Valuable Source of Information

Now that you have compiled a comprehensive media list, the next step is to give your sources the credible expertise they are looking for.

NEWS: Whether you're dealing with a national broadcast outlet or a local magazine, all media have the same objective: to attract readers or viewers, which in turn attracts advertisers. They achieve this by offering worthwhile information that people want to see. For example, if you can give a fresh perspective on a timely topic that everyone is talking about, you will quickly become very valuable to the media.

TRENDS: What is going on in your industry? What are you seeing in the marketplace? If you can help define a trend, you have something of substance to offer your media sources.

FORECASTING: As valuable as defining a current trend is predicting future trends—forecasting. A quick note on this topic: Sometimes professionals are reluctant to share their forecasts in the media for fear that they will not prove to be accurate. Rest assured, your career and professional standing will not be threatened by predictions that do not come to pass. No one is expecting you to be genuinely psychic; they just want your expertise and distinct perspective.

THE HUM: In media terms, the hum is the “background noise”—topics that may not be especially newsworthy but are still valuable to readers, even if the issue has been covered many times before. The hum includes subjects such as tips to avoid a lawsuit or a primer on contracts. This information may not seem very compelling or exciting to you, but it's still important because, every day, there are people looking for help on these topics. It is a win-win if you're the expert providing them with it.

It Is All About Packaging

All of this information may begin to feel overwhelming if you're inexperienced in PR, but keep in mind that all you really need to focus on is packaging—taking what you already have and making it more attractive.

You are already a professional with worthwhile information for the media. Your job is not to create something out of nothing; it is simply to highlight what is already there and show it to the rest of the world.

Be mindful. Stay aware of your thoughts. Write down your ideas and think about how you or your PR firm can make them work for you in terms of media exposure.

CHAPTER 2

Vehicles for Media Attention

After you have laid the foundation for your PR success, the next step is to begin to seek media exposure. There are four primary vehicles for media attention that you should focus on.

Press releases

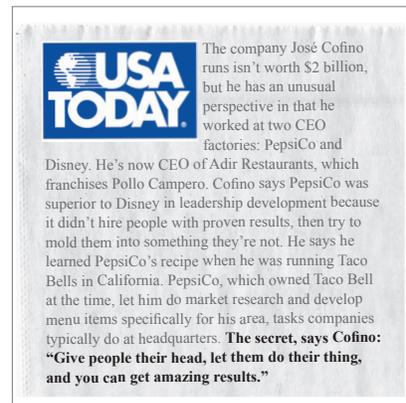
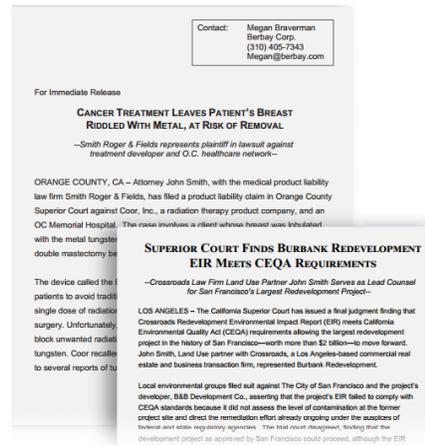
When you have an important piece of news to announce, a press release is an efficient way to get media attention. For example, if you file a significant lawsuit, close a big deal, design a new building or hire a high-profile new employee, a press release will give journalists the who, what, where, when, how and why of the story, enabling them to craft an article quickly and easily.

Media pitches

How do you stay relevant and keep your name in the news stream? One way is to position yourself as both a resource to journalists and an expert—just like the example of Joe in the introduction—so that publications contact you to comment on current events, trends in the marketplace and other relevant topics. Media pitches can keep your name top-of-mind for journalists, bloggers and other writers. Pitches should be brief, to-the-point messages that:

- Offer a fresh perspective on something already in the news
- Bring a trend to the media's attention
- Forecast what will happen in the marketplace

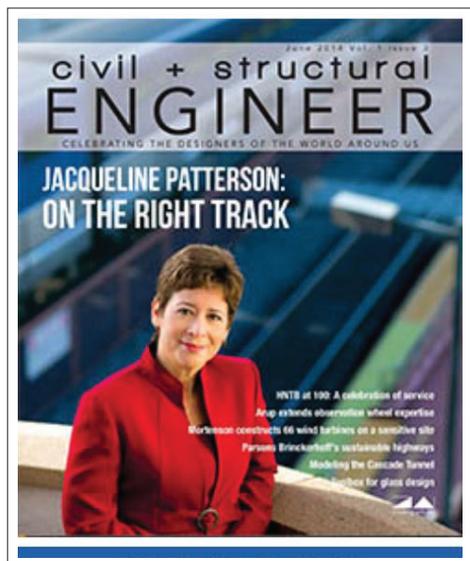
In your media pitch, you should also offer a handful of talking points that you are prepared to address in an interview. Ideally, these talking points will spark a story idea for the journalist. Media pitches can also be useful for generating opportunities to write bylined articles, another important vehicle for media attention.





Bylined articles

This is a great way to get your name in front of potential clients since bylined articles feature your name as the author, as opposed to being written by a reporter. In addition to providing a way for you to establish yourself as an expert, bylined articles have a longer “shelf life” than other vehicles for media attention since they can be repurposed and reused, offering you opportunities for continued exposure. Some professionals seek the assistance of a ghostwriter or PR firm to create a bylined article. The writer can provide a complete draft for you to tweak or simply structure a template for you to fill in and flesh out.



Profiles

Seen by many as the ultimate brass ring of media exposure, these opportunities to have a story written about you, your business life, your operating philosophy and so forth come about less frequently and are more challenging to land than the other options. In many cases, publications will solicit profiles of individuals or firms who have already established themselves as well-known experts through prior media exposure.

All of the listed vehicles for media attention strengthen your **third-party credibility**—an endorsement from a disinterested viewpoint not directly affiliated with you. In this case, that trustworthy third party is the media bestowing upon you an implied endorsement because they are quoting you, showcasing you or publishing your material. The implication is that you are, in fact, an expert.

If you rely on paid advertisements to tout your expertise, the audience knows you are telling your own story. This may create skepticism about your assertions. However, if you are interviewed consistently in print, online, on the radio or on television, this third-party exposure lends validity to your claims.

in depth



the media pitch

Of the various vehicles for media attention we just examined, perhaps none is more important than the media pitch.

A strong media pitch can keep you in the news stream, even when you don't have any particular news of your own to report. It can help you carve out a niche as an industry expert who can provide journalists with an insightful quote at a moment's notice, and it can even earn you opportunities for authoring articles that will further strengthen your standing as an expert in your field

What makes a great media pitch?

Open with something provocative. You want to capture the attention of your reader (journalist, blogger, etc.) immediately, so begin your pitch by offering a viewpoint that is thought-provoking and topical.

Highlight your expert credentials. Start by answering these two questions: Why should the media take notice of you? How can they be sure you know what you're talking about? The next paragraph of your pitch should offer some background on your professional successes, such as how long you've been practicing, any recent awards or notices you've received and any other recent media activity you've been part of.

Offer ideas for topics you can talk about. Demonstrate your worth as a resource by outlining several concrete ideas for topics you feel comfortable speaking on. If you do some legwork in advance, you'll dramatically increase your chances of being quoted in the media!

Remember, even if a pitch doesn't convert into a specific and immediate quote opportunity, the journalist or publication may contact you later. Consistent—and consistently well-written—media pitches tend to have long-term ripple effects, generating opportunities you may not see coming.

in depth

the media pitch

■ Build Relationships with Reporters

In order to become a go-to source for journalists, bloggers and others in the media, you must build a relationship with them. Watch for and read the stories they write, and follow them on social media. When you have something meaningful to add to a story they've covered, contact them and, respectfully, offer your comment.

■ Follow Guidelines

Make sure you follow each publication's specific guidelines for submissions. You want to show you've done your research and are on top of things by tailoring your pitch specifically to your intended audience. If you are given an opportunity for a bylined article, make sure to keep the editorial guidelines in mind as you write. By following this simple practice, you may save yourself the burden of editing or even rewriting an entire article down the line.

■ Timing Is Everything

Media interest is all about timing. You may send out several pitches and receive no immediate response, but in a few weeks or a few months you could be in high demand. The key is to stay consistently in front of your target market—your outlets of choice—because you never know when your expertise might suddenly be needed. Don't get discouraged!

CHAPTER 3

Following Up & Breaking Through

You now understand why PR is so important, the various vehicles for media exposure and how to write a media pitch that will really get you noticed. What's next?

The Art of the Follow-Up

One of the keys to achieving media exposure is following up. However, there is a definite art to this process as you seek to keep a balance between being persistent and becoming annoying. The last thing you want to do is alienate the very people you're trying to connect with.



After your initial submission, allow a few days to pass. Sometimes you will receive a firm no right away, but often you'll hear nothing back. In this case, your first move should be to send out a follow-up email. If you hear nothing back from the email, you can consider calling after a few more days have passed.

When following up via email, consider your subject line; it is the most important part of the email because it often dictates whether or not the email is even opened. When you follow up, consider using a different subject line than you used in your initial email. It is possible that the first email was completely ignored or overlooked.

While many journalists communicate by email, there are some who are beginning to communicate more via social media, such as responding to tweets. You want to tailor your communication to what the particular reporter prefers.

Respect the Journalist's Time

Out of consideration for the journalists you're approaching, you should be mindful of their time. When you contact them by phone, ask first whether they are on a deadline and if they have a few moments to spare.

Realize that even if you're interviewed, your quotes may not make the final cut for the article. Accept that you're laying a foundation and positioning yourself as a go-to resource, whether or not you're quoted in the final version each and every time.

Always be responsive. If you are invited to comment on something, get back to journalists as quickly as possible. Even a 15-minute window is enough time for a journalist to find someone else, particularly if they need to file their story right away. The faster you reply, the more valuable you are as a resource. If they need you on the set at 4 a.m., tell them you will be there—and arrive with a smile on your face!

Make the Most of the Opportunity

When you are interviewed, it can be helpful to **ask for the questions ahead of time**. This gives you an opportunity to prepare and to have the necessary information at hand. It also shortens the length of the interview and enables you to carefully craft your answers for maximum impact. Many journalists will be happy to comply. As you come up with your answers, try to think in terms of “**sound bites**”, which are morsels of information that are brief, memorable and succinct. As always, remember to tailor your answers to your audience:

Are you addressing fellow professionals or average people? If it is the latter, lay off the legalese (or other professional terminology) and discuss the topic in layperson’s terms as much as possible.

Who is the publication for? What will it interest that audience to hear? What do they need to know about the matter at hand?

What is your unique perspective on the topic(s) you’ve been asked to discuss? Don’t be afraid to adopt a particular stance or viewpoint.

A Few Things to Keep in Mind When You Talk with Reporters:

The critical time to manage your message is at the time you are communicating with the journalist. Once you have said something, you have much less control over what happens to it next or how it is presented. Members of the media are pressed for time, working on turning out one story after another under deadline, and do not have the time to become instant experts in every area. Think through what you want to say ahead of time so that you say it as succinctly as possible. It’s true that sound bites

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Following Up and Breaking Through

play well, so work on getting your message across memorably. For most of us, this takes forethought.

While most reporters honor “off the record,” don’t take a chance. You are better off not saying something you’d rather keep private in the first place.

Avoid making jokes or using sarcasm. Tone does not translate well into print, and your good-natured comments might come across poorly.

Work on honing your communication skills ahead of time. Media training can be a hugely important tool for any professional looking to stay in front of the public eye. Even if it is a quick, five-minute conversation with a colleague to say, “Here’s what I’m thinking of saying,” planning ahead can make the difference between positive exposure and a story you are not happy with.

CHAPTER 4

Magnifying Your Results

Being noticed by the media—with quotes, articles, profiles and so forth—is an accomplishment, but the real power comes from what you do with those opportunities. Leveraging your media exposure helps you magnify your results for maximum impact.



Even if you're quoted prominently in a major publication such as the Wall Street Journal, it will have little effect on you professionally if you do not let people know about the coverage you've received. Do you read every major publication every single day, cover to cover? Neither do your colleagues and prospective clients. That's why you have to bring your media exposure to your audience instead of waiting for them to discover it on their own.

A few examples of how to leverage media coverage:

Update your firm website with a notice about your media coverage, including where you were quoted and on what subject. If possible, link to a web page with the article or a PDF of the article that you create.

Increase the number of views of your coverage by posting links on social media (your blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and so forth).

Include a mention of your coverage in your e-newsletter so that your mailing list recipients will also hear about it.

Make hard copies of articles to leave in your firm's lobby, take to conferences and put in your marketing packet.

Updating your website and social media profiles with this information underscores your professional and industry leadership. In addition, posting your recent mentions in the media keeps your website, blogs and other online vehicles up-to-date and gives visitors the perception of energy and leadership. Every media notice also enriches your professional pedigree, enhances your credentials and adds to your body of work.

A Word About Reprint Permission

Note: This is not legal advice.

At Berbay, we are big believers in leveraging your media quotes, published articles, taped interviews, etc. However, you want to consider who actually owns the material and to what extent you can use it for your purposes.

Some outlets will give you free rein. Others will ask that you pay them for reprint permission. In some cases, it may be worth it for you to pay the publication a reprint fee so you can reproduce, display or distribute the article in its entirety. In many other cases, a summary of the article will suffice.

The decision as to whether or not you should pay for reprint permission on a particular article is up to you; the important thing is to be aware that you do not own the material, and you cannot do with it whatever you wish. If you have any questions, contact the publication specifically and ask about their reprint policy.

CONCLUSION

Building Your Body – of Work

The purpose of PR, whether you're hiring an outside firm or working on your own, is to substantiate your expertise. You want to build a body of media notices—not to create something from nothing, but to provide heft and substance to what is already there. Since you are an accomplished professional to begin with, you are well on your way to receiving recognition from the media.

Don't *tell* people you're an expert; *show them you're an expert with corroborating third-party validation* in the form of media notices.

This does not require a doctoral degree. What it requires is pulling your material together into a cohesive collection that underscores what you have done and proves you know how to do it. The truth is that there likely are professionals in the same field as you who are more practiced than you are. That doesn't matter: They're not leveraging their knowledge and expertise. You are.

With these tactics in mind, you are ready to start acting as your own PR firm. Lay the right foundation, understand your audience, keep things carefully targeted, always follow up, and don't neglect to leverage your media power to the utmost. Put these steps into play, and you can get the visibility you deserve!

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Prior to founding Berbay nearly two decades ago, Sharon held marketing management positions at Toyota Motor Sales; Ogilvy & Mather Advertising; Houlihan, Lokey, Howard & Zuckin; and Arthur Andersen. She is a past member of the editorial board of *Marketing the Law Firm*, as well as the California Society of CPAs State Marketing Committee. She writes and speaks extensively on marketing and has presented marketing segments on nationally broadcast programs. She has been quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, among other publications.