

## Using the Media to Enhance Your Trade Show Presence

by **Andrew S. Edson**

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**L**ike most marketers, every now and then your company probably participates in an industry event or tradeshow. Your presence no longer has to be limited to the exhibition floor. Thanks to an arsenal of online communications tools, your message and indeed, your presence can extend well beyond the confines of a hotel or conference center.

The day when people plodded up and down aisles to gather information and bags is changing. The smarter companies now utilize online press kits or web-based kits that blend video and audio with text and images to provide background information as well as offer a virtual demonstration of their products.

Depending on the trade show, there may be a large coterie of press attending. A good way to find out just what members of the press will be present is to ask the conference organizers. For certain, they should know and then you will be in a better position to take full advantage of their presence, especially if a pressroom is to be part of the master plan.

Some worthwhile tips to remem-

ber the next time you're exhibiting somewhere:

1. Plan to break news at a trade show or conference, if at all possible. This offers an optimum news hook and the chance to get press attention. A straw poll or major study that you're announcing at the conference is a good way to preempt your competition and make news.
2. Send out a news release, and don't forget to include the name of the trade show in your news release headline, as well as the booth number if there is one. This enables a journalist to find you easily, especially online.
3. Put all salient telephone contact numbers, including cellular, in the release so any journalist can track you down, if needed.
4. Make life easy and simple for the press. Embed links in your release from the trade show to the online press kit. If you're using or including photos, make them unique. A mob scene type photo — too many people clamoring for attention — just won't do. Forget "cheesecake" too, as this offers the wrong image for your company.

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5. Use one of the existing newswires, such as BusinessWire, PR Newswire or Marketwire, to help –you get your story to those who did not attend the show for one reason or another. Make logos, photos and other information available digitally.
6. Don't go totally digital. Have hard copy of your information on hand at your booth and, if allowed, an ample supply at the pressroom.
7. Take a walk and see what others are doing in terms of leave behinds at the conference pressroom. Use these ideas when planning for your next trade show.

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