

Five Steps to Effective PR

1. What's Your USP?

Identifying your unique selling point, i.e. what makes you different from every other pub in the area, is the very first step you should take when considering your PR plan.

Do you offer the best food/beer/welcome/garden/games/family environment?

Or is it that you've won the most awards or are the most charitably active pub in the area?

Whatever it is, you need to focus attention on this in order to build your media profile.

2. What's Your Target Audience?

Realistically, your target audience is your local population – so the local media is your most important conduit to reaching them.

So the first thing to do is find out who the right person is to talk to at your local paper/papers and ask them if they can spend a couple of minutes just talking you through how they like to receive information and what sort of story they would genuinely be interested in.

It's always worth asking them to pop in for a drink or a bite to eat to talk this through, there's nothing journalists like more than a free lunch!

3. Do you have a story?

There's nothing more guaranteed to get a journalist's back up than to insist you have a story when there isn't one.

For example: presenting a cheque for £42.98 to a local charity, no matter how hard you worked to raise those funds, isn't going to interest even the local newspaper on the slowest day, sorry but it's true.

However, if this is the 21st cheque you've presented to the charity over the last five years, raising in total over £700 for them, then that's a story – it may only be a picture caption in the paper (for which you'll probably have to provide the picture) but at least it's coverage for your pub.

4. Managing Story Expectations

Chances are that you'll be running interesting and exciting events throughout the year – whether it's running family fun days, beer festivals, St George's Day celebrations, Christmas in Summer or even covering your whole floor in turf to celebrate the rugby world cup or the Ashes!

All these things are worth notifying the press about both in advance in the form of a press release and releasing photographs afterwards.

However, do be careful how you bill these things when you are first involving the

press; if it's an annual event that you know attracts a whole host of people then be confident in your announcements, billing it as one of the hottest tickets in town etc.

If it's a new event that you've got high hopes for but no real idea of how it's going to go, be much more circumspect in your approach and perhaps avoid media invites for the first year/occasion.

5. **Executing Effective Communications**

Deadlines are the most important things to a journalist and helping them hit these deadlines is one of the most important things you can do to get your story into the papers.

When you speak to your local press make sure you identify when those deadlines are and how you can provide information in the correct format to the journalist to meet them.

Budgets are also something to take into consideration – although you might not incur any direct costs by writing and emailing out the release or taking photographs yourself, your time is still valuable.

After three months of engaging in your PR campaign, take a minute to assess whether this is a cost-effective exercise for you or whether you are willing to continue absorbing any expenses incurred.