

# How to get the word out

**A Guide to the Different Ways to Tell Your Story and Save Money Doing It**

**OVERNIGHTPR**

Small businesses are in a tough spot when it comes to promoting their product and their company. They need to get the word out most and can generally afford to pay for marketing expertise the least.

This guide is your free resource on how to maximize your marketing & public relations dollar. It's like a free consultation with a marketing pro. I hope that you find this useful, and if you have any comments or ideas for further guides, or if I can help your organization with its PR & marketing, drop me a line at: [tlongino@overnightpr.com](mailto:tlongino@overnightpr.com)

The best way to get people talking about your organization is to tell them a story about you. We've been telling stories since the first caveman figured out how to make a fire in his cave, and that's still the most memorable way to communicate with other people.

As you read through this guide, please understand that when I say "story," I mean the narrative of what you do that should interest potential customers. If you make the best pizza in town, then your story should be about the competitions you've entered and won, the free pizzas that you give away to students who make honor roll, and anything else that's unique to you.

Like dandelion seeds in the wind, the best stories float off far beyond your control and take root in minds you've never met. New customers and opportunities will grow. Read on for some ways you can get new ideas to take root around you.



There are, of course, a number of ways to tell your story. You can shout in people's faces until you feel that you're going to rupture something. A perfect example of this: Ever seen the commercials for a local appliance store on late night TV? Those commercials are loud, distracting, and designed to wake you up as you snooze on the couch at 2 am.

Or you can draw your audience in, engage in a conversation, and appeal to their reason, emotions, and get them to participate in a conversation about your brand.

One style of telling stories focuses on making a sale, the other tries to make a consumer-advocate, but either can work for you.

As you're looking through the following tips, keep the style that you want to use in mind and consider how either can work for you.

Each of the methods of getting the word out is numbered from 1 to 5 (Press Releases, Video Presentations, In-Person, Social Media, and Advertising). There are other ways to get the word out than just these 5, but this is an overview of ways to get the word out, so I'm painting with broad strokes.

Want more information on how to get the word out? Go to [www.OvernightPR.com](http://www.OvernightPR.com) and sign up to receive emails when I publish a new article!





# 1 press releases

**#1** Press releases are what I make the most use of, so I'm--of course--inclined to prefer them. That said, there are definitely things that press releases are best suited for:

- +** **Inexpensive:** Press releases are a very reasonable way of getting your story out on the net, and possibly in print as well. They let you tell your story how you want to tell it, and are easy to create and distribute. When written by (ahem) someone who has experience in the field, they can be powerful attention getters, and they go quickly from concept to final product (especially when written by OvernightPR!). They are among the cheapest ways to get the word out, but don't mistake cheap for ineffective!
- Press releases are most powerful with repetition. Some concepts (such as very visual ones) can be hard to convey effectively through press releases.

#### **USE:**

When you want to control your story, when you need to tell your story quickly, when you need to convey complex ideas quickly.

#### **DON'T USE:**

Well, press releases tie in with any of these other methods, so you can always use them. That said, if you're conveying a visual idea, or if you're looking for the absolute cheapest way to tell your story, look at two or four respectively.



# 2

## Video Presentations

**#2** I'm including in this category video news releases, paid webcasts, and FMV web presentations. These are expensive, beyond a doubt, but there are some advantages to them as well:

- +** Rich media is captivating and memorable. If you sell a product that has a strong visual element to it, having video is a way to clearly and efficiently communicate your story. Further, if you've made a good presentation, your key points will remain in your viewer's memory. A well-crafted "newsy" video presentation can actually get run on local news stations as filler news content.
- Video presentations are expensive. Running over a thousand for a relatively short presentation and going up from there, video presentations, unless they're picked up by a mass media channel or "go viral," aren't going to get as much exposure as a press release, and one of the big problems with video is that there isn't a good technology to index and discover the content of video for search engines, which makes it hard for video results to get in the right hands.

### **USE:**

When you can present your idea in such a striking visual fashion. When a picture really is worth more than a handful of words. When you have the time or expertise and technology to devote to making a professional multimedia presentation.

### **DON'T USE:**

When cost is an issue. When you need to guarantee that you will get to a wide audience. When you want search presence.



# 3

## In-Person Presentations

**#3** Whether we're talking about a trade show or door to door sales, there's a similarity to talking to people in person. In-person contact is also expensive, although less so than video. There's no method of telling your story that's more compelling than telling it in person, though, and if you're genuinely enthusiastic about what you do, it will show through and fire up your audience, too.

**+** Engaging. There's a reason why sales people can make a living from selling you things that you never knew you needed. Can be cheap in money, especially if you're doing the in-person talking

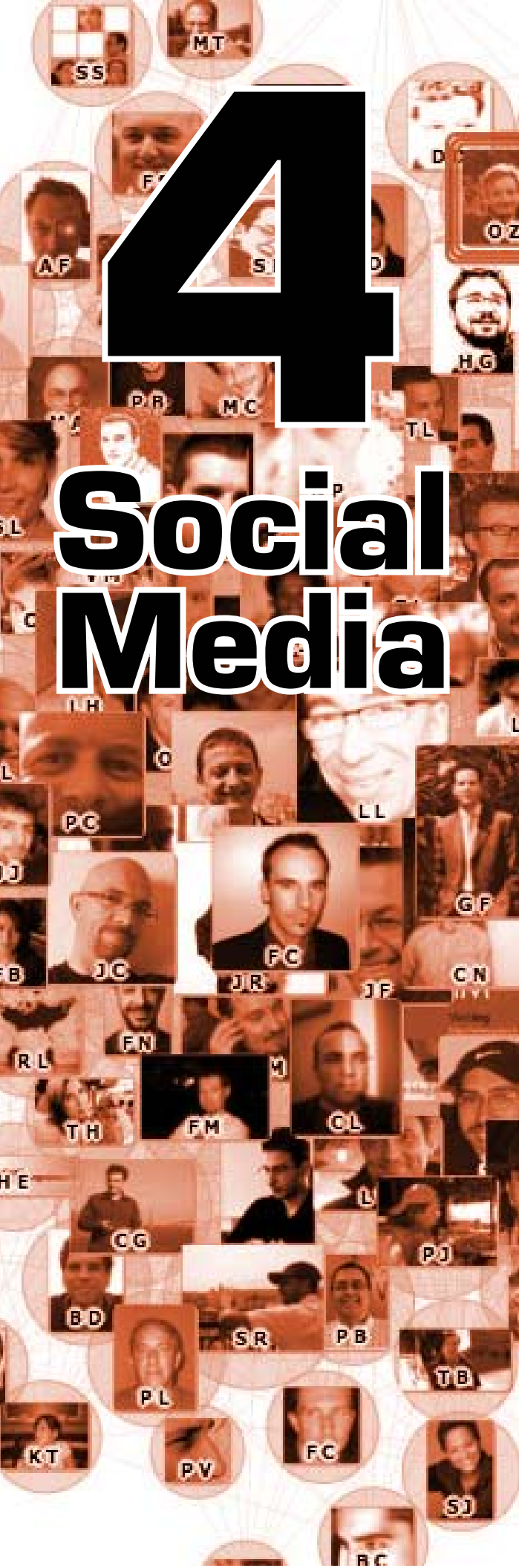
**-** Costs a lot in time either yours or someone else's, as well as in training and record keeping.. Only offers you an ROI while you're actively talking, so it can't get you money while you sleep or when you're taking a mental health day. There are only so many hours in the day to tell your story in person.

### **USE:**

When you're excited about your story, have a natural place with a large audience, or when the income from your product is high enough per item that you can afford to devote time to one-on-one discussions.

### **DON'T USE:**

When use of time (your own or an employee's) is an issue. When you're looking to maximize exposure (unless you combine this with 2 or 4!). When you need to move your product in bulk to earn enough to make ends meet.



**#4** Ah, Web 2.0. The “Internet as Application.” All of the buzz words and lingo add up to opportunity to many business people. And there’s a good cause: making consumers into advocates for your product means that you have a team of word of mouth marketers on the streets selling your product for you--for free! That same power can run amok, though, and leave consumers associating your brand with a PR blunder or failed product.

- + The immense power of the crowds can work for you. Get people talking about your tech startup on digg and techcrunch, or your awesome customer service on yelp and the consumerist, and you’ll find a crowd of people at your site, looking into buying your product. Social media is free to implement, but does take time and constant feeding.
- Even if you do everything right, it still takes months and months of feeding dozens of social media applications with your content to get attention. That kind of time investment can be very expensive in terms of other work not done. And, of course, even if you do everything right, it still might never “catch” and spread as you hope it would.

**USE:**

When you offer something that is unique enough that people want to tell their friends about it. When you’re tech savvy enough to know the difference between loopt and Google Latitude, what a microblog is, and why you’d want to use Movable Type over Wordpress--or vice versa. When you’re comfortable having relatively little control over your story.

**DON'T USE:**

When you aren’t comfortable letting others tell your story. When you need to get the word out quickly. When you don’t want to lose hours of your time to checking your most recent Google Alerts and Technorati standings. When you can’t imagine saying something new about your product frequently



# 5

## Advertising

**#5** This is the most straightforward way of telling your story to complete strangers. From paid editorial content to purchasing a 15 second spot on local radio, there are dozens of different channels that you can make use of to get your story out. Advertising is easy to schedule, frequently quick to turn around, and you will have a pretty good estimate on how many people received your message. With some of the online advertisements, such as banner ads or email newsletters, you can get very precise tracking & segmentation information, which can help you a lot in seeing who cares about your message and how they get it.

- +** Measurable return. Easy to segment a market. Generally distributed to a large number of people, and relatively inexpensive per “impression” or “eyeball.” Relatively complete control.
- A response rate of .05 - 3% is considered good in many forms of advertising, so your cost per lead is usually pretty high. Overall cost is often high as well, even though you’re paying little per impression. Many styles of advertising require that you fit your story’s message into constraints that might not be ideal for you. Interruption advertising--ads that seek to grab the viewer’s attention from the content it is placed around--is increasingly less effective.

### **USE:**

When you want precise measurements on who’s interested in your story. When you already have those precise measurements and are trying to reach a particular market segment. When you have money, but not necessarily time.

### **DON'T USE:**

When you value high response rates in your audience. When you have time to grow your audience through repetition, but not necessarily money to grow it quickly. When your story is hard to condense down to 6 words.

# Handy-Dandy Reference Chart

## Let's Make This Easy:

That's a whole lot of reading for a quick how-to. If you want a handy reference to all of the pros and cons of the various methods of getting the word out, then flip to this page and Bob's your uncle!

Feature	Press Releases	Video Presentations	In Person Presentations	Social Media Marketing	Advertising
Low Cost	+			+	
Control of Story	+	+	+		+
High Engagement		+	+	+	
Search Engine Placement Boost	+			+	
Repetition Required	+			+	+
Measurable Response	+	+			+
Low Time Investment	+				
Wide Audience	+			+	+
High Response Rate	+	+	+	+	

Bang for your buck, and of course depending on your needs, Press Releases provide you with the best results. Any of these methods of getting the word out can combine well with others. If you've got the money for it, reach out across a few different channels for widest exposure and impact.

If you've got any question about this, press releases, or marketing in general, give me a shout at: [tlongino@overnightpr.com](mailto:tlongino@overnightpr.com) or 407.802.6139.

--Trevor

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