

Publicity as a Tool of Promotion Mix

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Abstract

In today's digital and competitive world, promoting business is a challenge. Now a day's marketer has use to integrated promotional approach to cover market. Apart from advertising, sales promotion, persona selling, publicity and public relation is widely used to promote business. Media can be intelligently used as promotion tool of business. Publicity is one of the tools of promotion mix. What, exactly, is publicity? It involves supplying information that is factual, interesting, and newsworthy to media not controlled by you, such as radio, television, magazines, newspapers, trade journals, newsletters, E-zines (on-line magazines), and websites. The main goal is to earn coverage with help of Medias. This paper is about how publicity is used as promotional tool and to create positive public image about the products, services or institution. Strength and weakness of publicity is also discussed in the paper

Key words: promotion mix, publicity, public relation, media coverage

Introduction

Publicity (a tool used in public relations) is non personal communication that is typically in the form of a news story that is transmitted through the mass media. Publicity of a product can be defined as making goods "publicly" known. Experts define publicity as "commercially significant news about a new product manufactured by the enterprise, an institution or a person published in space or radio time that is not paid to the sponsor. The purpose of publicity is to draw favorable attention to a company and/or its products without having to pay the media for it. The way it often works is as follows: a company sends a press release (often with a video tape) to the media with the hope that it is newsworthy enough to be mentioned in the mass media. The advantage of publicity, besides the fact that it is free, is that it tends to more credible than advertising. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that the media will find the story newsworthy. Also, they might change the press release around so that it does not help the organization in any way. Sometimes, a film – especially one that is controversial – can generate a great deal of publicity.

Difference between publicity and advertising

Publicity is not advertising, since you do not pay for time or space, nor is it public relations. Public relations are a broader task, which includes publicity but involves promotion, public affairs, advertising, and opinion making as well.

1. Advertising is paid form of ideas, goods and services while publicity is not paid by the sponsor.
2. Advertising comes from an identified sponsor while publicity comes from a neutral and impartial source.
3. Advertising is controllable by the organization while publicity is not controllable because it comes from a neutral source.
4. Advertising is less credible in comparison to publicity while publicity is more credible because it comes from an impartial source.

5. Advertising is what you or your organization says and promotes about you or your organization but publicity is what others say for you or your organization.
6. In advertising same content is repeated by the sponsor while in publicity it is not generally possible.
7. Advertising always carries a positive message about your organization because it is the content you pay for but publicity can be positive or negative because it comes from an impartial source.
8. In advertising you have full chance to show your creativity but in publicity creativity is limited because it comes from non paid source.
9. Advertising is targeted to the particular audiences by the sponsor while in publicity it is not focused.
10. Most of the times in advertising social responsibility is ignored while in publicity special focus is given on social responsibility

Role of publicity

Advertising and publicity are two very different communication tools, even though both employ the mass media as a vehicle for reaching large audiences. Traditionally, most marketers placed heavy reliance on advertising and only occasionally used publicity. But in today's marketing world, publicity is an important part of an overall marketing campaign and needs to be managed to ensure that a consistent message or story is told. Publicity can take many forms, it can include an event that you are running, sponsoring events or organizations, facilitating workshops or speaking, issuing statements related to your expertise, publishing testimonials of your product or service or providing testimonials to other businesses. It can be done in the form of distributing newsletters, media releases or conduct social media or viral campaigns

A business firm can get various benefits from use of publicity as promotion mix. the causes of its use and importance are as follows:

- 1. Credibility :** As sponsor is not mentioned or not identified in publicity, the information and message about goods or services communicated by independent source become more credible and dependable.
- 2. Greater readership :** As information and messages about goods or services are communicated mostly through important newspapers or other media, greater number of readers can read the information and messages published in them. So, sometime publicity plays an important role of promotion.
- 3. Contains more information :** Publicity is used as more information and messages can be included in it than in other promotion methods, specially, advertisement. Many aspects of goods or services of business firm can be covered in special feature articles.
- 4. Cost benefit :** Not so considerable cost is needed in publicity. Advertisement is a costly method of promotion, but publicity is comparatively much economical method. In other words, if calculated the cost for advertisement, more benefits can be received from publicity.
- 5. Speed :** Publicity is the faster means for communication information and messages about firm and its goods or services. Publicity has greater speed to reach the public.

Other roles :

- Creates buzz
- Positions you as an expert
- Brings traffic to your site
- Skyrockets subscriber sign-ups
- Launches the heck out of a new product

- Drives sales
- Increases brand awareness
- Establishes authority and credibility
- Builds your platform

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF PUBLICITY:

The advantages of publicity are low cost, and credibility (particularly if the publicity is aired in between news stories like on evening TV news casts). New technologies such as weblogs, web cameras, web affiliates, and convergence (phone-camera posting of pictures and videos to websites) are changing the cost-structure. Using publicity the companies can have following advantages:

1. Credibility.
2. News value.
3. Significant "word of mouth" Communication.
4. Low cost (although not totally free)
5. Often results in word-of-mouth
6. Information endorsed by medium in which it appears.
7. News value and frequency of exposure generated by it makes it powerful.
8. Publicity is news and people like to pass on information having news value.

Despite being useful and powerful publicity does have some disadvantages as under:

Publicity-seekers are entirely at the mercy of the media's editors and other staff members. The editors, not the individual or organization who wants the publicity, decide whether or not anything will be reported in the media. And, even when something is reported, it's the media staff who decide how it will be reported and how much attention it will be given. It's very possible that information which an organization offers the media in a positive and flattering news release could show up in a news story that casts a negative or critical light on the organization that supplied it. the biggest disadvantages of publicity are the lack of control over the specific content, the timing, and the amount of coverage.

1. Not always under control of organization
2. Can be negative
3. A perception of being endorsed by media.
4. Potential for negative publicity.
5. Timing not always completely under control of marketer.

Press release is major source of publicity, so may not be reported the way desired

Methods of publicity

There are many methods of publicity that can be used by marketer to get positive public image about the product or services or institution.

External communication

External communication typically includes email, brochures, newsletters, posters, advertisements and other forms of multimedia marketing designed to attract customers, partners and suppliers to conduct profitable business transactions. Unlike internal communications, directed at employees to explain policies and procedures, external communication devices promote sales and publicity, generate sponsorship, announce events, products or services and support branding. Marketing professionals use persuasive techniques to influence others in their external communication strategies.

Promotional Literature

Companies promote their products by communicating the benefits and features in printed product or service literature. Functional specifications, reference manuals and other product documentation enable customers to decide if the product meets their needs. Literature also convinces potential customers that products provide a return on investment and an affordable total cost of ownership. Promotional literature tends to include attractive photos, text and descriptive language to describe product or service details. Using logos and slogans to build up their brand recognition, companies develop a market presence.

Product Training and Support

Companies present their products at trade shows and events to demonstrate their personal or business use. They conduct training courses to show people how to use product functions and certify personnel in product usage. Companies offer instructor-led training, virtual events using Web conferencing software and self-paced courses to meet the needs of busy professionals. During training events, instructors and company representatives give presentations and communicate with participants to learn about individual needs. Additionally, companies conduct surveys using online questionnaires to get feedback on product usage and requirements for new product development.

Public Relations

Although many companies focus on sales as a measure of business success, public perception is just as important to the organization's bottom line. Communications are one way to shape and define a corporation's image to the community, clients, and potential investors. External communications such as newsletters, media stories and press releases let the public know about the company workplace, philanthropic and environmental efforts, and other image-related activities, all of which serve to strengthen the public relations efforts of a company.

Technology and External Communications

While traditional print methods of communications are still common, modern technology has changed the face of external communications, and the Internet has become a valued resource in reaching new customers. Companies create websites to let people know of upcoming products and services. Social media such as Facebook and blogs are an easy way to reach target demographics and are a cost-effective means of promotion. However, with interactive technology there is also the possibility of public backlash, such as negative comment posting.

- **Intranet:** Make your intranet Web site rich with company information to answer employee questions if management is unavailable. Some organizational intranets also include video messages from the CEO or other high-level personnel. Sometime, this “cyber visibility” can help employees feel more connected with upper management and, in turn, the organization.
- **Blogs:** Blogs are Web sites maintained by an individual or group of individuals, used to convey information with regular entries, updates and commentary. Most blogs are interactive, engaging users to post their replies in online “conversations.” Blogs are simple to set up and often easy to manage. Try using your blog to announce important events, changes in policies or even as a unique way to brainstorm strategic ideas.
- **Twitter:** For the company that thrives on frequent, informal communication, Twitter may be an ideal solution. A relatively new internet phenomenon, Twitter has been called “micro blogging,” since each Twitter entry must be 140 words or less. This limit to characters can make the task easier and less intimidating for management.
- **Instant messaging:** Instant messaging is an effective tool for employee-to-employee communication, particularly when project teams are spread across multiple departments or

locations. Consider an instant messaging policy that limits staff to internal communication only. For data security, use one company-approved application.

Conclusion

In today's digital and competitive world, promoting business is a challenge. Now a day's marketer has use to integrated promotional approach to cover market. Apart from advertising, sales promotion, persona selling, publicity and public relation is widely used to promote business. Media can be intelligently used as promotion tool of business. Publicity is one of the tools of promotion mix which can be used to reach to the public But there are many challenges also . The public impression of an organization can define the success or failure of the company in the long-run. One misplaced quote, or badly worded newsletter will not only ruin an expensive publicity plan, but also has the potential to affect corporate revenue. Therefore, those in charge of publicity for the company need to be aware of their audience and the company image they wish to convey.

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