INKANDESCENT PUBLIC RELATIONS
PROMOTING, EDUCATING, AND INSPIRING ENTREPRENEURS SINCE 2001

EIGHT STEPS TO PR SUCCESS
If you have tried your hand at promoting your business before—either on your own, or by hiring one of the zillion PR firms in America—you know that there are innumerable ways to promote and market your business.

That’s because PR and marketing is an art, as much as a science. So while the tools in the PR toolbox aren’t proprietary, the difference between a successful campaign—and one that falls flat—is finessing the tools with style and grace, and knowing what to do each day to maximize your visibility.

What do you need to do to create an effective campaign that builds credibility, increases sales, and gets reporters to call you for comments?

You’ll learn that and more in the pages of the 8 Steps for PR Success, which is the basis for our book, “PR Rules: The Playbook.” It’s also the basis of the speech that our founder, Hope Katz Gibbs, gives to help entrepreneurs around the country learn to create explosive PR and marketing campaigns.

On the following pages, we’ll take you through the steps required to best promote your business:

1. Create a stunning website
2. Develop an explosive PR campaign
3. Make a splash in the news
4. Write a column in a magazine and host your own radio show
5. Network wisely
6. Join a speakers bureau
7. Write a book
8. Pay it forward

In the end, we hope you’ll be inspired, savvy, and ready to get the visibility your company needs and deserves.

Here’s to your incredible, indelible, Inkandescent success!

— The Inkandescent PR Team
Easier said than done? Sure, but a good website is a necessity. Remember, design matters. So does good writing.

The phrase to keep in mind is: What’s in it for the reader?

In this section you’ll learn the tricks of the web-development business so that whether you do it yourself or hire a professional, you’ll be able to create a strategy and timeline that will help you master the process.

What it is:
1. Your website is your little black dress, your Brooks Brothers suit. It doesn’t have to look fancy or formal, but it does have to look good. In fact, it should look as fantastic as you do. But this is why creating your company website is also often a painful process. You are looking at your business, and yourself, in the mirror. You know it will be viewed, potentially, by the world. And that can make you feel vulnerable. Don’t let it. Let this process be exciting—just like dressing up for an important event.
2. At a glance, your website has to let customers know who you are, what you do, and how to contact you.
3. Your website gives you an opportunity to tell your story in depth and in ways your customers will appreciate.

What it’s not: Your website is not the hamper that you throw everything into. It’s not the place to showcase your favorite songs (tempting as it is, please don’t put music on your site). And the home page is not the place to post a Flash movie about your company. Videos on your website are great, but no one wants to watch a flick about a firm more than once. And, if customers are taking the time to visit your site—they want to access information immediately. Don’t make them wait.
This is where you need to understand the playing field, which means knowing the difference between PR, marketing, advertising, and sales—and how they can, and should, be coordinated to get you maximum visibility.

What it is:
1. You need to tell people who you are, and why they should buy your service or product instead of any of the other available ones from other companies.

2. Credibility is a key way to showcase, and convince, potential customers that you're a trusted source. Whether your business is financial services or auto repair, appearing in the press builds your reputation. It's always better to have someone else blow your horn, rather than doing it yourself. And, sometimes it makes you a star—although that shouldn't be the goal because stars fall. A PR campaign keeps you shining bright for years to come.

3. Your brand goes viral. When one reporter catches on to the magic you are creating, others tend to follow suit. Realize that reporters often feed from the same pool, so once you start to get your message out there, it makes you a go-to source for other reporters. And that helps build your reputation even more.

What it's not: PR is not direct sales. It's information sharing, story telling, relationship building, and an effective way to educate consumers and colleagues. Getting in the news is not likely to generate sales, especially if you aren’t a B2C company. (If you are, it helps, but often it's a short-term gain. See the Playing Field section of the Playbook.) After all, when was the last time you read about a company in the newspaper and hired it?
By the time you have perfected your business model, and you know that your products and services are of use and interest to customers, you’ll have developed your reputation as an expert in your industry. Now is the time to let even more customers know about the good work you are doing by writing articles and publishing them in magazines and blogs, and sharing your insights through podcasts and videos.

What it is:
1. Educating customers is essential to building trust and credibility. By writing interesting, informative articles, you “show, don’t tell” the world about what you know. This is a basic rule of journalism, because it respects readers and teaches them something they need or want to know.
2. Being a columnist or radio show host puts you in front of an audience you might not otherwise reach. Since the publication you are targeting will be related to your industry, it puts you in front of your ideal customer. These readers will also potentially become part of your database and receive your monthly newsletter.
3. Consistency is key. Just as your newsletter should blast out regularly, columns in monthly publications keep you in front of a broad readership. This enables you to deliver your message repeatedly at predictable intervals, and it’s more effective than simply being quoted ad hoc in news stories.

What it’s not: Venting, or talking off the cuff about what’s bugging you, is not the goal of this outreach opportunity. Unless it’s your business or core message, steer clear of politics and religion, and other obvious landmines. While spontaneity is great, being unprepared—especially in terms of a radio podcast—is not. As you put together your entire PR, marketing, and media outreach efforts, plan ahead, be strategic, and know the ROI before you jump in.
**STEP 4**

**Make a splash in the news**

Getting quoted and featured in the news is the cherry on the hot fudge sundae for many entrepreneurs. Depending on the number of readers a publication or media outlet has, it can be a valuable way of reaching a broader audience. Caveat emptor. Before you spend oodles of time and money landing press mentions, know why you want to be quoted, what you want to say, and what you can reasonably expect to get out of the investment.

What it is:

1. Building credibility is the goal of being in the news. As we said in Step 2, having a reporter blow your horn is a great way to build fans, and hopefully customers. But the return is not a sure thing. Clients whom we’ve gotten quoted in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and on CBS’ “The Early Show” (ourselves included) have not gone on to make millions overnight.

2. Sharing your expertise through the media is also valuable. And it may turn into sales, especially if your business isn’t hyper-local. Even if your business is focused on one geographic area, appearing in the news can be beneficial if you have the ability to sell products and services online.

3. Parlaying several media mentions into marketing and sales tools for your business is also important. These media mentions should be noted in your newsletters and posted on your website.

What it’s not: Getting quoted in the news isn’t a golden ticket to overnight success. And the timing isn’t under your control; you may spend more than an hour being interviewed by a reporter and find you’re only quoted once in the resulting article, or your interview could be cut completely from a news story. Fortunately, even when an appearance in a newspaper, magazine or website or blog, or broadcast outlet doesn’t yield direct sales, it can be part of a broader PR and marketing strategy. However, relying on media appearances is not a predictable way to increase sales.
When you attend events that are filled with your potential clients and customers, this is what we call “PR on the ground.”

What it is:
1. Networking helps you accomplish the same goal that you hope to reach by getting in the news—finding the people who will learn about your product or service, trust you as a source, and become your customer.

2. When you meet someone in person, you are putting a face on your business. You also develop valuable connections with people you may do business with—or who may recommend you to their friends and colleagues.

3. Meeting people at events also gives you the opportunity to find the potential suppliers and employees that you need to build your business.

What it’s not: Networking events are not a time to over imbibe, troll for sex, attend for a free meal, or bring anything but your A-game to the party. That said, it's not always easy to find the right events to attend. If you are going to take time away from your busy schedule, it’s critical that you connect with the right people. Be sure to do an ROI on how much you are spending in attendance fees, meals and drinks, and time that you could be doing something else. Nonetheless, networking is an essential way to spread the word about what you do. And, meeting someone in person is a surefire way to know if you can work together.
There’s probably no better way to find new clients than by getting in front of a room full of people who want to hear what you have to say. But before you embark on this PR and marketing opportunity, know your audience so that you can tailor your message to them. Know what you want to say, how you want to say it—and what you want the audience to take away from your speech.

What it is:
1. Speaking to groups of like-minded business folks guarantees that several, if not dozens of people, will learn from your expertise. That builds your credibility as much, if not more, than getting quoted in the news.
2. The audience will also likely want to buy what you are saying—literally. In fact, when the industry experts, futurists, and veteran entrepreneurs on our Inkandescent Speakers Bureau are hired to speak, they almost always are hired to do consulting work, and are booked for additional speaking gigs.
3. You will learn from the audience. They may not know more about your topic than you do, but paying close attention to their feedback will help you massage your message so that you can be even more effective. And, if you are open to their ideas, they may be open to yours.

What it’s not: Speaking engagements are not venues for you to pontificate. The best speakers stay on point, and deliver a message that is engaging and original. Being authentic is critical. But be realistic. Public speaking is not for everyone. And the big speakers bureaus only want experts who are at the top of their game. Smaller bureaus are more flexible and likely to take on less-experienced speakers. So be open to starting small—and be willing to work toward your ultimate goal.
Who doesn’t want to write a book? It’s one of those fantasies that drives many professionals.

What it is:
1. Books give you instant credibility. You must know what you are talking about, and be smart, if you have had the chops to publish a book.

2. Books give you something to talk about as a public speaker. In fact, almost all of the experts whom we have asked to be on the Inkandescent Speakers Bureau are authors. Not only do they have something to say, they have something more than a speech to sell—and that’s good for them, the audience, and us.

3. Successful authors know their stuff. And, they often have businesses behind their books. That’s a good thing, because it’s tough to make a lot of money selling books—even notables such as Tom Brokaw have shared that insight. If you have a business, your book can be the best marketing device you have.

Inkandescent Publishing has three imprints. Which one would be a good fit for the book you are writing?

- Inkandescent Rulebooks: Best practices in small business.
- Truly Amazing Women: Leadership lessons from women who are making strides and changing lives.
- The Parent Diaries: How to help your children succeed in school—without going insane.

What it’s not: While many people fantasize about seeing their tome hit the bestseller list, the odds are against it. Until recently, the publishing industry was set up so that it actually restricted millions of wannabe writers from landing a book deal and becoming published authors. In many cases, that was a good thing. Self-published books tend to range from pretty good to absolutely awful. Poorly written and poorly crafted books don’t do a service to the author, or to readers.

So if you are going to embark on this intense endeavor, know what you are getting into.
In a 1784 letter to Benjamin Webb, Benjamin Franklin wrote: “I do not pretend to give such a sum; I only lend it to you. When you meet with another honest Man in similar Distress, you must pay me by lending this Sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the Debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with another opportunity. I hope it may thus go thro’ many hands, before it meets with a Knave that will stop its Progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money.”

This is the essence of paying it forward.

Used to describe the concept of asking the beneficiary of a good deed to “repay” it to others instead of to the original benefactor—the concept has been around a long time. Author and reformer Lily Hardy Hammond coined it in her 1916 book, “In the Garden of Delight.”

In 1841, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote an essay called “Compensation,” in which he shared: “In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody.”

What it is:
1. Giving back is good, and important, to do. Simple as that.
2. Once you have had success in business, it’s all the more important to share your wealth—and not just your money.
3. Sharing your time and expertise is often as valuable as giving away your cash.

What it’s not: Research shows that there are 1.5 million nonprofits in the country, and another 1.2 million around the world. At least one of them, if not several, needs you. Is it really necessary to start your own nonprofit? Probably not. Giving back is something you do to benefit others. Check your ego, and then proceed according to your wise conscience.