

## **Business Can Profit From a Well-Done Press Release**

In the dot.com world , the traditional press release is believed dead.

However, in the dot.dollar world of business, not all agree. For example, PaineWebber might not think so. Last year, a single mention in the *Chicago Tribune* led to over 1,000 requests for their guidebook for savvy women investors. All told, their media relations/investors education program attracted over 90,000 new clients - all women eager to invest their nearly \$6 billion in assets.

Korbel, oldest champagne maker in America, might not think so either. As part of their award-winning public relations campaign, Korbel became the “Official Champagne of the Millennium” and sponsor of *Times Square 2000*. Korbel also created the world’s largest Champagne bottle and sent it on tour. The activities generated over 1.3 billion media hits, resulting in a 22% soar in sales and a sell-out inventory.

For the small business owner, whose budget may or may not include the Chicago market or a bubbly nationwide tour, these companies offer some important lessons about attracting the attention of the press - which is the ultimate goal of the press release.

PaineWebber offered a valuable product to the editor - new and helpful information for his or her women readers.

Korbel’s tour of the world’s largest champagne bottle promised excitement, news of interest to readers of either gender and all ages, local tie-ins, photo opportunities and intriguing historical tidbits, all linked to a current happening - the Millennium.

Not everyone is expected to be creative. However, editors do expect certain standards when it comes to a press release. Contact information, including name, telephone, fax and email, should be on top so the editor does not have to search for it.

The date is also vital, in quickly determining whether the news is fresh or already outdated.

Accuracy counts. Or in the words of Richard Stengel, ex-senior editor at *Time* and an experienced presidential campaign speechwriter, "Don't deny reality. The press appreciates candor and generally doesn't punish you for it."

Editors have the trained eye of an eagle, so hardhitting news, probably, cannot be buried in poor writing. Releases announcing new business ventures, a local celebration of National Pickled Pepper Week in October, or the 24th Annual American Crossword Puzzle Tournament in Stamford this March, will not rouse the editor into assigning a reporter or photographer if it demands excess time to decipher disorganized thought, tangled or incomplete sentences.

*Chase's 2001 Calendar of Events*, found in local libraries, lists festivals nationwide, historical anniversaries, culinary celebrations and a myriad of other tidbits. The book is a great resource for imaginative business owners looking to create a local, newsworthy item.

As for the actual writing and submission of the press release itself, a hired professional, whether a freelance writer or public relations consultant, is highly recommended as the most cost-effective, most-likely-to-hit-print solution.

**PR Column for Small Business, *The Hour*, January 15, 2001**

©2001

Juliette Weiland & Co. 67 Signal Hill Road Wilton, CT 06897  
203-834-1359 Fax 203-834-1413 jweiland@optonline.net  
*Helping You To Achieve Your Vision.*