



**THE OUTSTANDING VALUE OPPORTUNITY OF
REPURPOSED PR ELEMENTS**

A Strategic Viewpoint Featuring Two Special Sections:
The Un-Annual Report & How & Why to Get “Poddy Trained”

Leveraging News Releases:

News releases are tactical. How you re-purpose them and gain the greatest possible leverage of your PR dollar can be quite strategic. Important news releases are labor-intensive. The best ones carry important, carefully-worded strategic corporate information. This makes them valuable. But preparing releases and distributing them to just one audience – the media – represents one of the biggest missed opportunities in all of marketing.

Go Direct

The media, after all, is rarely the intended audience for your messages. The media is a channel through which you hope your messages will reach their intended audience: customers, prospects, potential employees, current employees, partners, investors and others. Since the media doesn't always cooperate, the strategic alternative is to deliver your news directly to the exact groups and individuals you are trying to reach. And never has it been easier, more affordable, faster, or more appropriate than right now.

Unlike the media, most of the people in your intended audience target have not grown immune to news releases. That's because most have never received a news release. As a result, in most cases, the news release is seen and at least scanned. Two, people in these non-media audiences have a known interest in your organization and its news... that's why they have purchased your product or expressed an interest in your solutions; they are employees or would-be employees, etc. This means they are predisposed to have an existing and continuing interest in your news release content.

Preannounce to Your "Private Relations" List

Strategic sizzle is added to the direct option when you're able to get the news to your list of "private relations" contacts ahead of any release to the media. Sure, caution is advised. If your news is proprietary, confidential or will otherwise have a material affect on your company or any organization referenced by or related to your news, it is better to follow the traditional routine. But otherwise, few things can produce a faster, better bond with a VIP target than the feeling he or she is being treated like a trusted insider.

Repackaged Quarterly Recap Bulletins

Corporate momentum isn't always obvious. You may have had six or more releases over the past ninety days, but if they've been spaced a few weeks apart, the average trade editor isn't necessarily going to recall how often you have had some important things to say over the last quarter. One short one-page news recap bulletin that itemizes your headlines of the past quarter gives the editor an at-a-glance overview of your organizations activity. Momentum is easier to spot this way. And again, if you do this for the media, do it for your VIP list, too.

Webbify it, of course

Naturally, you post your ongoing news to the corporate website. Hopefully, you're using readily available web software applications that let you implement web site change management easily, directly, and without the added cost of a third party programming expert. If not, call me [contact info below] and my partner Alex will introduce you to some free, open source, off-the-shelf programs that are a delight to use.

Blog About it

If you have a corporate blog, *and you should*, then make sure the person or people who routinely populate the blog with news, views and information are aware of the latest release. If they're experienced, they won't use the release verbatim. They'll add content that wasn't necessarily appropriate in a standard release. They can add value, add perspective, and possibly add background that your community of readers is more attuned to.

Repurpose Case Studies, Tutorials, Viewpoints and Speech Texts, too!

Case studies, tutorials (otherwise called "How To" pieces, viewpoints and other features are often written for media placement, too. That's all well and good. But again, these articles can be brought directly to the attention of your direct audiences. In addition to the options outlined above, these documents have value as *trade event hand-outs, direct mail components, recruiting tools, web-site download offers, and sales collateral*. Lots of time and energy are typically devoted to these features. Some of your organization's best thinking goes in to their development. If the media pass proves unrewarding, or even when you do achieve some press traction, make sure these pieces are made available for leverage purposes in additional places.

Reconstitute from Piece Parts

There's a generally accepted rule that if a feature is published in its entirety in a publication, it can't be pitched in that form again. That's a good rule. But it should not mean that the value of any given feature has been exhausted. If, for example, you have produced three customer case studies and one or more of them have been published, you have the option of combining the three for a new story. The newly combined feature will have components from the placed article, but it will have new information as well. It will carry an altered headline, of course. In this recombinant form, the aggregated feature can be pitched and placed.

The UnAnnual Report

This is the biggest strategic idea in this overview. If your organization is a small to medium-sized privately-held company, chances are it does not produce an annual report. Why? Because it doesn't have to. But my question is, "Why not do it anyway?" For public companies, the annual report is one of the biggest, best, and most important selling documents created each year. Why shouldn't you have one, too?

Better yet is the fact that public companies are severely limited in how creative, imaginative and forward-looking they are allowed to be, by law. Worse, they are required to reveal things that can often be quote unpleasant. As a small to medium sized privately-held company you are under no such restriction; no such law. Your "un-annual report" can be as optimistic, futuristic, and enthusiastic as you wish.

Don't go overboard, of course. But do recap the year's news highlights. After all, you have the source material at your fingertips: the year's news releases, customer stories, case studies, viewpoints, tutorials and product launch materials. This is PR leverage at its best. While there's no added cost for the development of materials, everything you've created all year long for the media can be repackaged for another audience.

Do show charts and graphs showing forward progress, upwards trends, improved results. Remember, you are not compelled to show actual numbers; you do not have to painstakingly detail various risks. Essentially, this is an opportunity to demonstrate that your organization has

made forward progress and that your company has some authoritative industry voices. Think of it as a showcase for your organization's thought leadership.

Include an opening letter from your CEO, founder, or other likely candidate in which that person recaps the year and looks ahead to the coming 12 months. Consider the annual as a place to spotlight iconic customers. The "un-annual" will prove to be a hugely popular and valuable selling document. For good measure, make it available to the media and make sure your VIP list gets it, too.

If you have a blog, *and you should*, provide a link on the blog to the annual report. Give the corporate blogger a copy so he or she can extract relevant information or otherwise recap the highlights. Better yet, email a copy of your annual to bloggers in the community or communities in which you have established a presence or wish to establish visibility and credibility.

Lastly, Can We Discuss the Importance of "Poddy Training?"

Think for a minute of the important conversations you have all year long as a PR professional. These typically include calls to customers for case study source material, a chat with your CEO to discuss the direction and content of a keynote speech, perhaps a half hour conversation with your CTO or VP of engineering in which the coming new product is detailed for release writing purposes. These and other conversational, fact-finding events are all podcast worthy. [Cautionary note: this does not mean *all* conversations are for the public domain, of course.]

Skilled podcasters can easily and quickly edit the conversations you record. Editing is done to eliminate awkward pauses or tangential discussions that are off topic, for example, but also to extract anything confidential. Done right, the finished product gives the listener a unique and sometimes profoundly revealing insight into how your organization operates, why it is different.

You know this from your own perspective. PR professionals routinely have conversations and receive content they wish could be widely shared with others. We encounter customers, co-workers and executive team members that are brilliant, articulate, and passionate about what they do. We know, however, that a news release will rarely, if ever, capture these qualities. A podcast can.

In Conclusion, Don't Substitute, Reconstitute

Podcasts, annual reports, quarterly bulletins, and blogs are not offered here as wholesale substitutions for traditional PR elements such as news release. The point is that your traditional portfolio of tactics is made significantly more potent when they are both leveraged via repurposing *and* delivered to audiences outside of the traditional media target.

Consider this one example: The speech you write for your CEO's keynote at an upcoming trade event falls sort of its potential reach if you rely exclusively on his or her remarks being heard at the actual event. A release about the upcoming keynote may help, especially if it includes the gist of your CEO's remarks. Better yet, a link to the speech text via the news release and/or by way of your corporate website is better still. But then consider that a recording of your discussion with the CEO about the speech may form the basis of a brilliant podcast. Then add to that the possibility that speech excerpts might be featured on your corporate blog. And, lastly, consider the possibility that the speech text can be easily converted into a Viewpoint for possible media placement. See? What would otherwise have been the development of simple text for a one-time

fleeting event has the potential of being seen and heard in multiple different ways by a significantly wider audience. That's leverage. It's a very big part of what AgencyNext is all about.