

Public Relations professionals don't necessarily tell people what to think—they tell them what to think about. When you watch the news or peruse the daily headlines, you're taking in information that has already been determined by someone else to be worthy of your time and attention. Behind the scenes, a skillful PR Pro crafted a message and pitched an idea to the media - to bring to your attention. If you've ever watched a program and wondered, "how did that person or business end up being featured," then you've seen the result of a **PR Pro** at work.

For the record, here's what Public Relations is: the art and science of communicating a specific message to a target audience(s), to achieve a desired result with measurable outcomes utilizing various multimedia vehicles and outlets. And here's what PR is not: lying, spinning the facts, or hiding the truth to protect clients from bad publicity. Like any industry, there are 'good guys' and 'bad guys,' - but the key to being a real PR Pro is understanding that accurate, honest, and timely communication is the secret to success.

Let's do a quick review on the evolution of PR: Traditional PR makes use of news releases, press conferences, wire services, media kits, interviews and special events to accomplish various communications objectives. Now we have the world of digital and social media, which extends that reach into websites, interactive blogs, micro-blogging, social networking platforms, webinars, podcasts, webisodes, video streaming, and mobile marketing apps.

Finally, there is Personal PR, which exceeds the reach and role of digital, social, and traditional PR tools and integrates the person with the brand. Personal PR communicates who you are as an individual in addition to how you function within an organization. It speaks as much to what you do as it does to how you do it; what you care about—and how and where you spend your time, money, resources



THE SECRET TO BEING A PR PRO

BY V.K. FIELDS

and energy. The convergence of old and new public relations tools has resulted in a robust industry that allows novices or professionals to take control of the communication flow and become expert multi-media storytellers across town or around the world.

Virtual Footprints

First, the good news: technology and digital media have made communicating instantly and frequently available to anyone with access to the Internet. Now, the bad news: technology and digital media have made communicating instantly and frequently available to anyone with access to the Internet. The Virtual Footprints you leave behind show the online community who you are, where you've been, and what you care about. When you establish a presence online, it's nearly impossible to erase those footprints—especially those that might be damaging or detrimental. Remember that potential customers or clients will not make a distinction between the "public" you and the "private" you. So if your online image contradicts or conflicts with the business and professional image you want to project, the solution is simple: delete it and don't repeat it.

Tell Your Own Story

PR Pros must have the ability to recognize trends, anticipate reactions, and reasonably predict outcomes based on past occurrences.

Effective PR Pros help themselves or their clients reinvent and

reinforce their relevance in the marketplace; to reach new audiences, and to increase inherent value to existing ones. The secret to being a PR Pro is to be first at telling your own story. Sometimes this means tooting your own horn, and sometimes it means beating the competition to the punch. Half the battle of successful public relations—just like in business—is getting there first.

"Effective PR Pros help reinvent and reinforce their relevance in the marketplace."