



P **The**
Power
of Personal
Public
Relations

by SUE CURRIE

The Power of Personal Public Relations

Sue Currie

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I. What is PR?

As a professional speaker, travelling and presenting to various groups on personal and professional public relations (PR), I'm often asked: "What is PR?", "What's the difference between advertising and public relations?", "Isn't marketing and PR the same thing?", "Aren't you talking about publicity? Or promotion?", "Personal branding – what's that? Are you a branding or image consultant?"

My answer is: "Public relations, whether on a personal or professional level, is building 'relationships' with your 'public.'" With that in mind, what sort of relationships are we talking about, and who is our public?

The most common way to build relationships is through communication and, as the Public Relations Institute of Australia defines it, PR is two-way communication between an organisation and its' publics. Put simply, PR involves communicating who you are, what you do, why you do it and how you make a difference. And that applies to an employee or small business entrepreneur right through to a multi-national company.

But PR is more than just saying something to a group of people – it is about communicating the essence of you, or your company or your brand. It's building a relationship so they – your public – will want to have a dialogue with you, listen to what you're saying, read and understand your promotional materials, watch your programs, tune into your website and, ultimately, buy or have a relationship with you, your product or service.

The perceptions, reputation, character and image of a company are communicated through its people. Therefore you are responsible for how that business is perceived by others.

To succeed in business it is important to build successful relationships. Not only with those you deal directly with but also with the public at large. Therefore "personal" public relations is your key to career success.

Within this section you will discover the techniques professional communicators use to promote a product or service and how you can apply that to yourself to stand out and shine.

Public relations as a term is almost outdated now because the lines between marketing, communication, branding and PR are blurred.

To successfully create awareness of your product or service, enhance your image or influence public opinion, all of these elements must work together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to getting your name, reputation or brand “out there”.

PR is also about creating media strategies and campaigns to gain publicity or editorial coverage. However, publicity is just one public relations tactic. Other strategies to create awareness can include special events, newsletters, competitions, product giveaways, sponsorships, community relations, speaking opportunities, trade shows and awards. These activities are designed to mould public opinion and that is what PR is all about.

I spent many years working in the television industry and know it is a most innovative and forward-thinking industry. Television is all about communication: informing you through news programs and educating you through documentaries; entertainment and, of course, advertising; or, in the case of public broadcasting, community relations and self-promotion. However, just being a broadcaster of quality material is not enough. Television stations use other channels of communication to get their message and brand accepted or “bought” by the public. They are constantly communicating through publicity – of TV stars, sponsoring special events, holding awards ceremonies, or meeting with executive clients – and they are doing so frequently and effectively because they recognise that these types of PR strategies help them to form a connection with their public. This is a very important aspect to building the success of their business, because

people generally want to do business with people they like.

Consumers will buy a product that not only lives up to its reputation (one that is usually created through PR) but that also has some meaning to them on an emotional level. That’s why advertising campaigns these days seem to be more about the ESP, or Emotional Selling Point. Now, advertising might influence people to buy or try the product or service once but if there’s no emotional connection or relationship with the customer, then it’s unlikely they will become loyal to that brand. People don’t buy the product until they buy into the whole concept or relationship.

We need to not only produce a quality product or service but also to build a first-class reputation through a dynamic mix of public relations strategies and personal branding techniques. We want our customers, clients and bosses to become fans and advocates, helping to spread the word about us and build our public or corporate image. To do this our “public” relationship needs to be at a more personal level. We need to connect more with the individual who is buying our product.

Public relations is more than just media relations. It’s the whole core of you and your business: it’s the people in your organisation; it’s your products; and it’s the way everything about your company, or you as an individual, is communicated. All of these aspects are critical in building strong “relations” with your “public”. It’s the effective integration of all relationships (including customer service), it’s branding, it’s image and reputation, it’s media relations and it’s communicating who you are with the highest integrity that will be your key to success.

2. Your Claim to Fame with Personal PR

Celebrity is the cult of modern day society. It seems it doesn't take much to be on the cover of a magazine. Just appear in a reality show and you're almost guaranteed publicity coverage and a host of adoring fans. Witness the queues of people lining up to audition for a TV talent show – talented or not, they still seek their fifteen-minutes of fame! According to Daniel Boorstin in his book *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, “The celebrity is a person who is well-known for his well-knownness.” Or, as Andy Warhol led us to believe, “everyone will have their fifteen minutes of fame.”

Why Do People want Fame and Celebrity – and is it Important?

Celebrities seem to live the life we want to live. They represent celebration, good times, excitement and having it all. We want more and want everything to be bigger, faster, better. Celebrities also represent hope and success, and often inspire us to go further and achieve more, in the hope that we too will become well known, and so enjoy wealth and the other fruits of success.

Often success and celebrity is more about how you're marketed or promoted than about actual work, output or talent. A lot of famous faces are in the spotlight simply through clever promotion and PR, not necessarily because of talent.

Celebrity relies on promoting an image that appeals to a particular audience. That is why it's so important to identify your target audience

or market. If your business or product appeals to 18–35 year olds, then they're the ones you not only advertise and sell to, they are the people who you promote to – they will help you become a star. You need to create a certain intimacy or relationship with your market; they need to feel they know you.

Most promoters and stars understand this very well. They realise that we want to know more about them and understand them better because of the intimate relationships we're having with them while they are up on the screen. Same with pop singers – it seems they are singing that song just for us when we play their CD. So before we buy more music, merchandise or see a live performance, we want to further our relationship with the artist in question. By reading about that person in the latest music magazine we are buying into that relationship.

“Stars” are across many sectors including business. Look at Donald Trump or Jack Welch. They write books to further their appeal to their “public”. We have sports stars, writers, academics and others at the top of their field who appeal to many age demographics.

The audience has the final say; they decide who will become the stars. It's often how information about a person, business or service is disseminated to the media, and how the image or brand is promoted, that will determine how well the public will buy into that product.

Therefore celebrity can be manufactured. It is really a by-product of smart public relations. If that PR is backed up exceptional talent, then superstar status applies.

So if you wish you were in the spotlight, let's look at some ways to achieve that:

1. The first step is to invent the product or personality, and shape the image and brand. Developing your own strong brand identity is the start to developing star quality. Understand your true self and value.
2. The second step is to apply the tools of publicity and promotion. Promote your brand and personality as well as your work to build your reputation. Use the media as a tool for promotion and develop your contacts through networking. Those who become names are those that have the best publicity.
3. Building a network of fans through contact and follow-up will help you gain celebrity status. The people who become celebrities are the stars who recognise the importance of their fans and follow through with publicity: the business owners who enter awards; the musicians who tour and promote their albums; the sports stars who make personal appearances; authors who do bookstore celebrity signings. All of these activities create connection on an emotional level. Having fans on your side will help you to become a celebrity.
4. Self-belief and a strong drive to achieve are needed to gain celebrity success. It's the commitment to keep going that is important. There have been many stories written about famous people such as Walt Disney, Thomas Edison and others whose ideas were rejected many times before they found success. But they had such strong belief in

themselves and the commitment to keep going that ensured they became household names.

Those who are outstanding in their work and also apply the principles of personal PR will be the ones who become stars whatever their chosen field, whether it's sport, music, movies, big business, small business or even as an employee. True fame and recognition is reward for a job well done that others have heard about.

“It's **never** too late to **be**
what you **might** have
been.”

George Eliot – English novelist

3. Develop Your Brand and Star Quality

Personal branding is about expressing something different, unique and significant. A true artist like Madonna, or a creative businessman like Richard Branson, can completely reveal their inner core through their music or stunning business success. This helps us to feel connected to that person and almost understand their feelings.

It's the same with our work whether we're a solo entrepreneur, work for an organisation or have already established a large corporation. It is often the individual person behind the brand and how their inner essence is communicated which determines future success.

In business you have one competitive advantage – **you**. A personality brand can be very strong. Richard Branson's name is almost as meaningful as the Virgin brand itself.

No one can ever duplicate your personality, the way you do business and your attitude towards other people.

I had an interesting experience when I visited some winery tasting rooms in the southern highlands near Sydney. One was a magnificent looking place, high on a hill overlooking the vineyard. The ambience was so powerful that I felt very sophisticated and rich simply walking in the door. The wine tasting experience was pleasant even though a number of the wines were not available and despite the fact that the lady behind the counter didn't want to open up a fresh bottle of champagne. However, she was nice enough and I decided to buy a bottle of wine.

The next winery was located up a winding dirt road with a small ramshackle shed at the top, which was the cellar door. The owner walked down from another shed where he was doing some work, unlocked the tasting room and then proceeded to open up a fresh bottle of every wine in the range. He was passionate about explaining the qualities of each particular wine and encouraged us to keep drinking them. He was also very entertaining and had a number of stories to tell – but only if we wanted to listen. As it turned out, he was also a blacksmith and wanted to show us his workroom before we left. With his hot irons he made a little nail for us to keep as a souvenir. The wine was good too and we bought quite a few bottles. All in all this visit was a much more enjoyable experience than the first winery we stopped at, based on the personality of the person serving us and his desire for us to enjoy ourselves for the brief time we were there.

What this story demonstrates is how a personal brand is the very essence of you, what you stand for and how you are perceived by the outside world. It's important to get it right.

You recognise now how important image or personal branding is to stand out from the crowd. So what can you do to create *your* own brand? You need to look internally and decide what you want to become famous for. I don't mean *why* you want to become famous, but *what* is it that you'd like to be recognised for? Your vision of how you see yourself in the future is the basis for developing your self-brand. It's what inspires you, energises you to jump out of bed each morning and start the day. When you're passionate and inspired about your vision, you can then design the outcome.

I started out in business as Sue Currie Communications and while this stated my name and the purpose of my business, it just didn't have any real "kick" or emotion to it. Of course, your brand is more than just a name but eventually I wanted to reinvent my company's image with something that had more meaning and spark. In redeveloping my personal brand I looked at all the things I love and that make me feel good, as well as my past experiences. For me, I love swimming in the ocean, feeling the warmth of the sun, the colours of sunsets and sunrises over the ocean, and beautiful tropical flowers – those feelings and colours help me to shine. I've worked as a model, been a beauty queen and shone in the spotlight. I've also worked in television as a newsreader and publicist, a communicator helping other people and their stories to stand out. Now, through my knowledge and experience, I teach and help others to stand out and shine and they in turn inspire me to keep shining. Shine, therefore, is part of my essence and is now my business name. It really represents what I do.

You too can do a personal audit to determine your strengths and values, your vision and future goals. What excites you? Identify the feeling or emotion of who you are, where you are and what you are doing that makes you truly happy. Defining who you are aligns with your deepest passions.

This is the beginning in determining what sets you apart from the crowd. What achievements and accomplishments, dreams or desires reveal the emotional inner side of you? What is your Unique Shining Point? And how do you promote that side of you? What do people say about you, how do they perceive you? Pay attention to how others treat you and how they describe you during introductions. Are

you described as fun loving, compassionate, professional or creative? Do these descriptions align with your values and what you stand for? Ask people you trust for their advice and feedback. Get a number of opinions regarding the general perception about you or your business, and ask people who will be honest and objective.

Tom Peters, the famous US speaker and author, coined the term "Brand You" back in 1997. He said, "the clearer you are with your personal brand and what it is you are communicating – the more successful you will be."

As mentioned earlier, you need to have appeal because people want to do business with people they like.

Once you have established what you stand for and are in alignment with (that is, your true feelings) the next step is to communicate that effectively to create your powerful personal brand.

**"the clearer you are with your
personal brand and what it is
you are communicating
– the more successful you
will be."**

1. List all your achievements and major accomplishments to date.
2. Write down the dreams you have for your life. What is your secret wish for your future?
3. Keeping in mind the kind of person you aspire to be, make a list of adjectives that would describe such a person – for example, top of the class, adventurer, sporty, achiever etc.
4. Ask friends or family and a few business colleagues to describe you. What words would they choose?
5. Considering the answers to the last question, do you believe your peers are being honest? Do you think you have personality traits that are not very complimentary or positive? If so, make a note of these here.
6. What really makes you happy? What do you love doing? List the hobbies, sports and work that you love doing.
7. Describe how you feel when you are truly engaged in these activities. Are you contemplative? Gregarious? Peaceful?
8. What are you good at? Are you an organiser? A great storyteller? Write down a list of positive action words that describe you.
9. Summarise all these points to begin to form an outline of you. What words are similar? Is there a common thread here? Can you narrow these words down to just a few or a sentence that describes you?

4. The Star Within

Uncovering your true self can be a bit tricky, if not downright disturbing. How well do you understand the image you put across? We're not always completely aware of habits and traits that we may have developed over the years; some will be positive and others perhaps not quite so positive. You may need to do some self-analysis on your plus and minus personality traits.

Authenticity and being true to yourself are powerful elements of personal branding. However, you may have a characteristic that you believe reflects your true self, so you stick with that, not realising that the behaviour may offend others. As an example, some time ago, I encountered a professional speaker, a "knock-about Aussie bloke" to use his own words, who liked to swear on stage. He had been told his swearing offended people in corporate audiences yet he chose to continue this behaviour to the detriment of future bookings. He was certainly being authentic, but he could have still been true to himself and retained his larrikin style without swearing, and thus avoided alienating potential clients. Of course, there are a lot of performers and comedians who blaspheme and use blue humour – that is part of their act. They are prepared to offend people as they know to change their style would not reflect their true personality. They would rather risk offending a few than lose a legion of fans who totally relate to their inner, authentic self. The point here is that while you need to be authentic, you also need to be aware of how your authentic character may impact others.

Are there areas you need to improve or change? In uncovering who you are and what you represent you may unearth a few characteristics that

The Star Within

may not be so flattering to you or in keeping with the image you hope to project. In person, how you shake hands, make eye contact, dress and conduct yourself in social situations all contribute to building your self-brand.

Other keys to your success in dealing with people are your personality, your confidence level, your ego and attitude. Perhaps you carry around negative emotions like sadness and anger. Your voice, way of talking and body language all count towards giving you a “manner”. Aggravating speech habits, lack of good manners, and sloppy dress and grooming can be your worst enemies. I’m sure you’ve all experienced the front office receptionist who looks the part and is very corporate and presentable ... until she opens her mouth. Or the savvy salesman who is very convincing and authoritative on the telephone but when you meet him in person his sloppy dress and manner let him down. Maybe you’ve visited a client’s office to find untidy desks, rubbish bins overflowing and a sense of disorganisation. Is this the sort of image that says it’s a professional company that you want to do business with?

Images are so powerful because, however little you may like it, they do say something true about your personality. It’s no accident that you dress, talk and behave the way you do.

It pays to do a bit of self-analysis before you work towards developing a positive self-image. You invest a lot of time and money into your

work, learning new skills, buying new equipment, and even into your home by undertaking renovations and buying furniture. So why not invest a bit of time and effort into yourself – after all, you’re worth it!

“
The common phrase, ‘building a personality’ is a misnomer. Personality is not so much like a structure as like a river – it continuously flows and to be a person is to be engaged in a perpetual process of becoming.”

Harry Emerson Fosdick – American clergyman

5. Creating Your Professional Image

You've delved deep to determine your personal brand characteristics, but it's important to note that your image is both internal and external. How do you project yourself from an outward point of view – that is, what is your visual appearance like? Projecting a powerful professional image and strong personal brand requires you to let your light shine and display your positive attributes for the entire world to see. We are bombarded with images in magazines of what the perfect look or style is for both males and females. Is it any wonder we may feel that we don't measure up?

If we're truly living and reflecting our brand with passion we develop a sense of confidence and become comfortable in our own skin. So what if you are short and round, or tall and thin? If you dress to suit your shape and project a sense of your own style, you are displaying a confidence and positive attitude that is totally engaging in itself. But it is important to make the most of your personal outward appearance in today's competitive work environment, no matter what shape or size you are. Even in our personal lives – for example, that romantic first date – we know that to impress, we need to project our personal best. People shouldn't judge us by our outward appearances, but of course they do.

Having an extensive wardrobe of all the latest fashions isn't really necessary. Establishing your own image and a strong sense of individual personality and style is the key. You may only need a few key, quality signature pieces that reflect your individual style and that you can mix and match. You don't have to look different every

day – you just have to look good and look professional. There's a famous story about style icon Coco Chanel that says when she died she only had two outfits in her wardrobe – yet she was a woman who displayed a strong sense of her style and personality in whatever she wore. Style is an external expression of your inner self. Donald Trump and Richard Branson are two very successful businessmen and flamboyant entrepreneurs, yet each is unique, with his own style. Branson wears jeans and displays an adventurous, gregarious image while Trump displays an urbane, slightly aloof, city elegance.

Actors and entertainers, media presenters, speakers and politicians are in industries where appearance and image is of vital importance and is recognised as a major part of the job. Stars spend time and money on making sure their appearance is exactly right for their stroll down the red carpet. They understand that to get a positive response from the public and media they must project an outstanding presence. To stand out, a high profile person must be able to count their outward appearance and image as a strength.

You must look smart in the eyes of the people you work with as well as in your own eyes. Your appearance labels you; therefore it is crucial to get the right label!

Clothes don't have to be the latest fashion, although they must be well fitting, freshly cleaned and pressed. Buy the best quality you can afford – not only will your garments look smarter, they'll last longer too. You need polished shoes without down-trodden heels. The old adage is quite true – you can tell something about people by the shoes they wear. Shoes should also be the best quality you can afford, if for no

other reason than that they're comfortable and will help with your posture. Take note of the little things – good quality accessories always pay off.

Grooming: as they say, first impressions are lasting impressions, therefore you should always be clean and tidy and well dressed. Hair should be clean, well cut and not too fussy. Hands and nails are important; they need to be clean and well manicured.

Make-up is a personal choice. I know with younger women, the trend is not to wear any at all – personally, I like the made-up look but I am aware that it should not be too heavy, especially in business meetings. However, it does need to be heavier if you are presenting on air and I'd advise you to wear make-up if you're giving a speech or presentation – it will give you a bit of colour and warmth. Men, you should be clean-shaven or have neatly trimmed beards and moustaches. If your appearance shows that you care, people will recognise this. If you look like a slob, they begin to question your professionalism. It's not trivial to concentrate on your outward appearance. When you carefully select your wardrobe and create your look and personal style, you propel yourself forward to a brand new you.

I was, once upon a time, a beauty queen – Miss Asia – but that doesn't mean to say that I'm beautiful on the inside – I'm still working on that. So when I talk about image, I don't necessarily mean that "everything that glitters is gold", or that once you get the outside look right, everything else will be fine. You still may need to work on some of

your inner traits and habits. We all have an inner beauty inside, but do you need to work on that a little more? Add a little polish so your inner self can shine.

Write down the type of person or brand you would like to be or project. Cut out and collect some words, images and colours. Create a brand portfolio of ideas and visual examples. This image is going to be your new label. Build into it the best things you already know about yourself. Bear in mind the type of work you do or want to be doing. Look at how you would like to dress, your grooming, speech, posture, conversational ability, decision-making ability and level of self-confidence. Establish a strong visual image that is your blueprint. This is going to be your logo – your own personal brand. Think your new image, feel your new image and live your new image until it is part of you.

Begin to create your personal brand portfolio by purchasing a folder or exercise book where you can log the following:

1. Write down the list of words you developed in the last set of exercises that describe yourself. Make sure you include all the positive things you already know about you.
2. Write down the words that describe the type of the person you would like to become. Find graphic images of these words in magazines or make up some word art on your computer in colour. Cut out these words and paste them in to your book, place in your folder or, better still, create a vision board.
3. What colours do you love? What colours are you wearing when you get lots of compliments? Take note and add some of these colours to your brand book.
4. What do you want to look like? Are there visual images in magazines of clothes you'd like to wear, or perhaps a style or presence that stands out for you? Add these to your clippings.
What other images attract your eye? Flowery or perhaps geometric shapes? Remember, this is about you, what you like and what really appeals to you visually.
5. Cut out any other visual images of what gets your heart racing: loving couples, people jumping out of an aeroplane or cruising in a yacht. These images reflect your inner self and inner desires and are part of your true personality.

6. Who is Your Audience?

Now that you've established what you would like to project with your personal brand and image, let's look at your audience. Who is it that is buying your product or service? What target market are you hoping to attract and what images and promotional materials are they going to respond to? Perhaps you're not in business yet or perhaps you are just seeking a better job or starting a new career. Whatever your current position, your communication collateral needs to reflect the style and substance of you and your business – the two go hand in hand. You are your business, and integrating your written and visual communication material with your own sense of style and personal brand will strengthen the power of your public relations efforts.

Before you begin to work with a designer on your promotional materials, let's look at your market. Perhaps your product appeals to more than one demographic, such as small – medium businesses and corporate executives. Maybe it's teenage girls only. Take some time to identify your various market segments and build a profile of their ages, sex, where they work, shop, play, what magazines or newspapers they read etc. You can do this simply by looking through magazines and seeing who the big advertisers are. That will give you an indication of who the target audience is and the sorts of articles they read, the things they like to buy and topics of interest to them. For instance, if male corporate executives are your market, look at where the high performance, desirable cars are advertised. You'll then form a visual and verbal picture of your target market. It's this audience you need to establish credibility and then build a relationship with. Once you

have identified these people you can then work with a designer to develop a complete range of promotional tools.

By now your scrapbook should be full of not only your personal brand images and words but also that of your target audience. Your “brand book” is going to be the starting point for your designer to work from. By being very clear in your brief to the team who are working on your image and brand, you are well on the way to developing a strong range of communication materials. This book is a very powerful tool and can be used not only by a graphic designer but also by an image consultant, a website designer, a photographer and even an interior designer.

What tools do you need? Let's start with a good range of promotional photos that can be used in the media, on your website and in other flyers and brochures. The standard head and shoulders shot is fine, but have something creative taken as well. Again, cut out images of what you like and how you would like yourself portrayed and work together with a photographer to develop this look.

Now you have your photographic images, decide on your colours and create a strong brand look for all your business cards, thank you cards, personal note cards, stationery, postcards, with compliments slips, stickers and any other communication material. Your website and brochure also need to communicate the essence of you and your brand and have a totally co-ordinated look in line with your other collateral.

7. Your Unique Shining Point

By now, you should be very clear with your visual brand, how you see yourself and how you would like others to perceive you. It's now time to get vocal and tell the world who you are.

Many studies have been done on high achievers and one of their most common attributes is not that they are the best at what they do, but that they promote, sell and market themselves consistently. You may have the best product or service or have something really unique but unless you communicate it you will not succeed. People want to get to know you first before they decide to buy from you.

The first step in your promotional campaign is to determine your key message. What do you want to say – and what do people want to hear? What is your **Unique Shining Point (USP)**? You may have heard of the unique selling proposition in sales techniques. It's the same with personal PR. In a sense we are “selling” a story or idea to our target public. And believe me, they don't want to hear about the whiz-bang features and benefits of your product. They want to know about the story behind the scenes. What is it about your product or service or **you** that is going to stand out?

What is unique, different, controversial, exciting, newsworthy? You need to determine your **wow! factor**. In the media it is usually the most interesting, controversial or sensational story that will get coverage. Think about what attracts you to reading a newspaper or magazine. It's certainly not dull, statistical information – more than likely it's the exciting aspects of the person behind the story; their

tale of rags to riches success or misfortune, or the details of the latest celebrity marriage. In a sense, we are voyeurs – we want to delve into that person's private life, whether the story is of a high-powered entrepreneur or a movie star.

A story that appeals to the emotions is the story that people want to hear about. If that information has some benefit to the reader, viewer or listener, it will have even greater impact and have more of an effect on people's behaviour. When coming up with your USP, consider that what most people want out of life is to feel happy, be in a loving relationship, and have fantastic health and unlimited wealth. So if your story can benefit them by helping them to be healthier, richer or more sexually appealing than you are on a winner!

So to help you in uncovering your story, some of the things you might like to explore are:

- What obstacles or hurdles have you overcome to get where you are?
- What achievements in your past can you talk about?
- How can you, your product or service help people?
- Have you done anything different, quirky or silly that may capture people's attention? What is unique about you or your business compared to your competitors?
- What was the reason you began your business or chose the career path that you are on?
- What excites you and why are you passionate about your work?

- Are there any business or personal wins that you may have had, such as awards, or securing a major contract or client?
- Do you have any particular talent that adds to your role – for example, sporting prowess or musical talent?
- Do you have any other point of difference that may help publicise or promote you or your business?

Allan Weiss is a famous speaker and author who knows the value of publicity. On a visit to Australia a few years ago, a media release was distributed to help promote a seminar he was conducting. In the release it mentioned that he was once a game show contestant – albeit many, many years ago. Well, you can be assured that that was the “quirky” bit of his release that was used in the news stories about him. The fact that he was a best-selling author and a million-dollar speaker was not relevant, nor was the title of his seminar and any other promotional, advertising style of copy. It was the “fun stuff” to capture the attention of the newspaper's readers that appealed most to the journalists.

It is this “personality” based information that will appeal to the media who will in turn disseminate that information to the public.

You may feel this self-promotion doesn't suit you – perhaps you don't like talking about yourself. Well, you need to get over it. If you truly want to succeed and stand out from the crowd you need to shout it from the rooftops.

By really delving into the “personality” behind your business or yourself, you can also work towards a signature statement or brand phrase to sum up what you

stand for. Some people call it the elevator statement.

This is very useful and can be used in all your communication collateral. What we’re after here is a clear statement that communicates what your business stands for and what it offers.

One way of doing this is to look at the information you uncovered about yourself when developing your personal brand, such as your personal values and your passions. Put that together with your background, your skills and talents that you’re already using, of course your uniqueness and how that helps your customers, and then work towards a catch phrase. Ideally, it should be ten words or less – *for example*, **Shine helps YOU stand out.**

Skills + talents + personality + passions
+ market needs = **Your PBS**

The Rules of Communication

The power of personal public relations is in communicating your message so that it has meaning to others and in turn brings you credibility, more public awareness and an enhanced profile. For your desired communication to have an impact it needs to fulfill the following criteria:

Word of mouth reputation An editorial story is a lot more likely to be read and recognised than an advertisement. Seeing a story on the TV news or reading about it in the paper gives your product or message a lot more clout. Word of mouth is one of the most credible forms of promotion. We believe what our friends tell us and we like to receive our information from our favoured forms of media. For instance, if we hear from our friends that a movie is great and read a terrific review in the newspaper, we’ll be more likely to believe that it is actually a good movie and therefore go to see it. Likewise, if you need to hire someone to do a job for you, you’ll often ask your friends whom they would recommend.

The right package A story that appeals to readers of a weekly business newspaper is not necessarily going to appeal to readers of a young women’s fashion magazine. You must tailor your message to fit. It’s not one size fits all. You need to come up with the right content, angle, storyline or approach that is relevant to you and also to your target audience. What you’re telling or selling must have meaning to the receiver and must be relevant.

KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) The message must be put in simple terms. Words must be clear and the interpretation unambiguous – they need to mean the same thing to the receiver of the message as they do to the sender. We are bombarded with so much information these days – it is hard to keep track of it all and we often get confused and overwhelmed. Other local and global events can distract our audience and affect whether our message is heard. So the less effort required understanding the message, the more effective the message will be.

Repetition You want your name to be seen by your target audience and seen often. This will create an ambient sense of familiarity. Whether they are reading stories in the media or receiving newsletters or other forms of communication, this continued delivery of your message will, in turn, create more awareness. Advertisers rely almost solely on this communication technique, often repeating the same message over and over.

Consistency In building your personal brand you need to have uniformity with your message. Even though your “job description” says you do a number of things, your overriding message or brand needs to be consistent. All your communication materials need to be delivering the same message. You can’t have confusing messages that mean different things to different audiences. You need to be very clear about who you are and what you represent, and remain true and consistent to that message.

Delivery There are many ways for your message to be heard other than the traditional forms of media. There’s the internet of course,

with e-books, audio files and e-newsletters. You can participate in special events, trade show sponsorships, pro-bono work or public speaking. Whatever form of communication you choose (and ideally, a mixture is good) as the sender you must use communication tools that the receiver uses and respects. Text messaging may not suit everyone!

**“Your overriding
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8. Stand Out from the Crowd

In public relations we talk about the five Ws as a building block to writing a media release. They are *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where* and *Why*. But to really shine, we need to add an extra W – for the *wow!* factor we talked about earlier – your USP or Unique Shining Point. And there's also an H – *How*. These same principles can be used to structure a personal public relations campaign.

With your personal PR campaign, we have already spent quite some time developing your brand. We've established *Who* you are through your passions, personality and your visual appearance. We've covered *What* you want to say – your uniqueness and the materials you'll use from your CV to your online brochure. Now we need to look at *Why*, *When*, *Where* and *How*.

Determining your goals and objectives for the business or career you want (*Why*) is the first step in planning a creative PR campaign for yourself. Let me give you an overview of planning a public relations campaign and the methods professionals use when working with major clients. This step-by-step guide can also be used effectively for a personal PR campaign.

1. **The situation**

You have already developed your personal branding statement and looked at your vision for the future. This is where we take that one step further and build a communication strategy around your aims for success. Take a snapshot of where you

are now and explore the issue or opportunity that you want to communicate. For example, it could be that you want to make No. 1 sales director in your company; that you have a great story that you want to tell the media about; that you're moving interstate and want to establish a new circle of contacts; that you want romance in your life. Establish what it is that you want to create a plan around and look at the history of the issue and the detail that has created the current situation. To give you an example, I am currently writing this book and I will create a PR campaign to create awareness of it. So that is my "opportunity" (along with my co-authors) to generate some publicity and, ultimately, book sales.

2. **Desired outcomes**

What are your communication aims and objectives? We all know about goal setting and it's the same with our communication plan. If we articulate what we're after we're more likely to achieve it – but we need to be SMART about it. That is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. You need to write a detailed statement of what you really want to achieve with as much information as possible.

So, for example, it could be: to achieve 50 per cent extra sales by December 30; to achieve three print articles in business media by February 1; to hold an open day on November 1, 2007, attracting fifty potential new customers. These are detailed statements. They have a timeframe, they are very specific and articulate exactly what it is you're trying to

achieve. The more specific you can be, the better. And at the end of your communication campaign you can undertake an evaluation to see if you really did achieve what you set out to do.

3. Research

What do you already know? What you would like to know? How are you going to learn it? Look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the situation – perhaps just by searching on the internet. What websites do you need to look up? Check out your competition. Maybe something more formal like a survey or questionnaire will help you understand the situation better and work out the best way to promote or communicate your message. You may need to survey people in the street to get some information to work with. Whatever the case, you can't prepare suitable PR strategies unless you have a good understanding of the issue and an understanding of your target public's opinions on the issue.

4. Audience

Who is your target market? And how are you going to reach them? Who are your customers and clients or the people you want to contact? We have already looked closely at this area but to provide you with another example, consider planning a PR campaign to improve your love life – who would you need to target? Perhaps professional men between the ages of twenty-five to forty? Or women under fifty and living close to the CBD? Really define whom you want to reach.

There are also influencers you need to include on your list. These are people or organisations that have an influence on or support your target audience. So, if your target market is men of a certain age, look at sporting organisations where they may be members, or business networking events that they may attend. The media is one of the strongest influencers and will help get to your target market, so you need to include them on this list. What magazines does your target read? Where do they get their information? Aim high – go for the biggest potential supporters and promoters of your product or service.

5. Niche

What is your market niche or point of difference? Again we have already focused on this but it is a vital part of PR planning. What makes you stand apart from the rest? If you stand for everything, you stand for nothing. A focused personal brand concentrates on owning one thing in the mind of your target audience. Anthony Robbins is power, Robert Kyosaki is money, Volvo is safety and Kylie Minogue is the Princess of Pop. You need to differentiate yourself from the others. As the actress Lily Tomlin said, "I always knew I wanted to be somebody; I just should have been more specific."

6. Public relations strategies

You've spent some time determining your unique characteristics and coming up with a Unique Shining Point

that sets you apart – now it's time to let the world know who you are. No point having a great product or service or being the best at what you do if no one knows about it. This is the “how to do it” part. The active component of the campaign. Here you detail exactly how you are going to reach the target public with your message; how you are going to achieve the communication objective you've already set (those SMART goals). So, what tools are you going to use?

There are hundreds of ways of communicating with a target public. Word of mouth is a very powerful public relations weapon. But not everyone realises that one of the best ways of generating it is through publicity. Publicity is getting free editorial coverage in newspapers or magazines or being talked about on radio or television. It is very effective when it happens – they say publicity is *seven times* more effective than advertising.

The terms public relations and publicity are often confused; publicity is really only one function of public relations. It is media coverage – news stories, feature articles, radio talk show interviews, television appearances, editorials and reviews. Getting that coverage can be gained through effective media relations such as sending out media releases and media kits, writing personal letters and making phone calls to editors and journalists.

However, before we move on to creating a media relations strategy for you, let's consider some other PR strategies you could incorporate into your personal public relations campaign:

- Special events – holding an event such as an open day or cocktail function at your place of business would create word of mouth amongst clients and friends. You could align yourself with a charity and hold a fundraising event, volunteer on the committee of a community event, perhaps take part in a trade show or enter business or trade awards. Even if you don't win anything the exposure may create some publicity.
- Product launches are another special event where you might get some media exposure. Invite the media along to the launch and also arrange for product giveaways to the media – perhaps it's your latest book or range of cosmetics. Of course, if it's a large item or service then just a gimmick associated with that product would be more appropriate. Quirky and unusual ideas often work well.

I once worked on a TV program called *Attitude*, which was a youth current affairs show. One of the programs we wanted to publicise was on sexually transmitted diseases, an important topic. We decided to have some condoms made up with the name of the program on them to send off to the media with our release. Perhaps this was a bit controversial or risqué, but it worked and was certainly a good way to grab the attention of the media.

So, here's an example for you: if you were holding an open day at your place of business to achieve fifty new customers, what methods of promotion would you use? Perhaps an invitation hand-delivered (with some sort of gimmick) to existing and potential customers; a number of shopping centre displays, or a letterbox drop of brochures.

- Newsletters – email or hard copy – provide direct communication with your public, clients and customers. Try a range or mix of written communication; maybe a formal letter, followed up by a special report or a postcard; perhaps write a blog. Keeping in constant contact will create familiarity.
- Write articles about your area of expertise and submit them to print or online business or consumer publications. Also submit articles to your in-house company newsletter or other trade or industry publications. You will be seen as an expert in your area and this will create credibility. For maximum exposure, write a book.
- Fact sheets, tip sheets, postcards or a brochure – any written information about you, your product or service that you can include with mail-outs or have in your reception area is extremely useful. Make sure you have plenty of testimonials from happy customers and clients to include in any written communication.
- Create a website if you haven't done so already. An online presence is almost mandatory these days.

Think of a website as your online PR brochure. But you must remember to keep telling people about it and to incorporate a range of website promotion tactics such as: Put your web address on all your communication collateral – media releases, brochures, newsletters, business cards, postcards, catalogues, letterhead, email signatures and invoices.

Put it on stickers used for mail outs, packaging and promotional products such as pens, caps, coffee mugs, fridge magnets, T-shirts or uniforms and key rings. And don't forget the company car or van!

Have it on your voicemail messages or your on-hold message service.

Mention your website address during radio or TV interviews and speaking engagements.

Present interactive features on your site that keep visitors returning; perhaps a competition or an online survey as well as lots of free valuable information.

Send out a regular e-newsletter to your database that offers tips and information and a link back to the site.

Post articles on other websites with links back to your site.

- Although public speaking can be a terrifying ordeal, giving free speeches to business clubs or other organisations is another good way of letting people know about your business and area of expertise. You can conquer your fear by practicing in front of colleagues or friends, or joining your local Toastmasters' association.

- Sponsorships have the potential to be very effective promotional tools when properly managed. If you don't want to organise your own event perhaps sponsor one that somebody else is doing. Just make sure your sponsorship is acknowledged on any advertising and all other communication collateral; this will ensure your name becomes synonymous with the event and your sponsorship dollars are put to good use.
- Form alliances wherever possible. Often times we are asked to donate our services to charity, which is fine, but why not try and get an acknowledgement for your efforts in a program, or poster? Make it a win-win situation for all – they want your service and you want your name acknowledged.
- Cross-promotion – build strong affiliate relationships and connect with other businesses that have the same core customer base. Promote others like crazy – even promote your competition. “What goes around comes around.” Ask for referrals and testimonials. Give referrals, and allow others to use your name if you believe in their work and what they do.
- Something as simple as sending thank you notes and letters, clippings of interest and letters of congratulations is good personal PR. I worked on the Australian publicity campaign for a TV show called *Absolutely Fabulous*,

a British comedy starring Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley that became a hit in the '90s and created a cult following in the gay community. One day, some guys came to see me at ABC TV wanting to have a float with a team of “Patsys” – a character from the show – in Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. We organised the float and arranged for a photographer to take pictures. I sent off a range of these photographs to Joanna Lumley's agent in London and a short while later received a handwritten note, on personalised stationery, from Joanna Lumley herself, thanking me for the pictures. I wasn't expecting a reply, but not only was her response good manners, it was also fantastic personal PR. I still have that framed letter hanging in my office today.

- Networking – the most important point about attending networking functions is that you're there to meet people and make effective contacts. You won't do that if you spend your time flitting around the room from person to person or spending all your time with people you know. You're better off meeting three people and having a good quality conversation with them than trying to get around to thirty people. Go for quality contacts rather than quantity.

A good idea is to set an objective before you head off to an event. Perhaps it is just to meet and make contact with three people; maybe meet the guest speaker whom you've admired for a while; or perhaps talk to that elusive business contact you've been playing phone tag with.

Wait until the end of the conversation to exchange business cards, and ask the other person for their card first. You don't want to make a sales pitch at a networking function and thrust your business card at them like you're handing out flyers in the main street of town. It can be off-putting to other people if you come across as too pushy or needy – after all you are there to build good relationships. Have quality business cards made up and make sure you have plenty to hand out if asked – keep them within easy reach.

A networking function can be great PR for you and your business if you remember it's also about the other person. Try and make the other person feel comfortable and enjoy your company by having a quality conversation. And that often means we need to listen twice as much as we talk! Most people will think you're a brilliant conversationalist if you let them do most of the talking.

- Publicity – it's important to understand what the media want if you are trying to gain free publicity. You need to realise that media is a business. It is the business of selling newspapers, television, internet and radio programs. Let's face it – media is one of the biggest industries around. Have you heard of Rupert Murdoch or Ted Turner? Of course you have, and you'll know that they have made a lot of money out of the business of media. What keeps them successful and selling plenty of newspapers is a good story. The media's agenda is to get a good story; for you to get publicity, you need to provide a good story. What makes a good story? For major media it needs to be interesting, new, controversial,

Media is entertainment. There's an element of theatre about it – the media need to create something interesting and exciting that people will talk about and that will help them sell their newspapers. Your business or product may not be front-page news but there are lots of other sections that will be suitable: the entertainment pages, the business and technology section, the health and lifestyle supplement. And of course there are loads of industry and trade publications where information about you or your services would be well placed.

Don't forget that the media actually need us to fill all those sections with interesting information for their readers. The media need you just as much as you need them.

Send a media release any time you have something interesting happening but always follow it up; build relationships with journalists and editors. Don't drive them crazy but do keep in touch. Remember, public relations is developing a relationship with your public – and this includes the media. Some ideas for sending a release include opening a new office, winning an award, results of a survey, becoming president of your industry's association. Make your information as interesting as possible. Even if you just ring them up or send a brief email suggesting your topic it may be enough to spark their interest.

The media is always looking for stories of interest to fill their newspapers, magazines, TV and radio shows. If you can offer something that is newsworthy, topical,

interesting or entertaining then you have a good chance of your story being used. Sending relevant media releases often ensures you stay “top of mind” with your database of media contacts and it is great public relations for you or your business when your story is run.

Bear in mind that you need to send your story to the most appropriate media. It’s not just about getting your name in print, it’s getting recognised for what you do by the right target audience.

Jamie Durie is a name that may be familiar to some. This Australian celebrity didn’t try to be a star immediately or get publicity based on his initial success with Manpower (yes, the male strip dance troupe!) After he finished with Manpower, he studied horticulture for four years and then set up a successful landscape business. At that point, he then started working with the media and was featured in *Belle* magazine – a home and gardening magazine with style and class that was well suited to profile his work. This publicity prompted *Burkes Backyard*, a well-known Australian TV show, to contact him. He went on to have a hugely successful national TV career and is now a major personality on the high-profile *Oprah* show in the US, reaching millions of people worldwide. How’s that for the power of publicity!

Here are a few tips on how you can write your own media release and attract interest in your product or service:

- First and most important thing; have something interesting to say – consider your Unique Shining Point;
- Write a catchy headline with a short, punchy phrase;
- Have a bright opening; start with your strongest point first;
- For your content, remember the 5 Ws – What, When, Where, Who and Why;
- Use memorable quotes;
- Title it “Media Release” and always include the date;
- Include your contact details of telephone, mobile, email and website address;
- Use letterhead and keep the content to one page – any more and you will lose the journalists’ attention;
- When using email, cut and paste into the body of the email – don’t send an attachment;
- Send your release to the appropriate person – be sure to do your research;
- Always follow up and keep your media liaison strong;
- Supply a creative photo or suggest a photo opportunity that will add to the impact of having your information publicised.

Gaining publicity in the media will help you become known as an expert on your business stream; it will enhance your image and reputation and help you to gain celebrity status.

7. Budget

How much is it going to cost? PR is a great way to launch yourself to your public. You don't always have to advertise.

PR is cheaper than advertising but is not necessarily free. How much will new brochures cost? What about a postcard mail-out to your database? Will you hire someone part-time to help you? You need to look at what resources you have to put towards your personal public relations project. If it is \$5,000, how can you effectively use that money? You do need to allocate some funds towards a communication campaign. It might be that you spend X on advertising and X on PR communication and then see what gets the most effective return on your investment by asking customers how they found out about you.

8. Schedule

Work out your timeframe and action plan and then implement that plan – just do it! This is the fun bit where you actually put in to practice what you've planned. Work out a schedule and whom you are going to hire or get to help you. If your goal is to have an event in September, work backwards to “chunk” out the smaller steps it will take to put your plan into place. If you are dealing with the media, find out about deadlines and when they will need their information for media coverage.

9. The end

Have you attracted notice? This is where we evaluate and measure if your plan has worked. Look back at your objectives that you so carefully wrote out; were those goals achieved? Have they been met? Did you get 50 per cent extra sales? How about those articles you hoped to get in the business press? At this time we take the opportunity to evaluate our success by reviewing what we've achieved and determining whether we got value for our money.

So you now have a personal public relations plan; you've identified your goals and have strategies and tactics for getting the word out to help build your personal brand and profile. Communicating who you are, what you do and how you make a difference is what public relations is all about.

Get into the habit
of communicating
your **successes**
and **achievements**
everywhere and **often.**

9. Lights, Camera, Action!

You have now written an effective media release that has been published in the local paper, you've been networking and communicating and it seems people are starting to notice you. In fact, the major television station in your area has decided they would like to interview you for their very successful morning show.

What's the first thing you do? What do most of us do when asked to give an interview or public presentation – we panic! Well, I would hope you say yes to the opportunity, but many people do panic and as a result say no to this fabulous chance to promote themselves, simply because they are nervous. Fear stops a lot of us moving forward. The dictionary describes fear as an emotion caused by impending evil; a sensation of alarm and dread. We're scared to death!

I began my media career for Prime Television in Wagga Wagga, a regional city in Australia. I clearly remember the day when Prime flew me down from Sydney for the audition. I was absolutely petrified. They sat me on the set, put the autocue up in front of me and said, "Action!" Well, my palms were sweating, my knees were shaking, my voice was somewhere up in my throat ... but somehow I *did* get through it and passed the audition test. I was later offered the job as newsreader.

When we're asked to do a media interview, we need to put this fear

or nervousness into perspective. You might think that your knocking knees and shaky voice will give you away as an amateur, but generally nerves are pretty normal and not noticed too much by other people. Nerves may stop you from approaching TV or radio stations for publicity because you are too scared to go on-air and do that interview.

Don't let that happen. Nerves can be re-channeled and used as a source of enthusiasm to show your commitment to the subject you are talking about – your business or product, a subject very close to your heart. So let's look at how we might eliminate unnecessary fears from an interview situation.

Be prepared. You know your subject better than anyone else so think about some possible questions the media may ask and prepare your answers. Ask your partner or a friend to ask you a few questions and have a rehearsal – practice always helps. It's a bit like a job interview process. You would never go to an interview without some idea of the answers to questions you might be asked.

The media is not there to give you a hard time – unless it is a major controversial issue.

They want to find out information from you to help them do their story. They are interested in what it is you have to say. You could even come up with a list of questions for the journalist, but be prepared that they may not use them.

I once appeared on a Sydney TV morning show that has a team of researchers, and they prepared well in advance of the interview by asking lots of questions before presenting me with a script as a guideline. The only trouble was, once I got on air the host asked completely different questions! But I did know the answers and so will you. If you're relaxed and prepared as much as possible then that will come across.

Another way to help with nerves is deep breathing. A few deep breaths always helps. Another technique I like to do when I'm really nervous is count backwards (in my mind) from one hundred, counting down in lots of three. So it's one hundred, ninety-seven, ninety-four etc. This helps you to concentrate so that by the time you've reached fifty, your breathing has slowed down and you're feeling a lot more relaxed.

To help you feel comfortable in a television interview situation, you might try and get there a bit early. Have a look in the studio, see where the cameras are, talk to people, and spend some time in the make-up room or green room. Familiarise yourself with the surroundings. Generally, they want you to be there early, so take advantage of it. The same goes for a radio interview; be there a little ahead of time and take note of what goes on; get a sense of how it all works. You'll do a better interview if you can go into the studio rather than do an interview on the telephone.

A newspaper interview is much more straightforward. A journalist will ask questions and take notes. Sometimes they have a recorder and they'll get back to you and check facts. You can usually take your time with a newspaper interview. You shouldn't feel pressured into coming up with a quick answer.

OK, so we've covered the set-up. Now, without getting too technical, let's concentrate on the other critical interview areas: our technique, which is taking command of our nerves and presenting ourselves as we wish to be perceived, the content of our interview and, finally, our delivery.

- **First, let's look at content:**

What's really useful is to prepare three or four main points that you wish to get across. Write these down on a note and refer to it. Remember the Ws, concentrating in particular on **What** it is, **When** it is and **Where**. Be prepared! Remember what you're there for. Focus on getting those main points across. They are your key messages. Remembering those key points will help you stay on track.

Also keep your comments concise. Catchy short answers work best in the media, especially for radio news. They're known as "grabs" and can be slotted into a news story. If you watch the TV news you'll notice that the sound bites (or grabs) are about five to seven seconds long. Politicians, when they want to get a message across, are very good at giving that short punchy grab. Another point with sound bites

is to listen to music. Lyrics of songs are basically sound bites set to music. Your media message needs to be memorable and to the point – a short, punchy phrase that stands out.

If your answer turns out to be too short the reporter will simply ask a follow-up question seeking more information. So go in prepared for your radio or television interview and concentrate on getting those main points across – a call to action, if you like. Interviews will get crowds to that event, launch that new product to the public or communicate the name of your business to a wider audience.

One evening while listening to talk-back radio, I heard an interview with speaker and author Dr John Demartini. The interviewer was asking all sorts of questions about Demartini's latest book and he kept answering, "Well, the people who come along to my Success in the City seminar (on such and such a date) will have the opportunity to hear about that in more detail." He plugged his seminar at every opportunity – he was a media master.

Another important point regarding content is not to use jargon or abbreviations. For instance, I am an ASM of the NSAA, a member of PRIA and their RCG. You probably don't know what I mean and neither would an interviewer. Don't alienate your audience by excluding them from a jargon-filled conversation. Using industry-specific terms in a non-industry environment is not clever; it's just annoying.

It's also crucial to have a strong opener and a strong closer. For instance, if I was to be interviewed about this book I could open by saying something like, "Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the concept of personal branding with you." A closer or "call to action" might be: "If you want to stand out in the crowd visit my website at www.shinecomms.com.au to purchase your copy of the book."

The main thing with a media interview is to be prepared. If you are not ready, you can say no to an interview or not answer straight away. If a journalist rings up and starts firing questions at you, you can say, "Can I get back to you? Is 2 pm a good time to contact you?" Using a delaying tactic will give you a bit of breathing space to think about what you want to get across.

- ***And now let's go over delivery:***

A good interview is a matter of practice, practice, practice, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. When I did that Prime TV audition, I practiced beforehand and watched lots of TV newsreaders, plus I had previous experience in television and had worked as an actor – so I was very prepared. Any self-respecting actor or professional never goes on stage without practicing beforehand. Russell Crowe or Cate Blanchett would never do a stage show without a lot of rehearsal beforehand, and a sports star like Lleyton Hewitt would never take to the court or field without practicing beforehand.

When we talk about practice, a good idea is to record yourself and play it back to evaluate your performance. Watch your DVD with the sound off to see where the unnecessary or nervous gestures are.

Now listen to the sound only to hear for pace, variety and tone in your voice – are you boring? Sum up your key messages and see if you get them across. Really listening and observing will help to improve your skills as a communicator.

That now brings us to voice and delivery skills. To improve your speaking voice, practice reading aloud from magazines and observe your articulation. Do tongue twisters to loosen up. Use variety in your voice. Rehearse speaking louder and softer, faster and slower; a dull, monotonous voice is to be avoided. The main thing to remember is to be yourself. The way you talk animatedly around the barbeque or during dinner party conversation: that's your style – that's you.

If you are going to be doing a lot of talking, and particularly if you're doing TV or radio interviews, you will need to warm up your voice beforehand. Humming is a good way to do this. You can try a simple voice exercise like opening the back of your throat when you open your mouth; take a deep breath in and let out the vowel sounds one at a time – ah, eh, ee, oh, ooh. To explore voice skills further pick up a book at your local performing arts bookstore.

Media is entertainment so there's a sense of performance about it. If you do get the opportunity to promote yourself on radio and TV, it's also wise to be bright and buoyant in your answers – boring answers will probably be edited out and boring interviews will be dropped altogether. You need to be slightly more animated than usual and larger than life. Have a bit of personality about you. Try and interest the interviewer in what it is you're saying. Focus on them and keep good eye contact. You don't want your

eyes to flicker around the room during the interview. Use the interviewer's name as it makes it sound a little more personable.

Body language is important – don't fidget or move your hands around too much. People say to relax but you don't want to sit back in your chair and slouch. Sit slightly forward and be animated; don't be too stiff or still, be the way you are in normal conversation. You don't want to sit there like a statue with your head not moving and your eyes fixed – that would be too mind-numbing for your audience and they will lose focus on what you are saying.

If your interview is on TV, be sure to dress well. Wear a nice top or shirt – something that's not too bright or shiny, garish or flowery. You need to wear something that makes you feel comfortable, because when you feel comfortable, you look good. If it's a business interview, a suit is always appropriate but it doesn't have to be black – try navy, tan or grey. Choose colours that flatter you to help create warmth between you and your audience. Wearing make-up will also create warmth. For women some lipstick and blush will highlight your face. For both men and women some light foundation and a dusting of powder will eliminate any shine.

And finally, remember to smile – it’s a bit like the telephone technique; when you smile you feel and sound much friendlier. Oh, and did I mention have fun? It’s an interesting experience, so try and enjoy it!

“Remember
to **smile!**”



10. The Commitment to Keep On Keeping On

Writing this book has been a huge task – it’s been a start, stop, start process. There have been times we’ve been fantastically enthusiastic and others when we thought the whole project would just be a write-off. Having a team of three, living in different parts of the world, all having busy lives – these factors have, at times, seen us very frustrated. But we decided we were going to finish this project and write a book that we believed would help our readers to fast track their business success ... so we just had to do it. And we wanted to do it. We have all been passionate about this project, and it is this factor that is really the key to it all.

To succeed in anything and keep going you must really, really want it. But this alone is not enough. You do need to take action. It really is a matter of taking one step at a time. Using this book as an example, there were days I spent facing a blank computer screen with a very blank mind, but somehow, once I got started, the words did flow. Once you have your goal in mind, you need to jump in boots and all. You’ve heard the phrase “fake it ’til you make it” – well, it’s a popular saying because it actually works. At times you won’t feel like promoting yourself or doing that workout you know you should do. But to be a true superstar, whether of the silver screen or just of your own neighbourhood, you do need to just do it – why do you think Nike have had so much success with that famous tag-line?

It's amazing what you can do if you really put your mind to it. We all, at times, are faced with unforeseen obstacles and even though it's tough at the time, somehow we overcome our problems and come out the other side much stronger (and hopefully wiser).

My brother, Greg, is sailing solo around the world. It is something he has always wanted to do, and he has always had a passionate burning desire to fulfill this dream. Mind you, it's something that I'd never contemplate! Here's a note from my brother's log about three weeks after he set sail from Darwin to the Cocos Islands ... *Going straight on to Rodriguez, minimum of seventeen days, possibly up to three weeks. I lost my GPS overboard and my backup is faulty. Have been navigating with sextant but ended up navigating north of Cocos. Boom was snapped in an accidental jibe. Tried to sail to Cocos on headsail. Current and wind pushed me west of Cocos so had to abandon that plan and sail to Rodriguez instead. Wish me fair winds and following seas.*

Well, he did make it to Rodriguez (off Mauritius) after being at sea a total of fifty-four days – of course, he didn't have any choice but to keep sailing. He said that even though he was angry with himself for the many mistakes he made, and was frustrated at "missing" Cocos, once he made up his mind to head directly to his next port, the routine of sailing took over and he was a lot calmer and more resolute.

So how do you just do it? Waking up with enthusiasm to face a new day will kick-start the process. And how do you do that? Well, it's

not anything new I'm revealing here – we all know a good night's sleep, healthy food and exercise will keep our bodies and our minds at optimum performance. Do what works for you. Experiment with going to bed an hour earlier and getting up earlier for a walk before work. Try a yoga workout or get advice from a nutritionist if you're feeling tired every afternoon.

It does require discipline and dedication to follow your dreams. I've found the best way to keep on track is to imagine how you'll feel when you've reached your outcome. Really immerse yourself in the feeling of the moment, see how it looks, what you're saying, where you are, your surroundings and really picture in your mind that special moment when what you desire becomes a reality.

When I was fourteen, I decided I wanted to be a model and a beauty queen – where that came from I have no idea as I was skinny, gawky and had a head of unruly hair. My brothers used to call me "mop". I told my careers advisor at school that was what I wanted to do. Fortunately she didn't laugh at me and advised me to do a department and modeling course and learn secretarial work – just in case. I worked in a fruit shop on Saturday mornings to save the money for the course, which I just loved doing. I also used to pore through *Honey* and *Seventeen* magazines that my newsagent ordered in especially from London and the US for me.

Most teenagers have pictures of pop singers, movie stars and personalities on their walls – I used to cover mine with the



glamorous images of models from my magazines. I also had pin-ups of Miss World and Miss Universe. Well, without realising that I was “visualising” my dreams, I did manage to make them come true. The effect of having those images in front of me for a number of years worked. I did become a model at only sixteen years of age, after winning the “I Want to be a Model” quest. I went on to win other pageants and became a successful model.

Visualisation is a very powerful process. There have been many books written about universal laws and the power of attraction and that is because it works. Please follow through by reading more about this incredible topic – it will help you enormously. And, of course, apply what you learn!

Creating the business success you desire and the life of your dreams is a possibility. Often the difficult part is deciding exactly *What* it is that you want.

Take the time to dream, daydream and imagine. When you see what your heart desires and you begin to head in that direction through learning and experience, the unbelievable will happen. What was once a gem of a thought will become a reality.



“The *power* of *personal* public relations is *within YOU!*”



Sue Currie

“Determine your strengths and values, your vision and future goals and what excites you.”



Sue Currie is a leading personal branding strategist. A professional speaker and business educator, Sue is experienced in helping corporate and independent professionals to shine through their image and media communication. Sue is the director of Shine Communications Consultancy, an executive development company providing clients with consultation and education on personal branding and corporate image plus

public relations and media skills. She is an accredited member of the National Speakers Association of Australia and a member of the International Federation of Professional Speakers.

Sue walks her talk. Prior to establishing her professional speaking company, Sue was an award-winning public relations consultant. She spent ten years in broadcasting as a television entertainment publicist and has also worked as a television public relations manager, television newsreader and morning show host. Sue's early years were spent in the fashion modeling industry and also as an actor.

She has spent many years in the public eye both on and off camera and with her many years experience in the field, Sue certainly has an understanding of how to help you develop your unique personal brand.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Sue Currie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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