

# How to Use Media Lists for Successful PR

You've just launched your latest design: a hot new hat that is just begging to take its rightful place among the hip and happening items featured in *O* magazine's "Favorite Things" section. But sans a personal connection with someone at the publication, an endorsement from a world-famous celebrity, or hiring a pricy public relations person, how can the everyday entrepreneur or small business person reach out and find the editor who decides which products will end up gracing the pages of an uber-popular magazine such as *O*? The answer lies in part in the skillful use of media lists.

Long the stock and trade of PR agencies, a media list is a database of contact and editorial information on journalists, editors, producers, and publications. In today's environment, it's not just PR firms who use media lists. It makes good sense for small businesses to use them as well.

Once you're convinced that a media list can contribute to your company's overall marketing plan, the next step is to find the one that's right for you. Media lists come in all shapes, sizes, and prices. Here are just a few of the major players in the field:

- [Contacts on Tap](#)
- [MyMediaInfo](#)
- [Cision](#)
- [Vocus](#)
- [BurrellesLuce](#)
- [Easy Media List](#)

Not convinced you can take the reins of PR and do it yourself? There are three specific reasons why small businesses should use media lists to gain greater visibility.

## 1. Target Press Releases

Instead of just blasting your press release to a generic list of reporters, you can use media lists to identify exactly which writers, from which specific publications, report on what topics. Getting out short, regular, and relevant press releases to reporters who cover your beat gets your name out there in the media and increases your chance of coming up in the Google searches. Take the case of Emily VanderBeek, marketing director for Titan Commercial, a commercial real estate brokerage firm. VanderBeek says she has acquired a list through diligent research that she uses to send out company press releases. "This has been very successful because our list is more targeted and ensures that we are reaching the correct people with our stories," she said.

## 2. Save Money

Especially when it comes to connecting with local and regional media, it's much more cost-effective for a company to do its own research rather than hiring a publicist. While publicists bring enormous value to the process overall, you should get to know and make a personal connection with your local media.

Michael Epstein, chief executive of eDimensional Inc., says his small business has historically done most of its own PR. "I started our company in college with \$500 and generated over \$1 million in sales in the first year, primarily through my PR efforts," says Epstein. Epstein subscribes to Cision, a media contact provider, and says he uses the service to generate numerous contact lists as well as to review the editorial schedules of relevant publications.

## 3. Become an Industry Leader

By reaching out regularly to the reporters who cover your topic, you can become known as an industry source. If you provide reliable content on an ongoing basis, the reporters will begin to think of you as a "go-to" person in your field, and you will get regular ink as an expert.

The next time you have something you want to bring to light in a specific magazine, newspaper, or TV show, use a media list to get the word out to a reporter looking for a story.

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