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Proclaim Good News ... It Has Market Value!

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Proclaim good news through powerful writing. Success stories, such as those depicted in the bullets below and the one portrayed in the photo of Maxine Andrews and young Air Force troops, have tremendous market value and can be significant force multipliers.

A well-written communique, rich in detail about the product or event and the scope of its success, will generate credibility with established clients and intrigue others of similar interest. The effect is akin to tapping a red balloon into the air ... in front of a child. The action is eye-catching; the reaction is immediate and positive – the kind of attention you want for your business.



- Business wins a major contract
- Author's book was published
- Student wins a major scholarship
- Teacher is selected for a prestigious award
- University achieves a major R&D breakthrough
- Web site scores its one millionth visitor

Now, take this to the next level. The astute individual or organization can leverage a single event by launching a strategic communications campaign. To do so, identify three categories of information: what (the material), how (mechanisms to disseminate the information) and who (your target audiences).

What – Scope the accomplishment in well-honed, powerful writing. Set the context with detail that accentuates the "Wow" factor: Selected as #1 from XX competitors, monetary value of the contract won, first such occurrence in XX years, another in a string of XX similar successes (i.e., we're on a winning streak).

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How – Identify mechanisms to disseminate the information: press releases; business materials (e.g., brochures); web pages; newsletters; trade journals; talking points for media interviews; end-of-year reports; posts on social media (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn), etc.

Who – Think broadly; cast a wide net. The most obvious audience would be your primary client base. Expand beyond that, however, and include corporate or other business partners; chat groups on social media; informal professional organizations, such as the Women’s Owned Business Club; collegiate associations; family and friends (ask *them* to share) ... you get the picture.

Case in point -- I planned and executed a year-long strategic communications campaign that positively affected hundreds of lives. As the fictional detective Monk describes, “Here’s what happened...”

As a lieutenant colonel based in Hawaii, I commanded the 324th Intelligence Squadron (IS), a unit comprised of 480 troops. Upon arrival, I discovered its morale was horrible, a situation I immediately vowed to resolve. My senior enlisted corps and I developed and launched a series of first-of-its-kind, people-oriented programs, specifically designed to enhance professional development of the troops and take care of their families. Each initiative proved to be a huge success.

One of our success stories involved forming *The Blue Notes*, the only Air Force chorus in the state. How did this occur? When initially meeting members of the 324th IS, I learned, “You sing ... and you sing ... you play piano ... and you directed a church choir ... hmmm.” Logical fallout – form a musical group! Timing was impeccable.

That year, America celebrated the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of WWII. Given the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was central in the nation’s official recognition of this auspicious occasion. Thousands of people (including Bob Hope) attended the commemoration at Hickam Air Force base. *The Blue Notes*, one of the program’s opening acts, performed period songs by the Andrews Sisters.

We were shocked to learn that Maxine Andrews – sole survivor of famed trio – was in the audience and requested a photo with *The Blue Notes*. She was in equal measure astonished and delighted to find young kids still singing her songs. The young troops were equally ecstatic to meet her. The photo above captured that magical moment and was published the next day Honolulu’s major newspaper.

To capitalize on our ground-breaking initiatives, my unit’s Public Affairs Office and I launched a strategic communications campaign – deliberate, sustained, focused, and exciting. The mechanism ... the how ... was *The Spokesman*, a monthly, professional magazine published by our parent organization that reached 16,000 people assigned to locations worldwide – literally. *Everyone* read *The Spokesman*. Scoring an article in this publication was akin to front page coverage in the *Washington Post* or *Wall Street Journal*. [I should note that this story predates social media. *The Spokesman* was our sole mechanism to spread the word.]

Our campaign demonstrated the influence of powerfully written articles and achieved three major results. First, we shared our programs with other units, which subsequently emulated them to the benefit of *their* people. Second, published recognition helped the careers of individuals in 324th IS who strove so diligently to develop our programs. Their hard work, initiative, ideas, and leadership were recognized and rewarded. Third, 324th IS gained a well-respected and well-deserved reputation for innovation and taking care of its people. The unit took pride in its accomplishments and blossomed ... a magnificent transformation to behold and one I’ll never forget.

I conclude with a suggestion. Take a moment ... distance yourself from the immediacy of daily business concerns and consider tomorrow. Identify and proclaim good news about your business ... powerfully expressed and strategically disseminated ... it brings smiles, creates a memory, and often leads to new opportunity.