

## EFFECTIVE RESEARCH TACTICS FOR PUBLICITY

By Frances Gretes

The October 2006 issue of *A/E Rainmaker* featured the article "Research Tactics for New Business" by Frances Gretes, Director of New Business and Communications for Rafael Vinoly Architects, P.C. The focus was on clippings, web research, articles, and other media surveys. Conducting research for publicity purposes involves similar stages of research by using the same tools, but in a different way, and for a different result.

First you need to find out what outlets might have an interest in your firm. You can prepare a list of media sources related to your markets by checking *Bacons* or the *New Media Yellow Book*. Talk to people in your market and find out what publications they read. Decide what kind of publication that you want your firm to appear in. Is it *New Yorker*, *Domus*, *Interior Design*, *Vanity Fair* or *AARP Magazine*? Do you want news stories, long profiles in a life or location, a bylined article in a technical journal, or TV interview? Read the publication to get a flavor of the editorial style. Find out who covers what your firm specializes in. There is a list of journalists in the back of the *NY News Media Yellow Book*. It's published by *Leadership Directories*, and it tells you who the leaders are in major organizations. Read the articles by the journalists that you have selected, and try to predict how they might approach your

story. Check *Factiva*, *Nexus* or the New York Public Library to find out who covers a certain topic. Search by topic and see whose byline shows up most often. Do they favor certain firms, or building types, and do they generally write favorable pieces, or thrive on criticism?

Another resource is The Publicity Directory for the A/E/C Industry by the Fuessler Group, Inc. ([www.fuessler.com](http://www.fuessler.com)). Check circulation and get a readership profile from the publisher. Go to the websites of publications in November or December and print out their editorial calendars, and find out where your project fits in. When you're ready to make a pitch, not only know well what you're pitching, but try to have some personal background about the journalist to use as your lead-in before introducing your topic, such as, "enjoyed your last piece..."

To find out where to lecture or exhibit, go through directories of associations, museums, trade shows, and universities. It's very easy to find attendance at lecture programs, especially trade shows since the sponsors use the previous year's figures to promote the next one. If you intend to exhibit or lecture, you should ask for a list of exhibitors and speakers for previous years, to determine if it's worth the time and money to pursue.

### Where is the best place to network, and who should be part of your network?

- ◆ Conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, related to the markets that interest you. Attend, present, and exhibit.
- ◆ Experts at associations, university professors, campus planners, and facility managers.
- ◆ Consultants and contractors currently working on projects for a particular client, or a market you're pursuing.
- ◆ Vendors, merchants, bankers, attorneys, real estate brokers, secretaries and receptionists.
- ◆ Lead-swapping networks, family, friends and neighbors.
- ◆ Other A/E/C firms and related design / construction specialists.

The quantity of the information you get is not important; it's the relevancy of the information and the way you present it. You should absorb the information then condense it for others. Even though everyone has access to the same tools, it is the master craftsman who always stands out, because he/she knows which tools are best to use and how to use the least to express the most.

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