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## **PERSONAL PUBLICITY PLANNER: A GUIDE TO MARKETING YOU**

### **A BLUEPRINT FOR WOMEN WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR CAREERS— AND WANT TO DEVELOP AN IMAGE FOR SUCCESS**

*An Interview with MARION E. GOLD*

#### ***What is Personal Publicity?***

**PERSONAL PUBLICITY** is a broad spectrum of communications activities designed to shape an image—to **present you and your accomplishments in a positive manner**. It is the most intimate and most valuable tool you have to sell yourself. It can present to the audience the essence of who you are, what you do, and what you have to offer.

#### ***Why is Personal Publicity important to careerwomen?***

Too often we're so busy climbing the corporate ladder, we tend to forget that part of our continued climb includes letting people outside the company know who we are and what we have achieved. It's easy to wrongly assume that a mentor (for those lucky enough to have one), or supervisor will take control and make sure that others in our industries become aware of our success and knowledge, how our talents contributed to the growth of the company, and what impact we can have on our chosen fields.

#### ***Is personal publicity more important for women than it is for men?***

Yes...and no! Many men already have a publicity network established, and they are generally more comfortable letting others know about their accomplishments, or voicing their opinions. Too many talented women I meet express far too much humility about their skills and talents. We also make the mistake of thinking that our accomplishments will automatically be recognized and rewarded.

Just look at today's newspapers or watch television news. How often do you see a woman interviewed about key business topics or national issues? Even women who have made it to the top ranks of corporate America, or who have been elected to public office, have trouble getting consistent respect and recognition. The press makes a big splash when the "first" woman is named for this or that office, but then the women sink into anonymity and the "guys" take over the spotlight again.

#### ***Won't my company or my boss handle publicity for me?***

Rarely! If you're waiting for a boss, business colleague, client, or friend to spread the word about your talent and expertise, or the terrific community and volunteer work you do—you might as well put your head in the sand for all the visibility you're going to get!

#### ***Personal experience speaks best.***

I can tell you that in my 25 plus years in the communications industry, 13 as a senior corporate officer of a major communications company, not many folks outside of my company and my clients knew who I was and what I had accomplished, until I started handling my own public relations. And, I got results! Since starting my own company in 1994, I have had three major trade articles published, more than 25 bylined editorials published in major national and regional newspapers and magazines, and had two feature articles written about me: one in a national business magazine, and another in an international magazine. I was named to two local boards of national organizations, and one national board; I have been an invited speaker at several national and regional meetings and workshops. And I have received testimonials from local and national business leaders, including President Bill Clinton.

#### ***My boss is a woman. Doesn't that make a difference?***

Not really. While there are more women moving into the upper ranks of corporate America, not all are willing to lend a helping hand to the women still yearning for success. When she was interviewed after passing the baton to *another woman*, the chairwoman and CEO of a large advertising company said: "Her experience, performance and talent make it quite incidental she's a woman ... but its still a delight it happened like this."

Wouldn't it have been nice if she added how important it is to have mentoring programs? To create an atmosphere where diversity is valued? Instead she said: "don't hire anyone you wouldn't want to have dinner with."

Unfortunately, it is just that attitude that has kept women and minorities from getting ahead in many industries.

Here's another recent example: When Fortune magazine profiled seven outstanding women for "making it" in male-dominated companies, all save one said they didn't even think about affirmative action. Now these exceptional women worked hard, and clearly earned their positions; but the jury is still out on whether they will do their part to assure that the discriminatory hurdles they climbed will be erased.

### *Aren't you being too hard on these outstanding women?*

Being a groundbreaker and female in our society is not easy. I can tell you that it is not fun to be the butt of sexist jokes, or to be known as the company feminist. Not all of us asked for—nor want—the additional responsibility I may be thrusting upon them.

There is no doubt that these women faced opposition and discrimination, bosses who labeled them too weak, too strong, men who refused to work for them, and clients who discounted their opinions.

They had to be exceptional. They had to be especially motivated, especially smart, and have remarkably resilient personalities. We should all applaud their efforts and wish them well. But can't we also ask them to speak out on behalf of the women who are not so exceptional? Are the men who have made it in similar positions just as exceptional? I don't think so! The obstacles to success are different for men, women and minorities.

To paraphrase Bela Abzug: we will all be equal when a woman schlemiel has the same opportunities as a man schlemiel.

### *Okay. I'm convinced. So what's the first step towards taking control of my own publicity?*

The first step is accepting the premise that it's okay to publicly pat yourself on the back, as long as it's within the framework of meeting one or more needs of your target audience.

### *Won't I sound like a braggart?*

Not with careful planning. It is possible to create a public and professional image without losing credibility and self-respect. You have to think carefully about the image you want to create, explore your own comfort level with public exposure, and assess the informational needs of your audience. This is called "positioning," and I discuss it in more detail in my book, along with lots of tips on choosing a goal, identifying an audience, and reaching that audience.

### *Do I have to be a great writer?*

While I don't expect that anyone who reads this guide will become a PR maven, I do feel strongly that understanding the different facets of public relations can help most people, at all levels of their careers, recognize more opportunities to self-promote their talents and accomplishments in order to achieve.

It doesn't take an accomplished writer to send a letter to an editor, or to write a short op-ed piece about an issue that is important to you! And it doesn't take special expertise to decide which professional and community organizations to join, or where to volunteer your time most effectively.

### *Do I have to be honest, or can I exaggerate?*

The public is not stupid, and to think you can pull the wool over its eyes is a great error and can irrevocably hurt your career. Don't promise what you can't produce; and don't pretend to be someone you are not. In the world of advertising, perception may be reality, but make sure you can live up to the perception you create about yourself.

### *How do I decide what image I want to create?*

Take a hard, objective look at who you are. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What is it you want people to know about you and your talents? How does that relate to your company, your product, or your services? Try to take a critical look at any previous communications efforts you have made, and the results. Then look closely at your achievements and talents, and how they can be distinguished from other similar professionals in the marketplace. That's how to get started!

### *Does it matter what other people think about me?*

It sure does! And if you don't already know, ask them! *Just think about it.* We don't live in a vacuum. Our sense of "who we are" is strongly affected by the perceptions, beliefs, and thoughts that we hold privately in our minds, as well as how others respond to us. By understanding how others see you, as well as how you see yourself, you can begin to take control and create a more honest and satisfying professional showcase that will move your career forward.

### *Will Personal Publicity Planning work for everyone?*

**Whatever your professional goals—the corner office, sales, teaching, carpentry, secretarial, administrative, community activist, the military, self-employment, or the myriad other opportunities that lie ahead—you need to take control. Part of that control is the image you create for yourself and your Personal Publicity .**

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#### **The PERSONAL PUBLICITY PLANNER**

**Created to help YOU take control of your career by suggesting what you can do, and how to do it.  
Designed for women AT ALL STAGES OF THEIR CAREERS and for ENTREPRENEURS who want more visibility in their communities and in the professional marketplace.**

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#### *Here's a sample of what you will learn from the PERSONAL PUBLICITY PLANNER: A GUIDE TO MARKETING YOU*

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS? ♦ WHY PERSONAL PUBLICITY IS SO IMPORTANT ♦ HOW TO GET STARTED AND ESTABLISH A GOAL  
♦ DECIDING ON A MESSAGE ♦ IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCE:  
HOW TO FIND THEM AND HOW TO REACH THEM  
♦ BECOMING AN EXPERT RESOURCE ♦ YOUR PERSONAL MEDIA KIT ♦ HOW TO HANDLE AN INTERVIEW ♦ THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOLUNTEERISM AND PERSONAL PUBLICITY

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