Practical Case Studies & Know-How
MarketingSherpa

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How To #HOW22813:

Three Ways Your Intranet Can Improve Both Sales and Public Relations at the Same Time

SUMMARY: Many companies lose both sales opportunities and potential media coverage due to poor coordination between their sales and PR departments. We contacted Dave Wolkowitz, a consultant with MarketSting who specializes in helping PR pros use tech tools to make their jobs easier, to learn how you can use your intranet to improve communication between PR and sales. Wolkowitz suggests three basic intranet improvements to grow sales and media mentions:

A. Offer Easier Access to Client Data:

Without a complete picture of what their companies are doing, PR people cannot make great case study suggestions, are unaware of interesting story angles to pitch to the media, and don't know all the vertical markets their companies' service. As a result, you may have missed opportunities for coverage in everything from national business publications to niche trade publications.

Plus, when sales reps are preparing RFP responses and fielding prospects, reps are more likely to win the account when they can quickly and easily cite the accounts your company has serviced in that prospect's niche in the past.

To make both PR and sales reps' jobs easier, you should consider creating an intranet-based database to house client information including project type, client type, vertical market, and other relevant information. The database should also contain contact information and email links for client contacts – enabling PR people to quickly locate sources for reporters who want to interview a relevant client.

B. Share Marketplace Intelligence:

You can use your intranet to get your sales reps, PR department, customer service and others to share their personal marketplace intelligence on a company-wide basis. In-person meetings, and even teleconferences, are often hard to schedule. Emails get buried. In addition, the problem with memos, meetings and email is that knowledge shared is not centralized or permanently held.

On the other hand, a Web-based marketing intelligence bulletin board system (MIBBS) allows all employees to post notes, queries and responses at their convenience. For instance, PR people can post surprising objections and challenging remarks from reporters and sales reps can help them prepare for the future by posting solid responses. The MIBBS can also be a center for sharing technical information – such as comparing the technical strengths of one company's product to another's.

Develop your MIBBS for easy and speedy use. For instance, your sales and PR teams should develop several major categories of information by which queries and their responses will be classified – a software company might choose categories such as: partners, technical, implementations, research, etc. This way, users can navigate through the system to find the information they need, and can easily review all the responses posted in a certain category. The MIBBS should also offer a search tool to handle queries for specific key words. In addition, you can add useful features such as automatic notification of response posting – that way someone who posts a query would not have to continually check the MIBBS for a response.

C. Merchandise Your Media Hits:

Definitely add a comprehensive, and constantly updated, list of media mentions to your intranet for sales and PR use.

While we don't advise you to break copyright by reproducing articles written about your company without permission, you certainly can give your sales reps links to all the latest articles that they in turn should pass along to prospects. Passing along an article link is a great excuse for touching that prospect again without appearing too pushy or "salesy".

Just like prospects, journalists are also impressed when they hear you've received media attention in lots of publications. In fact they are more likely to cover you if lots of others have. So your PR department can use this ongoing collection of story links to impress the press.