

PRACTICAL

Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Inc.

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"To tweet or not to tweet?" Social Media Creating a Buzz.

You can't miss the discussions and media attention being paid these days to social media. Twitter, FaceBook, LinkedIn, MySpace and others which are collectively being hailed as the new tidal wave in communications. That has many businesses wondering how to best leverage their company in this uncharted media realm. Complicating the issue is the sheer number of social media options available and how best to determine which one is right for your company. Understanding these new tools and how to use them takes thought, research and planning, not unlike the way you conduct other aspects of your business.

Unlike many traditional marketing/communications techniques which use a "push" method to share their information to the public, social media relies on a "pull" method to attract followers. Think of it this way: In traditional media, a news release is distributed to media outlets or you send an e-newsletter to your customers. You are "pushing" the information outward. With social media, it's the opposite. You create something that others want to follow or find. For example, when you create a blog, you post information or thoughts that others may want to follow on a regular basis. You don't directly go out to them, they come to you. You are pulling them in. It also means you have to have something of value to share or others won't want to follow. So you can't just push your services or products, you have to provide value and useful information that will attract followers and generate buzz.

Once you understand how it works, you need to ask yourself: Who do we want to reach? Why do we want to reach them? What do we want to accomplish? Then investigate which social or new media tools will help you reach your goals and develop a plan. Like any other type of marketing communications effort, it takes time, a commitment and persistence to make an impact. It's another way to make sure your message is heard.

Have You Hugged a Reporter Lately?

OK, OK...we know that when a reporter calls it's probably the LAST thing you want to do, especially if they're asking tough questions. However, you'll feel a lot better about dealing with reporters if you've gone through media training.

"Media training really gets people thinking in terms of what the media wants and is looking for and then learning preparation techniques so you become comfortable dealing with the media," explains L&F's Senior Account Executive, and former news reporter, Scott Stein. "While you cannot control everything about a media interaction, you can control your reaction and your answers. That's what media training is all about."

Sometimes an organization thinks it can't afford media training, but we contend you can't afford not to offer media training to your spokespeople and others who may deal with the media. If hiring a firm isn't possible, take a look at your options. Do you have someone in-house who could put together a training program? Does your local trade association offer training? Do your PR people belong to PRSA (the PR trade association)? If so, they may be able to develop a presentation.

Preparation is really the key to successful media interactions. Clients tell us that their media interactions vastly improve after going through media training. You still may not want to hug a reporter, but you may be able to wrap up interviews with a smile on your face!

L&F Media Training

L&F offers media training ranging from half-day sessions to two day long sessions. We recently completed media training with Integrys Energy Services and Sanimax North America. Coming up later this month we'll be providing media training for the Wisconsin Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus.

Difficult Times? Why Choose PR?

When the economy is struggling, it's easy for businesses to take a wait and see approach. However, staying in the public's eye with an effective public relations plan can be beneficial for business during and after a down economy. PR reaches audiences on a different level than marketing by establishing you as an expert in your field and offering third party validation of that expertise through the media. During a down economy, consumers search for security. Maintaining a public image as an expert gives consumers a sense of reassurance and makes them feel safe when working with your business.

PR also helps keep consumers informed and aware of your business during a down economy. Reinforcing your business and brand through the media on a consistent basis helps keep your business on the top of everybody's mind. When spending begins, consumers will easily recall that you are the expert and your business is working to better serve them.

Check Out Our New Web Site!

Leonard & Finco recently revamped our company Web site: www.LFpublicrelations.com Check it out to learn more about our services, our clients, and pick up some PR advice.

Quick Quote

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

~Anne Bradstreet

NAME Dropping

Here's a sampling of what's going on with our clients:

Congratulations GRAEF! The Green Bay engineering firm received the **2009 Engineering Excellence Grand Award** for the reconstruction of the **Claude Allouez Bridge** in De Pere. The award is presented by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin (ACEC).

California Association of Business Brokers (CABB) president **Ron Hottes** was recently interviewed by Karen Klein of **Business Week**. Hottes was asked to provide advice for a small business Q & A column for the national publication called "Smart Answers." The story ran in early March.

Bison Pipeline LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of **TransCanada Corp.**, is proposing an approximately 302-mile, 30-inch interstate natural gas pipeline to carry gas from the Powder River Basin near Gillette, Wyoming to the Northern Border Pipeline system in Morton County, North Dakota. L&F is working on the Bison Project to coordinate stakeholder relations. The Project will deliver much needed natural gas to the Midwest.

Have you noticed, It's **Better By the Bay** and in the airport! Austin Straubel Airport now sports a number of Better By the Bay signs welcoming business visitors and tourists to our area. And, speaking of the Greater Green Bay branding initiative, a board of directors has been formed with **Julie Van Straten** of United Health and **Gail McNutt** of Schneider National as the new co-chairs. Check out Better By the Bay at www.betterbythebay.com

The **Green Bay Kroc Center** project has received good news on two fronts - an additional \$10 million has been allocated to the project and the program proposal for the community center has been approved. The additional funding will add \$5 million to the construction budget and \$5 million to the endowment fund for the operation of the center. The programming approval moves the project into the design phase. The Kroc Center, planned for Green Bay's eastside, will include a double gymnasium, an aquatic pool, fitness center with running track, chapel/auditorium, music room, youth game room/party rooms, art room, a computer room and more.

The **Fox River Cleanup Project** is on target for the start of dredging by May 1st. The nine-year effort involves dredging and capping along a 13-mile stretch of the lower Fox River from Little Rapids to the bay. The Fox River Cleanup Group - **Appleton Papers Inc.**, **Georgia-Pacific** and **NCR Corporation** - is providing the leadership and funding to move the project forward toward its design goals and milestones.

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