



Get Noticed June 16th 2008 The www.doyourownpr.com newsletter

Hello there, and once again we're going to be looking at someone who has done their own PR and done so successfully. Today's star is Robyn West of www.pogopack.co.uk. I've probably known Robyn for three to four years now. She's reluctant PR-er, but I have watched her get to grips with it and flourish.

Robyn, I know this is still quite early in your business but you are already starting to attract attention. Tell us about The PoGo Pack and the PR that you've had.

PoGo supports girls in the early stages of puberty with the PoGo Pack, a period starter kit for girls aged 8-14, together with information and resources on our website. The pack contains everything a girls needs to manage her periods: a selection of pads specifically for young girls, simple information, a period planner for tracking bleeding, a pull-out purse for daily use and ancillary products. The idea came about when my daughter was going on holiday. When I discovered that there wasn't an all-in-one kit available in the shops, I set about creating my own. It's a great time-saver for parents too. I know many mums will throw their hands up in horror at the idea of girls starting their periods as young as eight, but it's an increasing trend. I want to encourage parents to ensure their daughters are prepared for the unexpected. PoGo had a fantastic double-page feature in the local paper that resulted in lots of orders. I'm also pleased to have the full support of the School & Public Health Nurses Association (SAPHNA) which has been brilliant at spreading the word because they love what the PoGo Pack achieves.

How much time do you spend on PR?

Not nearly enough, but I've now blocked out one day a week to dedicate to PR activities because I know that it's the consistency that pays dividends. I've built up an extensive list of media that I want to target, and different industries and ideas to try.

What PR activities have you found that are starting to work for you?

Getting publicity in the paper generated a lot of interest. A local pharmacy ordered PoGo Packs for their four branches because their customers kept asking if they stocked them! I do lots of presentations to parents & girls at local schools, and that's great for creating awareness and getting sales. I offered the Girl Guides some PoGo Packs as prizes and that was a really worthwhile exercise, so plan to repeat this with other publications.

I'm lucky that people understand the benefits of my product immediately, so it's easy to talk about it, hence networking really works for me. This has resulted in Business Link wanting to use me/PoGo as a case study. I'm now making networking a regular part of my monthly calendar.

I know that you've been working with a big department store, how did you find working with their PR department?

Not terribly successful, to be honest. The promised national PR campaign to launch the PoGo Pack was backed up with insufficient action, which resulted in zero publicity. The PR department has lots of brands to promote, most of which are far bigger and more exciting than mine. Getting hold of people when they have celebrity launches to organise is a challenge! Also, the in-store promotion I was involved with was a valuable learning experience, particularly when one store lost the stock. However, I managed to turn it to my advantage by thinking creatively.

What do you enjoy least about PR?

Calling journalists on the big national publications, who are sometimes too busy. I feel like I'm being a nuisance, but try to keep reminding myself that it's not personal and to think about how I can help them.

What's been your highest point so far PR-wise?

Definitely the newspaper feature, which continues to generate orders months after the event because people have held onto it. Due to that feature, I was approached to enter the Ask About Medicines awards, which acknowledge excellence in communications with the public on health matters. The awards will be announced soon so it would be rather exciting to be shortlisted.

And your lowest?

Unrealistic expectations of the department store - thinking they'd put PoGo on the map. Another dreadful moment was a networking event I went to that was heavily attended by men. Having them freeze in horror when I gave them the most sensitive elevator pitch I could think of was not something I wanted to repeat. I decided women's networking groups were the only route for me.

What have you learnt about PR so far?

That the best person to get out there and shout about my product is me and that any publicity is going to be down to my efforts alone. I've also seen the benefits of making that effort, and it's incredibly motivating, but the benefits are short-lived and it's making a constant effort that makes the difference.

Can you link a rise in turn over with PR?

Definitely. Every activity I've done so far has resulted in something positive, whether it's sales or invitations to participate in something else which is equally beneficial to the business. I find word of mouth has been a very powerful tool for PoGo and I'm astonished where some enquiries come from.

What advice do you have to give?

- (1) High quality images are crucial for product-based businesses.
- (2) Start building a list of media to target, and capture all ideas in one place, so that when you do set aside time for PR, you immediately have something to work on.
- (3) Make the most of opportunities when they arise. I subscribe to a few newsletters and have just sent off a pitch for a media call. Even if it doesn't amount to anything, it's one more person who knows about the PoGo Pack - who might tell someone else.

What did you specifically get out of working with Do Your Own PR?

I ran another business a few years back, and it was thanks to what I'd learnt on Paula's courses that I got publicity in national magazines. I've now been able to utilise that knowledge with PoGo. My one-to-one sessions with Paula were also fantastic because the ideas and advice were specific to my business. I enjoy Get Noticed too because it reinforces the message of sticking with PR, generates ideas, and provides some useful resources.

Robyn also wrote to me last week with a little update:

"Just thought you'd be interested to know I was contacted today by a television production company for Channel 4. The local paper that did the feature recommended me. Sadly I didn't feel able to be one of the Secret Millionaires for their next series (I told them to give me 5 years!) but they may contact me again in the future and they thought my story was great."

This is a perfect illustration of what Robyn has mentioned in her interview - that even though someone might not use your story, it's one more person that knows about you and can spread the word.

Robyn has always impressed me with her energy and commitment, especially as I know that she's gone through some difficult times, and it is fantastic to see it all coming together for her. I think her product is very clever and I look forward to seeing it in more places. Her website, once again, is www.pogopack.co.uk

Until next time,

Paula Gardner

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