

**CONTROL**

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

Tips and Strategies for Creating a Working PR  
Program for *Your* Company




Walt Boyes  
Editor in Chief

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## Introduction

We're talking about Public Relations...something many automation companies don't do. Why not? What good is it? Isn't PR just for really big companies or politicians? I make stuff, I don't need a "spin doctor!"



Did you ever ask yourself why automation companies, integrators and manufacturers alike, don't do PR? Is the answer simply that the management staff doesn't understand what it is, what it is for? Do you understand what Public Relations is? Do you understand what it is for? Public Relations,

PR, is a fundamental part of any integrated marketing program...any integrated marketing communications program...any branding program. PR is about communication and communicating. We'll talk about the ways PR is useful in the automation market.


Public Relations is the art and practice of communication in a structured way. The purpose of public relations is to create the desired effect in the minds of the recipients. So what does this really mean? PR practitioners typically are attempting to present a concept, an idea, or a series of ideas, like the values a

corporation represents...in a way that is structured to:

- Cause belief
- Stimulate action
- Add value

**CONTROL**

## What is PR?



Public Relations is the art and practice of communicating ideas.

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## The difference between PR and advertising

Advertising is about products, services or brand image, PR is about ideas...



Display advertising is designed to cause an action: sending in a bingo card, calling an 800-number, requesting information from a website, calling a salesperson. Public relations is a bit more general than that. Public relations is simply about creating “buzz” in a structured way, around an idea. In

essence, a public relations campaign is aimed at all of the stakeholders of an enterprise, while advertising is aimed directly at customers. PR serves analysts, customers, shareholders, media, and all of the other entities with an interest in the enterprise as a whole.

There is a concept known as the “marketing mix.” It is all of the tools and strategies an enterprise uses to communicate its values, its products, its services to the public and to customers. The marketing mix includes display advertising, tradeshow participation, direct marketing, field sales, online marketing, and public relations. Public relations is an integral part of the marketing mix. Most enterprises do public relations, they just do it unconsciously, and therefore they do it poorly. The topics we’ll cover in this seminar are designed to show you how to do it well.

**CONTROL**

## PR’s place in the marketing mix

PR is NOT a cheap replacement for display advertising!



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

## CONTROL

### The basics of PR for Automation Companies

1. Media communications
2. Product marketing
3. Tradeshow participation
4. Editorial coverage
5. Stakeholder communications
6. Crisis management



The six basic functions of PR in the industrial enterprise are talking to the media, product marketing issues like new product introductions and new product releases, participation in tradeshows, symposia and forums, gaining editorial coverage, communicating with all of the stakeholders of

the enterprise, and crisis management. There is a seventh function, sort of a metafunction, that is composed of all six, plus some extra...and that function is management and conservation of the enterprise brand.

Public relations is not sales. Public relations is not advertising. Public relations is that part of marketing that is the glue that holds an integrated marketing communications plan together. PR communicates *the plan itself*. It is important to see how this works. PR communicates any and all of the ideas,

concepts and values of the enterprise to all of the stakeholders of the enterprise...and is designed to attain a stated result. Sometimes that result is more "buzz" at a trade show. Sometimes that result is a higher stock price. Sometimes that result is crisis management.

## CONTROL

### What Public Relations is

- Public Relations is the practice of selecting the correct facts and concepts about an enterprise and its actions and presenting them in the most positive light...



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

One of the biggest fallacies people fall into when they think of PR is that they think a PR person can communicate anything they have to, true or not, and get coverage and belief. You have only to look to the realm of politics and consumer business to see that that is far from true. PR can

communicate facts, and truth. Yes, the facts are selected to produce the correct desired response, but they have to be true, and they have to be mostly "the whole story" *and* they have to be interesting and worthy of being listened to. One of the most common mistakes industrial enterprises make is sending out the same tired new product releases several times a year. It just isn't "news."

## CONTROL

### What PR can and cannot do for your company



PR cannot make a "silk purse" out of a "sow's ear." You have to have something legitimate to say, or nobody will listen.

## CONTROL

### How to construct a PR campaign

- First, decide what the purpose of the campaign is. What result do you want to achieve?



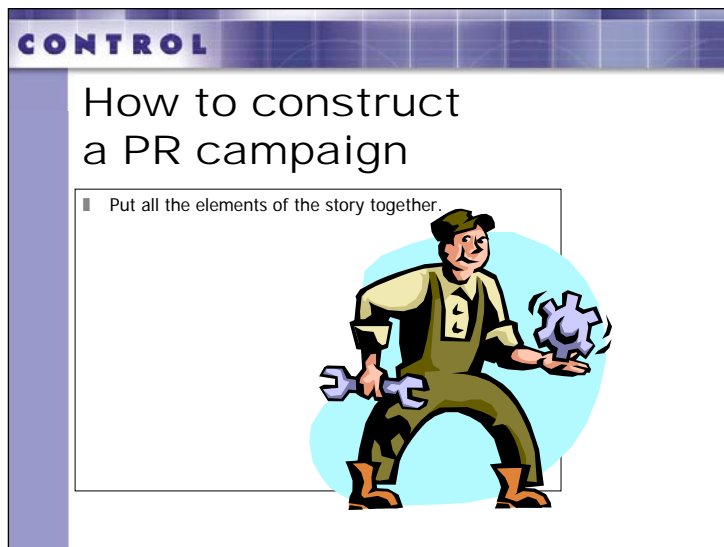
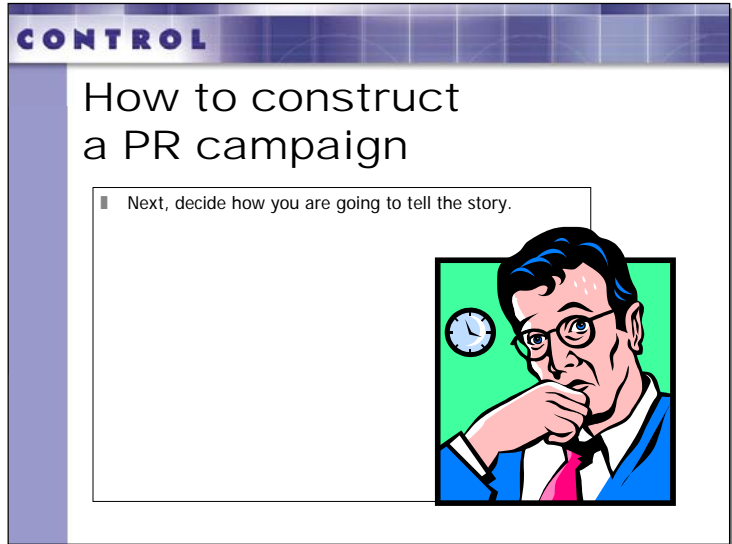
A campaign has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A campaign is like a story, and if you think about planning a PR campaign as if you were telling a story, it is not only a good analogy, it also works very well in practice. First, you have to decide what the purpose of the campaign is. What is the desired result? Do you want to drive customers, editors

and analysts to your website? Do you want to announce a new product? A new service? Do you want to trumpet the news of a big order or a new contract, or a major strategic partnership or alliance?

## Public Relations for the Automation Industry

Remember that the goal of a PR campaign should be measurable. It is useful to use the same tools we all remember from strategic planning: S.M.A.R.T. Your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Trackable.

Next you need to decide how you are going to tell the story. Will you use press releases? Will you call editors and analysts? Will you release a video or multimedia CD? Will you put the story on your website? If you are doing a campaign for your internal stakeholders, your employees, will you put the story in their pay envelopes, or on the bulletin boards? If you are talking to shareholders, how best will you let them know the story? You need to decide, based on your S.M.A.R.T. goals, how you intend to communicate the story.



Then you have to write the story, just like writing a novel or a screenplay. You have to arrange the facts in the way you want them communicated, make sure that you have not left anything out, and that nothing you *don't* want to say has been put in. It can be as simple as writing a new product release. It can be as complicated as a

major campaign to change the name of the company. It doesn't matter what the story is, or how long and complicated it is. You have to have a complete story, a complete plot plan, well before you launch the campaign.

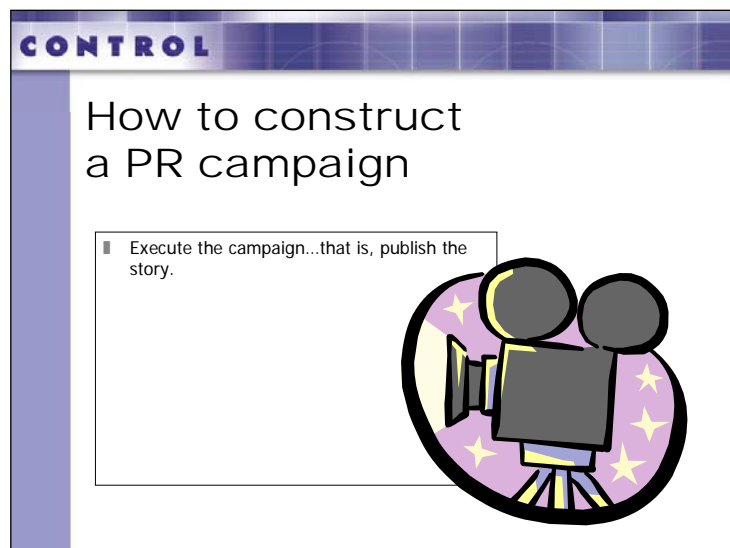
# Public Relations for the Automation Industry



You may even need to use focus groups or surveys to help you get your story to its utmost clarity. You may need to test it to see how well it “plays in Peoria.” You have to have all your ducks in a row well before you launch. You need to know how everything fits together, because once you launch a PR campaign,

it is very hard to stop it without embarrassment and damage. New technologies have made web-based surveys like SurveyMonkey or Zoomerang, and web-based focus groups affordable to any size company, so there are no longer any excuses for not doing your homework.

Finally, you are ready to launch the campaign. You have the story, you have the materials to present it, and you can release it. You may call a press conference at a trade show. You may simply mail a round of releases to the media. You may launch it by a combination of several vehicles. But any good PR campaign has a launch date. Any good PR campaign has an end date, too.





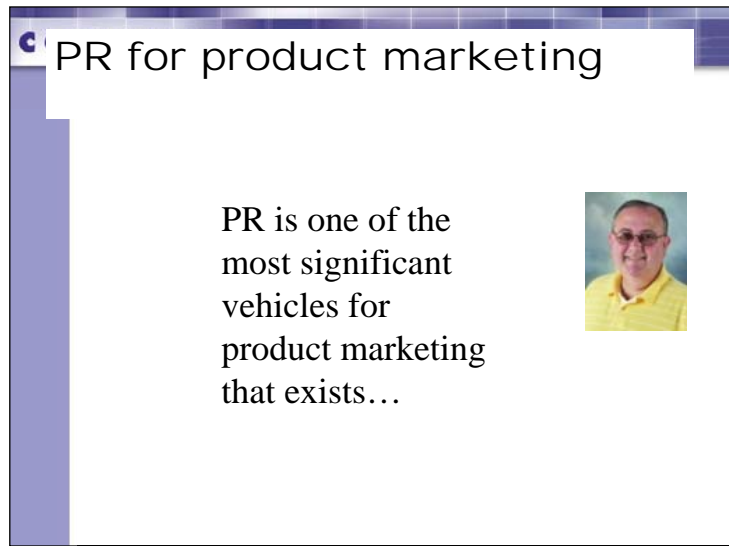
# Public Relations for the Automation Industry



You end the campaign, and then you analyze the results. Did you achieve the stated goal of the campaign in a measurable and trackable way? If you did, what were the results, and could they have been better? If you didn't achieve the goal, you should plan a post-mortem analysis to find out why. That's

why a good campaign has an end. So you can figure out what you did, and whether you can do better.

Think about your product marketing efforts. In the typical industrial enterprise, we do PR all the time for product marketing, often without realizing that we're doing it. We send out new product releases. We announce new products at trade shows. We write articles about how our new products have saved XYZ company millions. We put together new product introduction packages for our sales forces. All of these things are PR. You do PR without thinking of it as Public Relations. Let's talk about some of these functions in greater detail.





# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

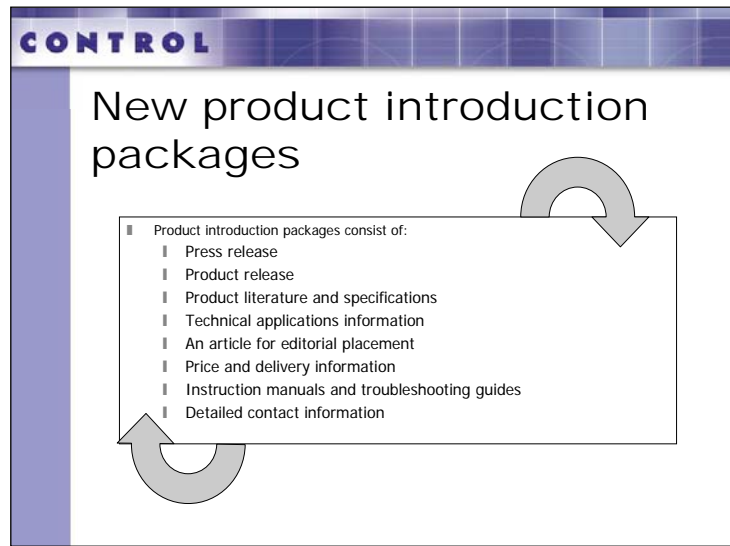


Product introduction packages are a joint effort of the marketing department's product marketing and public relations functions. When they are done well, they serve equally well for both the inward and outward public relations activities necessary to properly introduce and generate momentum in the

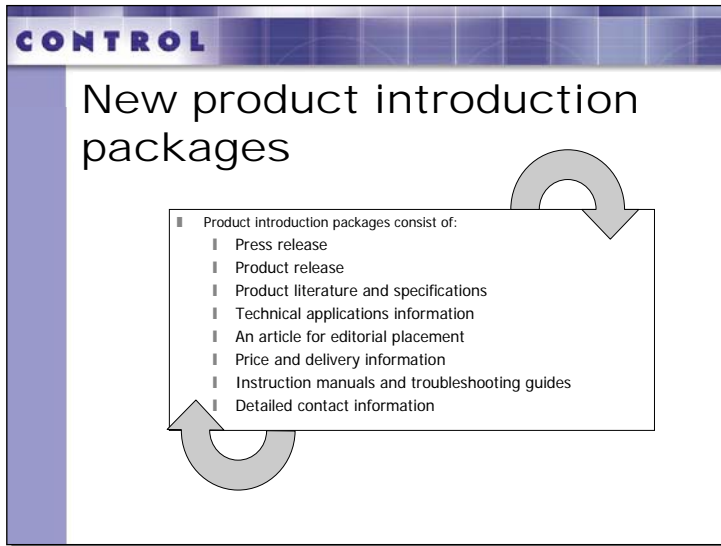
market for a new product. Let's look at how this is done.

Product introduction packages are generally done rather slapdash and often are incomplete. It is better to delay the official launch of a product until the campaign has been planned and the materials are all written and compiled.

Obviously, depending on who the package is being sent to, you will leave out one or more of the items on this list. But you need all of the things on that list to be able to present your new product to the market with no slips and no pratfalls.



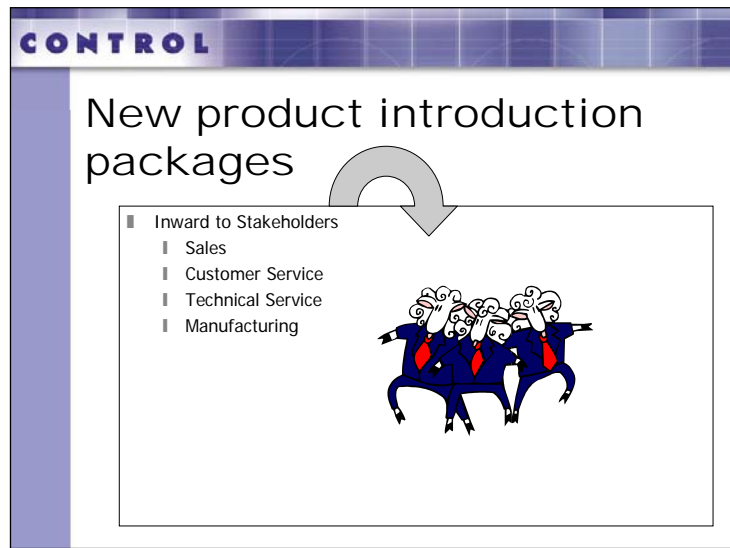
# Public Relations for the Automation Industry



Notice that there is a difference between a press release and a product release. We'll talk more about that later. All the product literature and specifications must be done, and back from the printer before you launch. Applications information must be available, to tech and customer service, to field sales, and to the

customers. Instruction manuals and troubleshooting guides need to be finished. Price and contact information must be agreed and printed up, and the product must be in production. There is nothing more embarrassing to a company than to announce a product and not be able to ship either literature or product or both. While this (sometimes called "vaporware") can be done on purpose to create FUD ( Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) in the competition and customer base, when it is not done on purpose, it shows, and it looks ugly. In fact, there is a wonderful case study, Osborne Computer Corporation, where a leading edge manufacturer of portable pc's went bankrupt because they did a new product introduction and couldn't ship the new product.

It is truly awkward for a customer or a field sales person to call shortly after a new product announcement, and be told that there is no information available yet. Several days in advance of the big release, an in-house release should be done, to manufacturing (simple, press and product releases, in interoffice mail, and on bulletin boards, and via email and the intracompany website), to sales (allowing enough time for outside sales to receive it), and customer



## Public Relations for the Automation Industry

service and technical support. That way, everybody knows what is going on, and nobody is embarrassed by being in the dark.



Now, finally, you are ready for the outward release. You send the press release, followed several days later by the product release (with photograph) and you send the technical editors the entire product release package, less price and instruction manuals. Then you follow up with an article insertion pitch to the editors of the

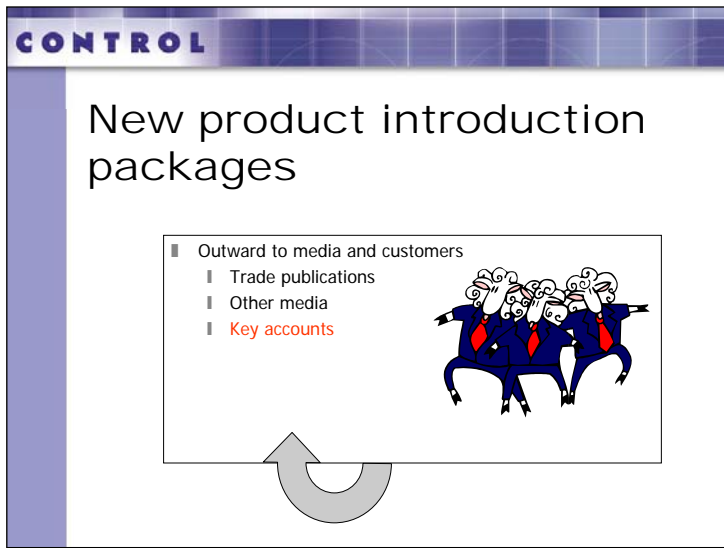
targeted trade magazines. You want to place the article in as many places as you can, while preserving the "uniqueness" of each article in each market niche. So, you would not try to place the same article in *Control* and *Control Engineering* for example.

It doesn't hurt to send your press releases to media other than the trade journals that cover your market space. Other people you might want to consider are analysts, such as Gartner, ARC, Hambrecht & Quist, and others. In addition, it doesn't hurt to send your press releases to the Wall Street Journal, other financial news

outlets, and to the Commerce Department. They can sometimes help you place your release outside the US. Which leads me to the final point about media: don't forget that there are media outside the US and Canada. Make sure you get global coverage.



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

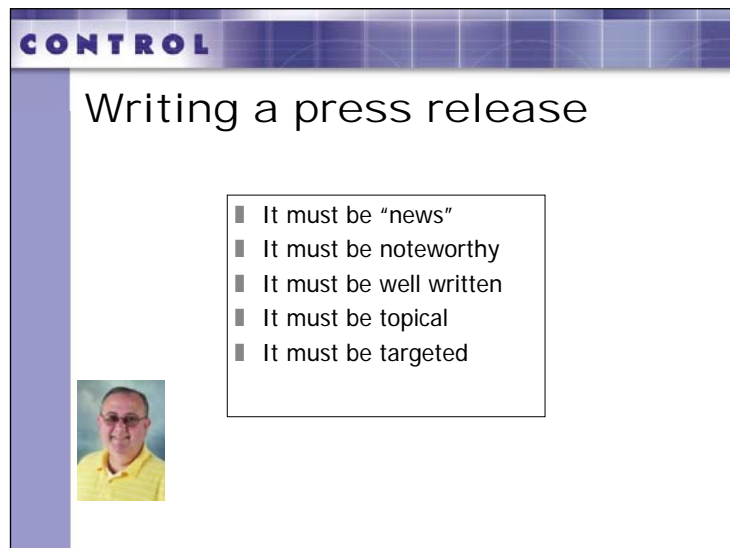


Many companies forget to send product release packages suitably customized, to their largest customers and other key accounts. Companies who do lots of work with OEMs and VARs can get considerable mileage and goodwill by making sure that their OEMs and VARs understand that they are the first customers to see this

new thing. This may actually help prime the pump for sales in the short term, and give you a ready source of references and potential articles in the long term.

A typical editor of a typical industrial trade journal or website gets between 1000 and 1500 press and product releases every month. If this doesn't give you pause, think about how long it takes to read each one...just to read them. Most editorial departments do triage. They sort them into two piles: frequent advertisers and not.

They go through both piles. If in the first two seconds, something about the release jumps out at them, they save it. Otherwise, it gets "round filed." In self defense, about two years ago, I stopped looking at printed releases, and only consider email releases now. How do you beat those odds? The same way a journalist gets his byline in the newspaper. You have to have something to say. You have to have something newsworthy. It must be on topic for the trade journal you sent it to, and it should be sent to the correct editor. Most magazines don't even open releases sent to an editor who has departed or taken

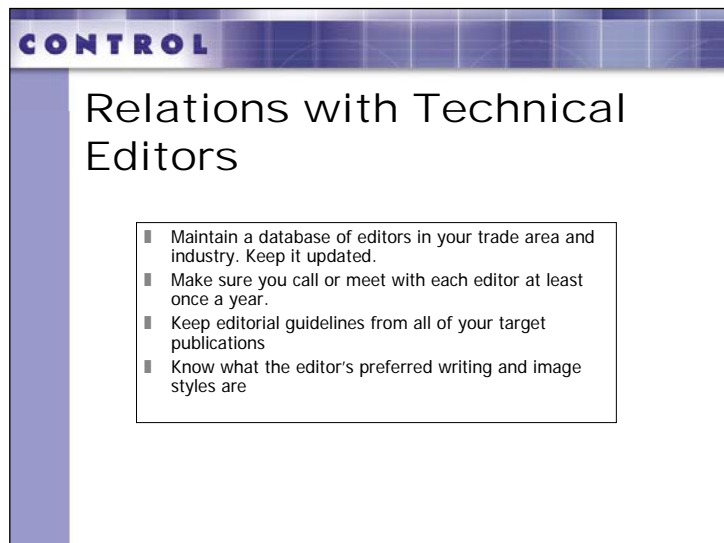


## Public Relations for the Automation Industry

on other responsibilities. We'll talk more about the importance of media relations later. Above all, the release must be well written. I wrote an article a while back, when I was doing PR, in which I explained why I had press releases and product releases written by a professional release writer. I still recommend it.

**T**oo many industrial enterprises make the same mistakes: their releases are poorly written, they are about the same products they wrote releases about last year, they don't discuss features and benefits that matter to the user, they aren't topical to the magazine, or they are sent to the wrong person. But by far the worst mistake is

not sending a publishable photo or image. Your product release is much more likely to make the cut and be published if the image you send along with it isn't amateurish, or isn't visually uninteresting. Editors like pictures of products in use, rather than fancy shots of products on special foregrounds, with patterned backgrounds in the background. These are difficult to get, for a new product. They love pictures that are interesting, and different from the run of the mill stock publicity stills they always get.



**H**ere is the real trick! The more you know the editors in your market, and the more they know you, the easier it is to get your well-written, topical, targeted press or product release run. It is *not* about "who you know" as much as it is about "do it right, and be known to them." Editors can do many things for you. You can

## Public Relations for the Automation Industry

get interesting tidbits of competitive intelligence by trading information for information. You can get that much-sought-after commodity, free publicity. You can get article placements, if the editor knows you, and knows that you can deliver on time when you say you will. And if you know the editor, you will know what style of writing, and what style of image, are most likely to get you the press coverage you are looking for.

Once you have achieved a relationship of mutual respect and trust with the editorial staffs of your targeted publications, you can begin to pitch them articles for editorial space. These are priceless in the way they can affect the market for a product. One of the greatest sins in industrial PR is submitting a “puff

piece” for editorial coverage when you’ve agreed to submit a 1500 word article. The editor has saved space for you, and now he has to find something else to fit in those four pages. He may never accept another article from you. This is one of the reasons that at *Control* we do not accept articles written by suppliers or their PR firms. We DO solicit white papers for [www.controlglobal.com](http://www.controlglobal.com), and one of the trickiest things I have to do as editor is to call the people who sent me a longform product brochure cleverly disguised as a white paper and tell them that I won’t post it without major editing. Make sure the article, or case study, is well written and accompanied by good visuals. If possible, pick photographs of products in the field, or your staff working, or something other than a studio shot of a product. Charts and powerpoint slides also work very well as visuals. Above all, get the article done when you said you would. Be early if you can.

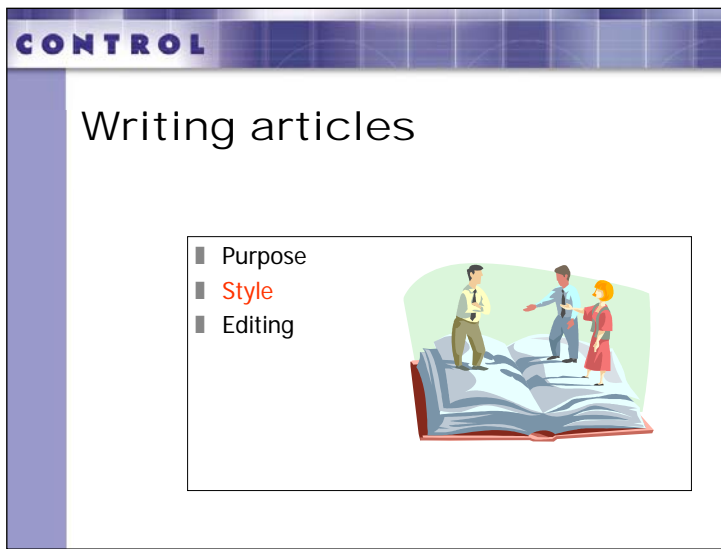
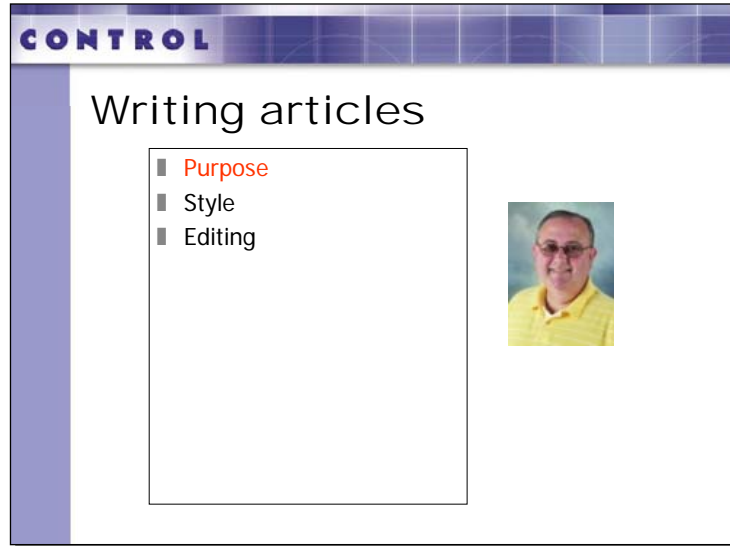




# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

Giving a tutorial on how to write an article is a little beyond the scope of this webseminar, but we can talk a little about the three most important things to think about when writing one. Although I personally write my own articles, I recommend that you use a professional to write your articles.

Even here, however, you need to be aware of the purpose of the article, so you can communicate to your writer what you want the article to do. A typical article for a trade publication is between 800 and 1500 words, that is, between 1 and 4 pages, depending on the number of illustrations and advertisements. You need to be very clear on what the purpose of the article is. What is the *one thing* you want to get across?



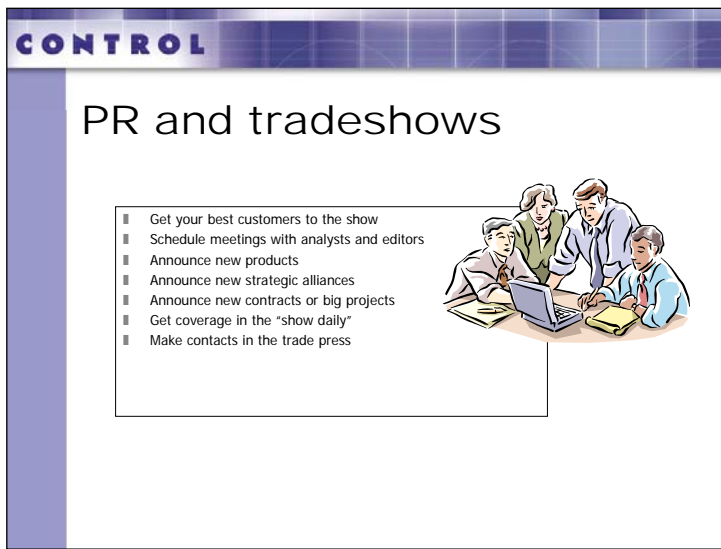
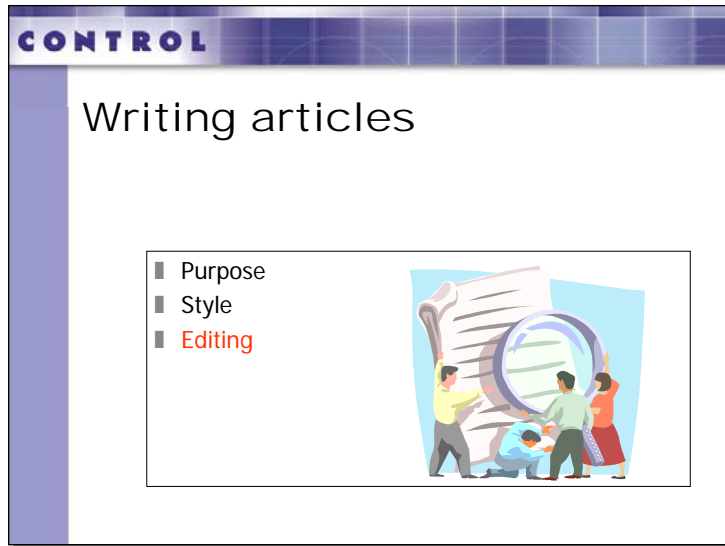
If the magazine or journal has a style guide, get it. Study it. If it doesn't, get several issues and read all of the articles. Look for style issues. How long are the paragraphs? What kind of phrasing is typical? Are the sentences short and declarative? Is there lots of jargon, or are the stories simple and clearly written? Try to

make your article as much like the ones you have read in that magazine as possible. The closer you get to the editor's preferred style, the higher the likelihood of getting the article published. Some magazines, like CONTROL, do not accept editorial written by vendors or their public relations firms. In that case, you need to find an end-user, system integrator, or consulting engineer who will be willing to either write or have his byline on the article.



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

Even though editors are supposedly famous for wanting something bad to cut out, the more editing you can do for the editor, the better. When I edit for publication, I am enraged by poor spelling, punctuation errors and grammatical mistakes. Editors generally will not publish articles with those errors, and it looks bad for you if you submit one. Fix the obvious problems first, before you submit the article. If you give the editor a tight, topical, well-written article, you have an excellent chance of it being picked up for publication.



It is a fundamental axiom that if you are going to participate in a tradeshow, you must attend with a plan. Much of that plan is PR. If you are making a new product announcement, you need a PR plan. If you are making some strategic alliance announcements, you need a PR plan. If you are meeting with analysts and editors, you need a PR plan. If you want to get your most significant users to attend and visit your stand, you need a PR plan. A clear and S.M.A.R.T. PR plan for a tradeshow can make the difference between a lackluster and expensive experience and a vibrant and useful venture.

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**M**ake a plan for announcing your presence at the show. Make sure that your best customers get a copy of the press release, along with a personal invitation to stop by the stand.

Make sure to put together a special function (a meet-n-greet, a hospitality suite, or similar) to invite them to as a token of your esteem. Make a release about the special function. Have the function early in the show, so you can make another release about the function, and who attended, and if anything important was discussed. This can get you coverage in the "show daily" as well as solidify your relationships with your best customers.



**W**ell in advance of the show, schedule private meetings with industry analysts and editors of the major trade journals. Keep the meetings brief, one-on-one, give them some detailed information on your company, serious stuff, not fluff, and give them a nice giveaway, like a Lands' End briefcase with the company logo on it, to hold the

material you gave them. One of the things you want to get from the analysts is what their opinion of your company is, and what they see as your place in the market. What you want from the editors is good will, and maybe a commitment to run an article you will provide.

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## PR and tradeshows

- Get your best customers to the show
- Schedule meetings with analysts and editors
- **Announce new products**
- Announce new strategic alliances
- Announce new contracts or big projects
- Get coverage in the "show daily"
- Make contacts in the trade press



Tradeshows are wonderful places to announce new products, especially if they are innovative and unexpected by the competition. But do it properly. Hold a press conference, and invite the media early enough so that they will be there. Have plenty of product information available, both in paper and digitally. Many

editors and reporters would love to take home a CD instead of 8 pounds of paper.


If it is at all possible to announce a new strategic alliance at a trade show, do it. Even if it is not much of an alliance, you and your new ally can both gain exposure and publicity from holding a press conference to announce that you have agreed to joint marketing of watermelon-colored juju beans, or whatever.

You have, at a tradeshow, the entire trade press captive, with no place else to go, and you can, by making announcement after announcement, reserving the bigger ones for later, build the "buzz" you are creating to a frenzy.

**CONTROL**

## PR and tradeshows

- Get your best customers to the show
- Schedule meetings with analysts and editors
- Announce new products
- **Announce new strategic alliances**
- Announce new contracts or big projects
- Get coverage in the "show daily"
- Make contacts in the trade press



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## PR and tradeshows

**New!!!!**

- Get your best customers to the show
- Schedule meetings with analysts and editors
- Announce new products
- Announce new strategic alliances
- **Announce new contracts or big projects**
- Get coverage in the "show daily"
- Make contacts in the trade press

**ON THE SHOW FLOOR: ISA EXPO 2005**



Michael Kessler, Pepperl+Fuchs' components and technology director (right), demonstrates P+F's upcoming advanced diagnostics devices to Ship Kase, Redbus networks consultant for Yokogawa Corp. of America, on the show floor Oct. 26 at ISA Expo 2005 at McCormick Place in Chicago.

[www.controlglobal.com](http://www.controlglobal.com)

Same thing with new contracts or big projects. A tradeshow is the best place to announce them, if they aren't too old, because all of the press is there, and you can make sure they all heard what you have to say. You are much more likely to get coverage if you hand a reporter or editor a press release and talk to him or her about it,


than if you mail it in.

One of the most important things PR can do for you at a tradeshow is to get coverage in the "show daily." That's the newspaper that is published every day of the show, and shoved under your bedroom door at night, or the email newsletter you get each evening, or the blogs of chief editors like me. Coverage of your stand and your company every day will drive traffic to your stand faster than any other way to do it.

**CONTROL**

## PR and tradeshows

- Get your best customers to the show
- Schedule meetings with analysts and editors
- Announce new products
- Announce new strategic alliances
- Announce new contracts or big projects
- **Get coverage in the "show daily"**
- Make contacts in the trade press



**SOUND OF IT!**

- recent articles
- calendar
- handy
- Control Magazine's Global Resource
- profiles
- previous 20 articles
- next 20 articles

**Big news - Chem Show Much Better Than Anticipated**

The East Chemical Processing Industry Exposition, better known to all and sundry for the past 60 years as the Chem Show, is on at the Jacobs Center in lower Manhattan. I first started attending the Chem Show at least 20 years ago, when it was still in the gone-but-not-forgotten New York Coliseum on Columbus Circle. The only reason I miss the old place is that hotels were easier to get within-walking distance.

The show, after two disappointing years of increasingly last shows (one which took place a month after 9/11, shows cancellation and no-goals), there are some very interesting things going on here. There is a huge automation pavilion, interesting in itself, and the most interesting thing of all is that the 15,000+ people in attendance (that would be thousands, for anyone who's been along for the last generation) is not in the pavilion. Oh, they're here, okay, but they are all by themselves surrounded by equipment manufacturers. They aren't taking themselves as an automation company, either. They are taking themselves as a productivity company. Consider it solved!

P&ID and H&ES are very much in evidence, as are hordes of online analytics systems. These will become extremely important to the average process automation professional as the first decade of the 21st century draws on.

I spent yesterday talking to most of the usual suspects, and now I'm going to visit the interesting people I haven't seen before.

There are also some fantastic paper sessions at the conference, most of which are automation or instrumentation centered. Much difference between this conference and the last one. I hope to get to some of those sessions this afternoon.

Wait


Wednesday, November 2nd, 2005

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## PR and tradeshows

- Get your best customers to the show
- Schedule meetings with analysts and editors
- Announce new products
- Announce new strategic alliances
- Announce new contracts or big projects
- Get coverage in the "show daily"
- **Make contacts in the trade press**



A tradeshow is also the best way to make \_new\_ contacts in the trade press. Find out who is a new-hire editor, or technical editor, or who has been given the job of triaging press and product releases. This is the easiest way to keep your media list current, because most of the media in your market will be attending and

many will also be exhibiting. If you make sure to do all of these things the next time you attend a tradeshow, you will be amazed at how much more valuable it will be to your company to have been there.

**CONTROL**

## How to use PR to increase interest in the enterprise

- Communicating the company brand
- Internal Communications
- Communicating with shareholders
- Communications with the media

**PR** is the vehicle of choice to communicate the company brand. Together with advertising, it is the way the company speaks to its customer base and its competitors and the media and analysts who moderate the marketplace the company lives in. The company brand must be communicated in a coherent and totally consistent way to the internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and stockholders of the company.

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## What is branding?

- **Branding** is the maintenance and furtherance of the company brand.
- A brand is the cognitive “gestalt” made up of all of the knowledge, emotions, thoughts and feelings about a company and its products by employees, suppliers, customers, competitors, shareholders and the media.

That’s a big fancy definition. Basically, your brand is everything you stand for. It is the image you have created, and that you live up to every day in the marketplace. Anything you do to reinforce the positives in your brand image can only help, but anything you do that contributes a negative to your brand image hurts. And by

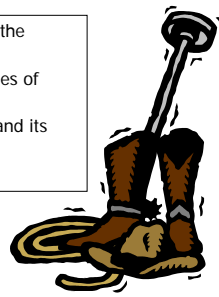
the “law of 10,000 Attaboys” a negative contribution to brand hurts more than a positive contribution to brand image helps.

While marketing is designed to promote the company’s products and services, and advertising is designed to generate sales, PR is designed to communicate the values on which the company stands. These values are what stand behind the company’s brand. These values are the company bedrock. As long as the company acts in congruence with these values, PR can further the image of the company, and thus the company brand. When the company acts incongruously, PR can ameliorate the damage, but cannot entirely reduce it.

**CONTROL**

## PR for branding the industrial enterprise

- PR communicates the brand values of the company
- PR projects the image the company sees of itself
- PR promotes the company, its values and its actions






# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## Cognitive dissonance and PR

- Cognitive dissonance is produced when a company acts in a way that is contrary to its projected image and brand.
- Cognitive dissonance is a powerful phenomenon that leads directly to lost business.



United Airlines has stopped using the tagline, "The friendly skies." Why? Simply put, United has a reputation for bad service, surly employees, and general unfriendliness. Their tagline was causing cognitive dissonance and was clearly losing them more friends than gaining them.

Southwest Airlines is a no-frills airline. They promise cheap fares, and nothing else. And for over 25 years, Southwest has been the most successful airline. Why? Because everything they do is congruent with their message. And they do it with verve and élan. They are entirely "on brand." There is no cognitive dissonance with Southwest. You get what you expect, and more. While with United, you expect some service, some amenities, some civility, and what you get is a lousy airline. Too many automation companies act the same way. Even the best PR practitioner cannot ameliorate a strong cognitive dissonance.


Just as PR is a channel for external communications, so it can be for internal communications. It is every bit as important for employees, suppliers and other internal stakeholders to be informed on the company's goals, objectives, and values as it is for analysts and editors in the media, and for stockholders to be informed.

Communicating the company's brand values and vision internally and continually reinforces them in the minds of employees and reduces the potential for cognitive dissonance when a customer runs across a problem employee.

**CONTROL**

## PR for internal communications

- Communicate the company's strategic goals and objectives
- Communicate the company vision
- Communicate the company's brand values
- Communicate news
- Manage morale
- Provide a channel for stakeholder communications






# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## Communicating with shareholders

- PR is used to share company financial news with shareholders
- PR is used to share new programs, options, and shareholder specific information
- PR is used to communicate with analysts and Wall Street experts.



Typically, the only way PR is knowingly used in most automation companies is for shareholder communications. Shareholders need the same communications that the internal stakeholders do, and companies who are forthright and forthcoming with their stockholders and stakeholders do better

at maintaining their stock prices even in the wake of unfavorable news than companies who ignore their stockholders except for the annual report, and ignore their stakeholders entirely.

The lessons learned from the downsizings of the 1980's are clear. If you want a workforce that is on-board with the goals and objectives, vision and brand of the company, you have to be completely honest and open with them, especially about bad news. Hiding the fact that layoffs are coming produces good old cognitive dissonance, which leads immediately to a loss of trust in management. Employees (as do customers) have extremely well-tuned super heterodyne bullshit detectors, and it is stupid to even try to fool them, or to think that they don't know what is going on, just because you haven't announced it yet.

**CONTROL**

## Communicating with employees

- Honesty is the best policy
- Open communications is best
- Clear and direct works
- Waffling and ducking is counterproductive

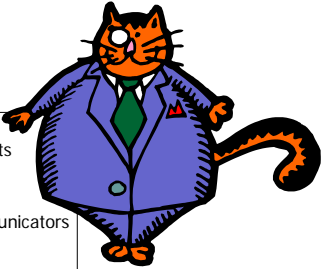


# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## Effective tips for using upper management

- MBWA
- Upper management meet-n-greets
- Open door policies
- Upper management as mentors
- Upper management as PR communicators



David Packard and Bill Hewlett coined the term MBWA, "Management by Walking Around" to refer to an extremely PR friendly practice of having the upper managers walk around the plant, informally talking to employees and getting a personal look at what is going on. This practice can be supplemented by an organized program of

meet-n-greets. "Meet the CEO" is an extremely effective way to reward good employee service, and also give the CEO an unvarnished look at what his employees think. Even better is a publicized "open door policy" by upper management, and the use of upper management as employee mentors is effective as well. These practices confirm and prepare upper managers to fulfill their important function as PR communicators for the company.

Every industrial enterprise dreads the crisis. The call comes in the middle of the night. Your tanker is aground. Your mine has collapsed. Somebody's plant has exploded, and your product was at fault. There is a leak into the groundwater. Whatever it is, you need to have planned for how to handle a crisis, have a team in place to manage it, take responsibility and corrective action swiftly, and provide easy access to information as honestly and openly as possible.

**CONTROL**

## Crisis Management

- Plan ahead for a crisis
- Have a crisis management team
- BE HONEST and OPEN
- Take responsibility
- Take corrective action swiftly
- Provide information access

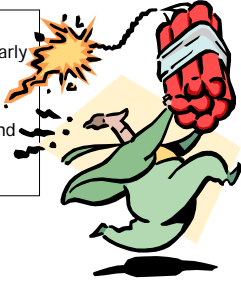


# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## PR and crisis management planning

- PR's role: crisis manager
- Have and update your crisis plans regularly
- Have access to CEO level decisions
- Act as team leader for the crisis team
- Make sure media updates are regular and complete



The best way to handle a crisis is to be prepared to handle one. From the CEO on down, everyone involved in crisis management needs to be familiar with his or her responsibilities in a crisis situation. The PR manager's role is that of crisis manager, reporting directly to the CEO. The PR manager should have access to


all of the information and the decision making process, and should have input and veto power over any decision that impacts the crisis. It is PR's job to see to it that the company is, and even more importantly, *is seen to be* completely open, honest and transparent in the crisis situation.

These rules are deceptively simple, yet companies fail the crisis test every day. Maybe it is just too simple. The secret to crisis management is to be open, honest, and work hard to solve the problem. If it is your fault, accept responsibility early in the crisis, and start corrective action immediately. If it is not

your fault, communicate that at every opportunity, while emphasizing that you are there, shirtsleeves rolled up, working to solve the problem anyway. Remember that you are telling a story, as it is happening. You are a reporter for your company's side of the story. Keep it to Who, What, When, Where, How and Why as much as you can. The simpler the story you tell, the more likely it will not be changed much by the media as they report it.

**CONTROL**

## How to handle a crisis



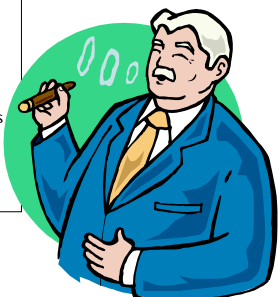
- Establish a crisis information center
- Establish a schedule of updates and stick to the schedule
- Never waffle, never lie: be forthright and honest
- Make sure you are communicating the truth as best you know it.
- Tell your story simply and help the media and the authorities get the story out

# Public Relations for the Automation Industry

**CONTROL**

## What your CEO should do

- Take personal charge of the crisis
- Immediately accept responsibility for himself or herself and the company
- Order immediate corrective action
- Pledge the full and active cooperation of the company to correct the problem
- Be available for media contact at all times




A CEO who is seen to decisively and positively take charge of a crisis situation, honestly and openly, who takes responsibility freely and orders immediate corrective action is a huge asset to the PR manager in the crisis management situation. The worst thing a CEO can do is dither, or appoint some lower-level functionary to

manage the crisis. Much of crisis management is appearance. A CEO who handles a crisis contributes greatly to the amelioration of the negatives the crisis may give the company, and may even make the company come out of the crisis ahead, with an improved brand image than it had beforehand.

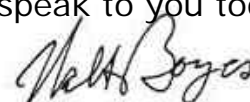
**CONTROL**

## Conclusion

You've now seen what PR can do in the industrial enterprise. If you've followed me so far, you get a gold star...and the right to call yourself an "automation spin doctor."



So that's PR for Automation Professionals. I hope you have a better understanding of PR's place in the marketing mix, and how important proper use of public relations can be to the strength of your company and your brand. In a minute we'll open the discussion up to questions, but I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I've enjoyed it and I hope you have too.



# Public Relations for the Automation Industry