



How to Get Your Clinic Featured in Local Press

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1. Read Your Local Newspapers or Magazines

To be featured in the local press you need to understand from cover to cover the stories they include. Some local newspapers are happy to cover a range of topics from new businesses, events, launches to award wins and charity fundraisers. These types of stories may feature in a business specific section or in the main part of the paper/magazine, you will find this out once you read and research these publications. Taking the time to understand the stories your local press is interested in, will save you time in the long run but will also make your content likely to be featured.

It must be noted that there is a difference between advertising and editorial content. Advertising content is paid for and editorial is often newsworthy content free of charge.

2. Source Journalists Contact Details

A smart move to increase your chances of your story being included in local press, is to make it your mission to find out the name and email address of the person who can either get or help get a decision about running your story. Try to stay clear of generic email addresses where possible, as in many cases they are not checked as regularly as personal emails. If in doubt, just ring and you should get the information you need. Alternatively, many magazines or newspapers include lists of journalists or editors within the printed or digital copy, these are generally near the front or back of the publication. Also, sometimes you can find journalists names featured on the website this may lead you to an email or person to request to speak to on the phone.

3. Do Your Research on Local Journalists

Find reporters in your niche for example in the aesthetics industry find the name and contact information for anyone who covers beauty, aesthetics, business, entertainment and/or community activities. Once you know who they are add them on LinkedIn and follow their social media accounts to see where they may be reporting next or what social events they will be attending connected to your industry. Don't be afraid to approach them and introduce yourself noting any newsworthy information connected to your business or invite them to an event. If a newsworthy event occurs this can then mean you have created a contact within your local press. These actions could foster long term relationships. If you don't take the time to foster these relationships, someone else will.

Another method to get in touch with your local press is to become an active member of your local chambers of commerce or any other business groups which will increase your prominence in your local community. Go for local committee positions and offer to speak at events which are connected to your industry. By attending these events it can maximise your chances of meeting your local media and being approached for a quote to feature in the press.

4. Developing Story Ideas

Once you have an understanding of the publications you would like to feature in, the next step is developing story ideas. Connected to the research you have conducted into the type of stories the publication features- consider these kinds of stories and what you could offer that might be a good fit. The main aim of local press is to find stories that will matter to the local people they are trying to reach. So, before you get lost in the story you wish to tell stop to think does this connect to the audience reading this? If not, go back to the drawing board.

To capture a journalist's interest, you generally need to be doing something interesting: hosting an event, raising money for charity, launching something new.

Story Ideas:

- a. New product/service launches
- b. Business Events - adding a competition to the story, such as the chance to win a product or a free service, can further incentive for readers to take action.
- c. Get involved in the local community: You can generate PR by supporting local events and organisations. This could range from taking a stall at a local event or show to sponsoring a sports team (with your name on their shirt). Let the press know of your involvement and see if they can send a reporter - otherwise send them a report of an event afterwards.
- d. Take part in fundraising activities. Organising charity events or encouraging your employees to take part in unusual or impressive fundraising can reap dividends in editorial coverage. When conducting fundraising activities make sure you send out a compelling press release with photos, and make sure your available for interview.
- e. Utilise influencer marketing to garner positive exposure, being featured on blogs and social media platforms. According to Twitter research, 49% of consumers seek purchase guidance from social media influencers. Micro-influencers, work on a smaller scale with higher engagement rates and a more targeted audience. But this strategy only works when influencers are genuine advocates of your brand. This interest can also lead to local press picking up your story, where possible try to use your current customers to find influencers who already love your brand and reach out to them with an attractive partnership proposal.
- f. Always look for 'human interest' stories within your local business, if something of interest happens internally within your business, why not tell your local press?

5. Be Aware of Timing

When you contact a journalist with a story, they will ask is this a new story? And why do people need to hear about this now? Contact the local press ahead of time. Weekly publications tend to work a work ahead and monthly publications tend to work a month ahead. While there are no set rules for when is best to contact local press, if in doubt call the local publication and ask.

Although do bear in mind that many local newspapers and magazines now have a strong online presence and may publish stories at any time. It is worth asking if you could be included in both the print and online editions for higher exposure. To further increase exposure check for a news section on the local newspaper or magazines website, if you cannot be featured in the publication you may be able to be featured here. The more you understand about how things work with your local press the more likely you are to get ahead of schedule in having your story featured.

6. Write an Email Pitch or Press Release

The local press doesn't require you to send a pre-written article. They are looking for a press release or an email which pitch's your idea. If the local press is interested in your idea, they will either interview you and write up the piece themselves or (depending on the article) ask you to write it up on their brief. Local press will hold different requirements, but once you have spoken to them and if they wish to include your story, they will notify you of this.

The following tips should stand you in good stead:

- a. Generally, send press releases via email and paste into the body of an email as most people don't like opening attachments from people they do not know.
- b. To start the press release, begin with a summary of the story (ideally no more than 15-20 words) and it should read like the opening line of a news article.
- c. Creating a press release focusing on the new launch of your business, try to make the story personal or add an inspirational message into the content - so it's more newsworthy to the reader with relevant facts and images included.
- d. Make sure to use non-technical language unless called for as this is for the general public, write a copy that explains the benefits of your offering to the community. Providing useful insights and information where possible to showcase your expertise to consumers.
- e. Your press release should be no longer than a single side of A4. Sub-headings and bullet points can be useful to make information easy to digest.
- f. Local press may get lots of emails a day, so a compelling subject header is vital. Try think of an email header which includes the phrase 'story idea', 'new launch' or 'news' alongside a one liner that describes your idea to grab their attention.
- g. Add your bio at the end
- h. Proofread your piece for spelling and grammar mistakes

If you are struggling to write a press release please, don't let this put you off contacting your local press. A short email pitch, that explains your idea in a paragraph or two, can be just as effective.

7. Important Information for Creating a Press Release

- a. Refrain from words like unique, the best or similar statements as this presents itself as a sales pitch and is unlikely to be used. Don't mention your company name in every other sentence.

- b. It would be great to include a concise positive/value-adding quote from someone in your company. If the quote is actionable and emotive in their tone and language, even better. We would recommend including at least one quote in a press release.
- c. Include background notes on your business and why it was established.
- d. Think like a journalist cover the five W's: who, what, when, where and why.
 - i. Don't forget to include your contact details and a headshot, a picture of your business and a logo if available. Make sure these are high quality professional images. A good accompanying picture will generally mean a story gets used in a more prominent position within the newspaper. Make sure each person shown is identified by a caption.
 - j. It is also ok to discuss your idea over the phone if the individual you need to speak to is available. Follow up your press release with a phone call. Emails can easily get lost and a brief conversation will give reporters chance to ask you for any additional information.

8. Ideas for a Press Release

- a. Research similar topics in your local news, what stories have been written on similar topics? You can use this to help shape your press release.
- b. If you are looking to make an impression with your local press and if you can also source an address alongside a contact name, you could send a personal card or a gift which relates to your company. Within this package you could offer a journalist a free treatment in exchange for a review of their experience. (This could also be done over email, but this can add a personal touch). If you make a meaningful connection with a few writers, they will remember you and your company next time they are writing a story about that subject.
- c. Don't forget where possible present yourself as an expert in your field: e.g. if you are an expert on treating acne contact our local media before acne awareness month in June. Offer your expertise for a news article. When you present yourself as an expert in your field, the news media will want you to keep coming back.

9. Be Persistent and Be Prepared to Follow Up

If the local press is interested in your story you will generally get a quick response. But don't be afraid to follow up with them if you have not heard back by phone or email, as a delayed response could be due to a busy time period. If you have chased a few times and not heard anything back I would assume they might not be interested at this time, but it is worth contacting other local press.

It should be noted that if you receive free editorial content from your local press, you may not always get to pre-approve the content if it was written by a journalist. 'Copy approval' is rarely practiced in the industry. Make sure the message going out to the public is what you want them to hear.

10. Review your Efforts with Local Press

If you have been successful in featuring in local press over the year, it is worth every 6-12 months reviewing which of your actions/communications with local press generated worthwhile publicity and continue to create more opportunities in that vein. There's a high degree of trial and error involved - you won't necessarily get full page coverage every week, but you will increase your connections and raise your profile. And that is definitely good for business.

11. Get in Touch

Please get in touch if you have any questions: 01477 536 975 or email info@lynton.co.uk



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