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How real estate pros build awareness and credibility

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Whether you are just starting out or well into your career as owner, developer, broker or service provider, how you communicate with and project to clients, prospects, tenants, lenders and peers is of primary importance.

There is a myriad of options and tactics from simple networking and outreach to comprehensive public relations and marketing featuring public relations, advertising, public speaking, and digital marketing.

All these strategies are relevant and important. How you choose and use them involves planning and budgeting. Ask yourself these questions. What do I want to be known for? What messages do I need to convey and to whom.

Once this process is done, flexible goals can be established to build awareness, reputation and credibility for your properties or services or to find a buyer for your company, a new employee or to influence the public or industry on a social or political point of view.

Public relations without goals is useless.

One firm we represent set a goal to build reputation as real estate expert in a specific industry. We formulated a strategy to place articles and speeches in that industry. Another client has performed the same strategy for 10 years, to build awareness of the company spokesperson as thought-leader and company products and services as highly competitive. Some prolific dealmakers seek optimum exposure for every transaction, allowing their accomplishments to speak for themselves.

Once goals are established then “the messages” and “audiences” must be identified. The two elements must be thought out before an actual strategy is developed and applied.

A typical message might be that a company achieved millions in deals last year or that they use a special investment strategy that no one else has. Real estate audiences to whom these messages are sent might consist of prospects, clients, referrals, and influencers including home buyers, brokers, developers, tenants, and investors.

Now that you have the basics of your plan, you are ready to formulate strategy. There is a wide range of



choices today from traditional to social media, from public speaking at professional gatherings to conducting webinars and joining online community groups. All of these tactics are valuable, but it is important to still give serious attention to conventional media coverage and speaking engagements.

Regular coverage in popular trade media *Real Estate Weekly*, *New York Real Estate Journal*, *Mann Report*, *Bisnow*, *REFI*, *GlobeSt.com*, *The Real Deal* and *Commercial*

Observer is essential and, when the time is right, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Crain's New York Business*, *New York Post*, *Fox Business TV*, and *Building New York*, Michael Stoler's CUNY TV real estate show.

While the above media all still provide conventional newsprint and video, they also now provide news site and blog coverage which reaches a lot more people. So even if you have not yet established a big presence on Facebook or Twitter, your messages are on the digital track and reaching people in ways you never have before.

In addition to media coverage, speaking engagements and panel appearances are vital to an effective marketing program. Here you have an opportunity to appear in an intimate situation with other leaders in the industry and to reach broad interested audiences and achieve press coverage of your appearance.

Many of these conferences such as the upcoming New York Multifamily Summit on September 19 are sponsored by tested professional services, in this case GreenPearl which runs conferences throughout the year.

This Multifamily Summit boasts keynote speak-



Michael Stoler interviews developer Larry Silverstein on his CUNY TV show

ers Bruce Eichner and Robert Knakal and focuses on “today's toughest challenges in investment, development, financing, construction, deal flow and property management.” RealShare and Real Estate Finance and Investment magazine (REFI) also sponsor popular and well-attended events.

While the above professional groups sometimes require paid sponsorships in return for speaking privileges, associations such as B'nai B'rith Real Estate, Young Men/Women's Real Estate Association of New York (YMWREA) and Real Estate Management New York (NYARM) offer opportunities for speakers totally on a merit basis.

Criteria such as relevance, professional credentials, and ability to draw attendees are carefully considered in evaluating candidates.

Smart real estate companies use a mix of the media and speaking, major strategies described above, to keep their brand, credibility and reputation always in front of prospective buyers, sellers, borrowers, brokers, and tenants. They are also mindful of advertising and digital marketing needs including website, newsletters, e-mail blasts and social media.