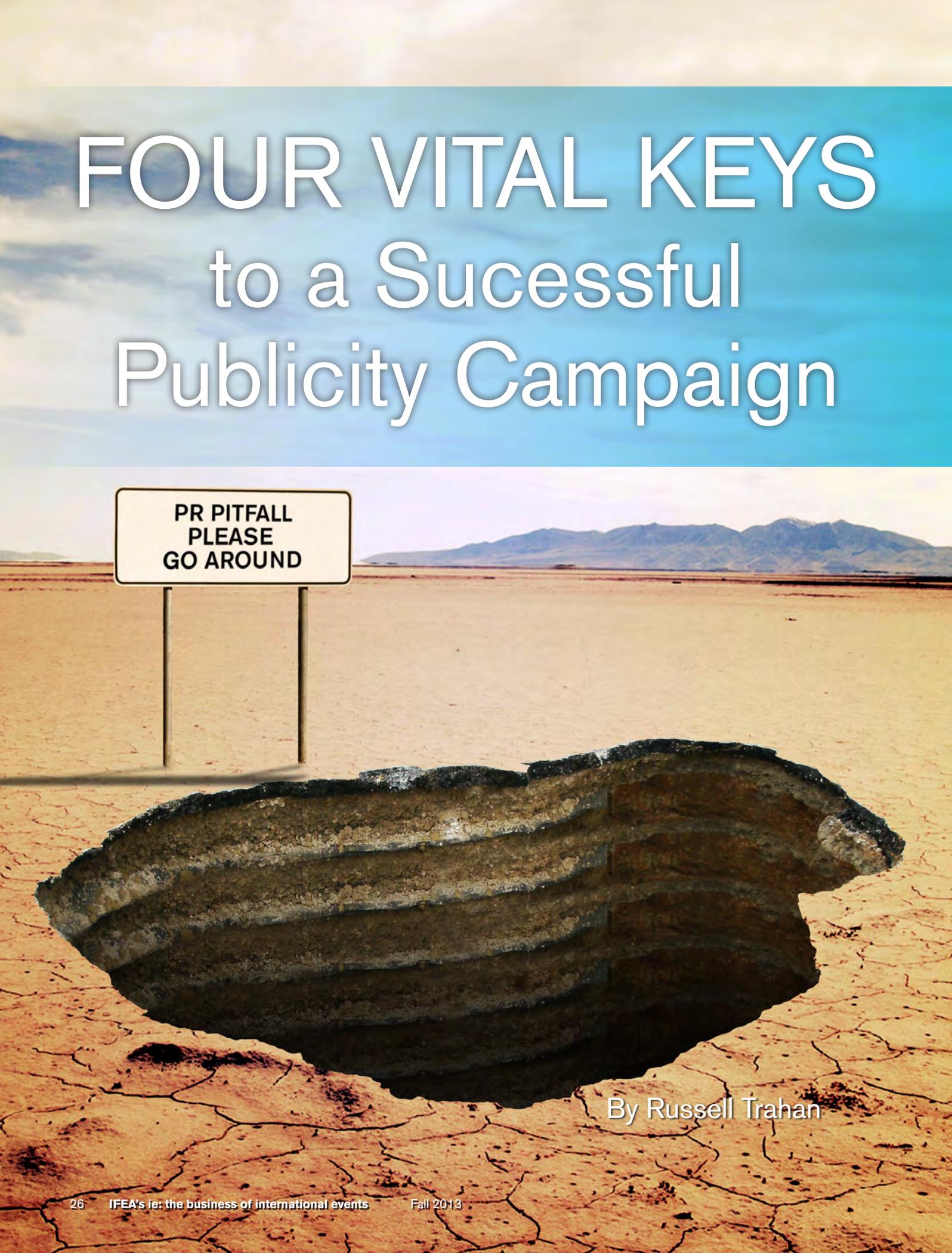


# FOUR VITAL KEYS to a Successful Publicity Campaign

A photograph of a desert landscape with a sign and a large rock. The sign is white with black text and is mounted on two black posts. The rock is large, dark, and layered, resting on the cracked, dry earth. In the background, there are mountains under a cloudy sky.

PR PITFALL  
PLEASE  
GO AROUND

By Russell Trahan

Every year, countless businesses from a variety of industries decide to take a crucial step in their corporate progression: a national publicity campaign. More often than not, there are a few critical missteps made at the outset that impede their momentum that have a direct impact on their PR return on investment. Public relations endeavors are an essential component to increased visibility and name-awareness, but without proper preparedness and implementation, visions of magazine covers and daily newspaper interviews can prove to be ill-fated pipe dreams.

Thankfully, there are a number of actions you can take to safeguard yourself from PR pitfalls and get the most out of your fledgling publicity campaign.

#### 1. Start Sooner than Later

A common misconception held by newcomers to the public relations realm is that the appropriate start date is when the final touches have been put on a new product or location. This is typically the initial obstacle that has many professionals sputtering out of the gate: your PR campaign should begin at least four to six months in advance of your anticipated launch. Properly executed publicity involves creating a snowball-effect by ever-increasing mentions and features across a wealth of publications; by the time many businesses feel they are ready to proceed with PR, their window of opportunity has already begun to close.

#### 2. Appoint a Company Spokesperson

The decision to finally pull the trigger on a company-wide public relations campaign is enough to create a palpable buzz around the office. The prospect of increased sales numbers and an expanded client base as the result of increased visibility will generate excitement amongst your employees and coworkers, but frequently lost amid the enthusiasm is the responsibility to delegate a media spokesperson.

Many CEOs tend to view their operations through a prism of team-oriented achievement, where each and every member of the company provides their expertise to work toward a common goal. While this is a terrific model for fostering corporate harmony, it does not work

when a reporter is on the phone seeking a specific person for a quote in their next issue. Appointing a spokesperson to handle all media matters and requests is vital to maximizing the likelihood that your thoughts and ideas make it to print. Reporters and editors adhere to strict deadlines, and in many cases, the contact that provides the content they

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desire first will be the source quoted in the final copy. Publicity by committee leads to confusion, dragging feet and, ultimately, missed opportunities. Nominate a spokesperson to handle all public relations activity.

#### 3. Don't be Afraid to Stretch Your Message

There's a tendency in the business arena to begin to adopt a form of corporate tunnel vision; you become so close to your skills and knowledge that it's virtually impossible to view things from

a third-party perspective. As a result of this myopic mindset, many potentially lucrative opportunities fall to the wayside or are ignored entirely; cast aside because they don't fit into the specific schema you've formed about the nature of your business or expertise.

Stretching your topic to apply to what's circulating in the news is a fundamental facet to a profitable campaign. For example: a company that manufactures widgets may only view their audience as potential suppliers, but directing their message to also include product-consumers expands their audience and extends their reach. Never decline a publicity opportunity because of a perceived lack of expertise on a topic; broaden your message to apply to avenues you may have previously overlooked.

#### 4. Stir the Pot with Unique Perspectives and Controversy

Nothing whets the media's appetite quite like a good, old-fashioned controversy. They dominate headlines, they are the fodder for early morning water cooler conversation and most importantly: they sell papers. This does not mean to delve into the gutters of Kardashian-inspired, tabloidian gossip, but providing a unique counterpoint to commonly held beliefs or opinions is a terrific way to produce attention and awareness.

A well-researched, informed argument that may fly in the face of societal norms is akin to a flashing, neon-sign to journalists seeking to provide both sides of an issue. Do not shy away from ruffling feathers, because nothing builds public notoriety like controversy.

Make no mistake about it, a carefully crafted and properly executed publicity strategy will enhance your company's profile, and provide a boon to your organizational efforts. By embarking on a PR campaign with clearly defined goals and an action plan for when the media comes calling, you're positioning yourself to enjoy profitable quarters and annual reports in the black.

**Russell Trahan** is President of PR/PR, a boutique public relations agency specializing in positioning clients in front of their target audience in print and online. PR/PR represents experts of all kinds who are seeking national exposure for their business or organization. Russell and PR/PR will raise your business' awareness in the eyes of your clients and customers. For more information, please visit [www.prpr.net](http://www.prpr.net) or email [mail@prpr.net](mailto:mail@prpr.net) for a free consultation.