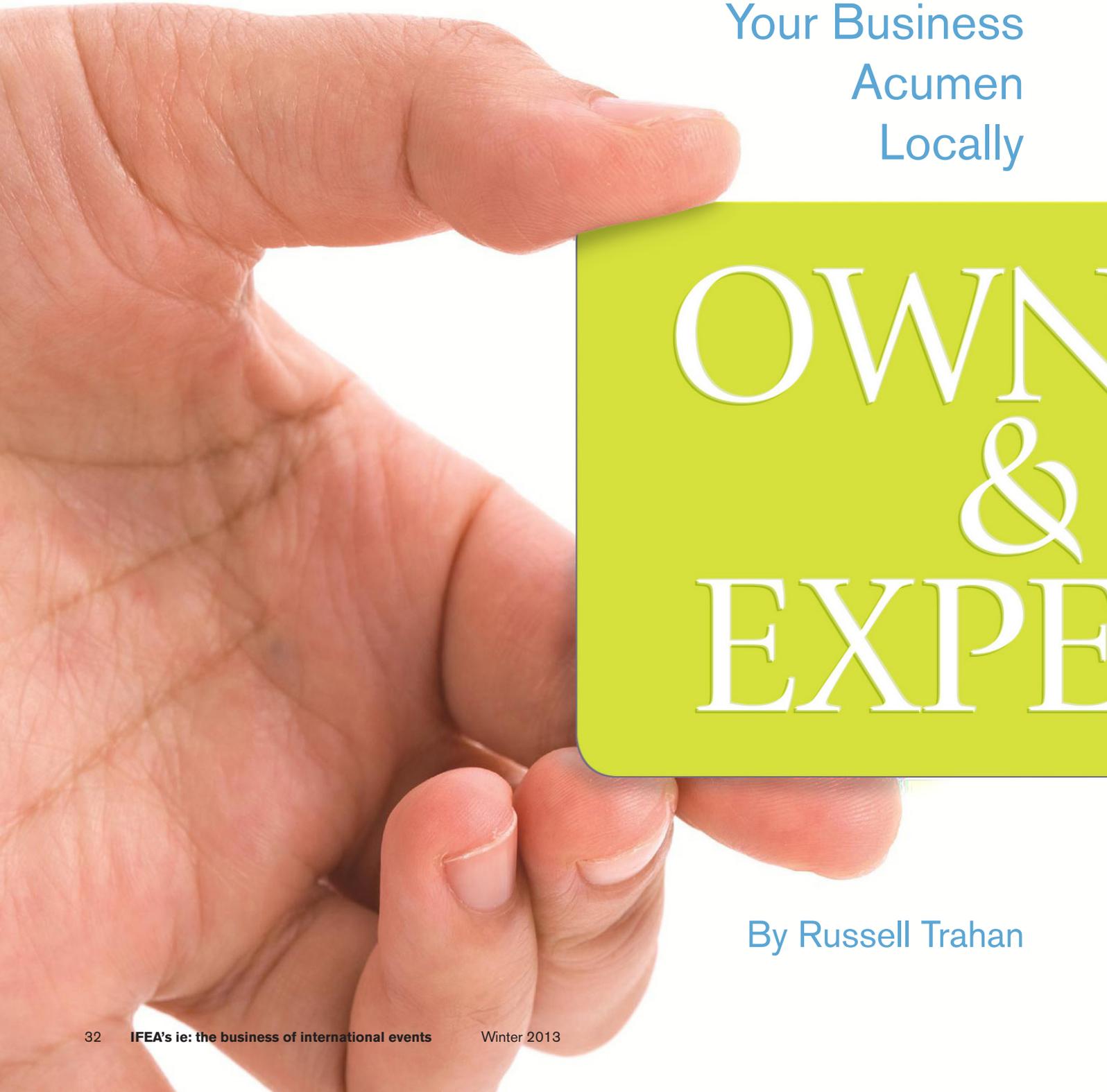


YOU'RE THE OWNER, YOU'RE THE EXPERT

Five Ways to Leverage
Your Business
Acumen
Locally

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a bright green rectangular card. The card has the words 'OWN & EXPE' printed in white, serif, all-caps font. The hand is positioned on the left side of the card, with the thumb and fingers visible. The background is a plain, light color.

OWN
&
EXPE

By Russell Trahan

For William, finally hanging the 'grand opening' banner on the facade of his business was a dream realized. After years of drafting and redrafting plans and budgets, applying for loans and acquiring the initial capital to break ground on his new property, he was able to turn his goal of owning and operating a local business into a reality.

At a recent chamber of commerce meeting, William found himself in a conversation with a colleague that proved invaluable. Amidst discussion of business tactics and customer development techniques, he was clued into a spectrum of opportunities to generate brand recognition and supplemental revenue that he was previously unaware of.

As the proprietor, William's expertise not only applies to the daily operations of his business, but to the wider-scope of finding success in the small-business sector as a whole – and in a bipolar

NER
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economic landscape, there is tangible demand for individuals with proven accomplishments in this area. Regardless of his status as a neophyte to the world of business ownership, there are opportunities available to leverage his knowledge.

Here are a few of the ways that you, as a business owner, can employ your unique brand of expertise to build your local reputation and secure a stout customer base:

1. Speaking at Service Clubs

Getting involved with speaking at local service clubs is a fantastic way to introduce yourself to the professional-minded public, and to share your business savvy with others. The first step is to research service clubs in your area, and start contacting the necessary parties about guest-speaking opportunities.

Now, the initial hang-up most business owners find is that they do not see how sharing the inner-workings of their specific business will be of value to anyone else. When speaking, you need to stretch your expertise so that it applies to a wider audience – not just those in your immediate industry. You do not need to delve into the intricate details of how your particular trade is run – there are overarching principles that apply to operating a flourishing business – and as an example of the payoff that comes with applying them, you are qualified to educate others (while subtly promoting yourself).

Starting to speak at the local level can also catalyze a larger speaking career. Begin crafting a presentation and approaching the necessary parties to get your voice heard.

2. Stir the Pot by Writing Op-Eds

Tossing a bit of proverbial kerosene on a contentious conversation is an assured way to cause your name to resonate within your community. There are numerous hot-button business issues that continuously circulate in the media and spur lively debates – minimum wage, unions and mandatory insurance, to name a few. By writing an opinion-editorial that could possibly be placed in daily newspapers with large circulations, you can state your position on a variety of relevant issues, and establish a wider-range of name-recognition.

3. Foster a Thriving Business Community with Mentoring

What better way to put your skills on display than to take an aspiring business-owner under your wing? Businesses thrive when there is a layer of mutual support, and that often involves working together for a common goal: carving a niche in the community for profitable, locally-owned companies. Attend networking events and connect with others who are in the same position you were in before your dream became an actuality – an individual with an idea and an implementable plan, and coach them through the process that you experienced.

Starting a business can be a painstaking and often frustrating progression; by acting in a mentoring and advisory role for others, you can help navigate some of the

roadblocks that come along the way, and create a tightknit community of proprietors and reciprocal customers for life.

4. Guest Columns in Local Publications

Weekly and monthly tabloid-sized publications are regularly seeking fresh content with local-angles to fill space on their pages, and submitting guest columns reinforces your identity as a stalwart in the local business arena. Common themes can include commercial trends, regional events or opportunities – essentially any topic that allows you to provide your unique insight.

The readership of homegrown newspapers and magazines is extremely diverse. From the college student seeking weekend plans to the local business magnate in the market for legitimate sales prospects, there is a forum to offer your advice and expertise to a varied audience, which brings a wide-ranging customer base through your doors.

5. Participate in Regional Radio Interviews

While guest columns and opinion-editorials in print have a longer-lasting impact toward your business aims – it is a permanent medium for your thoughts and know-how – radio interviews can provide an immediate boon to your profit margins.

Connecting with decision-makers with local radio outlets – via social media or email – is a fantastic first step to donning headphones and contributing in-studio. Many producers and personalities are also active at community networking events, and a brief conversation and a number exchange may lead to an on-air interview.

After his enlightening conversation, William began employing the techniques outlined by his colleague, and saw a significant increase in his bottom-line and local profile. By utilizing his distinct set of expertise to contribute in other facets of the business realm, he has amplified his reach and cemented his position as an erudite force in the local community.

Russell Trahan is President of PR/PR, a boutique public relations agency specializing in positioning clients in front of their target market 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 or email mail@prpr.net for a free consultation.