

Public Relations



Everything You Need to Know About Organising Product Reviews

Publitek Ltd

18 Brock Street, Bath BA1 2LW, UK

Tel: **+44 (0) 1225 470000**



Everything You Need to Know About Organising Product Reviews



Research by Google has shown that consumer tech customers generally visit between 14 and 21 different sources of information about any specific purchase. And those that they believe most are recommendations from friends and independent third party reviews.

Organising third party reviews is perhaps not as easy as you might at first think, and the relationships you build with journalists, bloggers and social media influencers is critical if you want to be successful.

Journalists receive hundreds if not thousands of emails a day, and it is important that you only pitch relevant products. You need to keep emails short, subject lines informative and end the email with the offer of a review.

And if you are successful, reply promptly and don't keep the journalist waiting for the product - ship it to them so it arrives in great condition so they can get the full consumer "unboxing experience". Make sure you monitor the media space for coverage too, most journalists are too busy to let you know your product has been featured.

If done right, a simple email could achieve media space worth thousands of Euros / dollars / GBP and your product could be seen by millions tech savvy potential buyers from all over the world. If done wrong the collateral damage to brand and relationship can be enormous - it could damage your relationship with them and you could risk the chance of being blacklisted not only by the journalist you approached, but also the publication you are targeting and the whole publishing house. You may even fall foul of a negative social media campaign - which is why we take such care to do things right.

And doing things right pays off - we recently sent an email that in itself generated coverage with an equivalent advertising cost of around £6000! How many sales people would like to achieve a return on investment of that magnitude?

How to make a great pitch

In order to avoid filling up journalists' email inboxes with irrelevant pitches and risk the chance of being blacklisted, you need to carefully choose who to send the email to. For instance, if a magazine has a reviews editor, don't also pitch product samples to the features editor - it just annoys them and remember, they are a team and talk between each other. You don't want to be the person who approaches everyone.

Spend some time researching the media and key influencers serving your market to create a list of contacts that would be interested in hearing for you.

Of course, if you don't have time to do this yourself, you could always employ an agency that already has great contacts in your chosen space.

Select your subject line

If you are part of a company that is well known in the media space your email subject line could simply be 'Brand name + model name'. You do NOT need more; journalists will know what is in the email before they even open it. Don't make it complicated for them!

Start-ups and small companies in the process of building market presence may want to use the following model: 'Brand name + model + industry related phrase' pointing the journalist in the direction you are about to take them.

If the product is unique in some way, don't be afraid to mention it too. This is how you can show that the product you are pitching deserves to be reviewed.

A good example would be, *iPrint 350 - the smallest 3D printer in the world.*

Start your email with a pleasant greeting.

Start the email with a personalised greeting, and if you know the contact very well, do not hesitate to engage on a deeper level. But as journalists are busy, don't go too far - one sentence is enough.

Keep it simple

The main body of the email needs to be short, not more than 100 words long - and it needs to be informative! You need to win the attention from the first sentence with as few words as possible.

Start your paragraph with confidence showing that the product you are pitching is certainly something that is worth taking a look at. Highlight how the product is unique and its strengths. Another way of attracting attention at the very beginning of the paragraph is to add a line about the 'exclusivity' of the offer that you are making. The contact you are approaching may be one of the very first people in the region who will have the chance to review this product. If this is the case, make it clear. Make him or her want the product from the first sentence - make them feel special!

If the product was recently released, mention it so the journalist knows this product is still hot! Add a sentence that you've included the latest press release and a high res image of the product. Don't forget to finish the paragraph mentioning all-important pricing information and stock availability.

Finish in style

At the end of the email, offer them a sample for review on a separate line. Don't mention the word 'review', offer them the chance to *get a hold of* a sample or to *take a look at* a sample - and tell them that samples are available.

Don't ask them to review, don't ask them how long it will take them to generate coverage and don't offer to give them anything in return.

Then hit the send button and be positive. If you've done your job right, you will get a response back requesting a review sample.

The follow-up

Today's journalists are being asked to deliver three times the amount of copy they were asked for 20 years ago. This makes them understandably busy and they may not get back to you simply because they've missed your email.



If your pitching email does not include an 'exclusivity offer' and you are flexible on waiting, it is recommended to wait at least a week before you send your follow up email. What do you need to include? Not much; you simply need to go back to your email history, find the email you sent him and hit the reply button so the initial email stays in the email thread.

The new email should not contain additional information. You've already said everything you were supposed to say. Don't change things around. All you have to do is to simply greet the journalist by name, use a polite phrase and ask them if they have had the time to take a look at the email you sent them last week. Mention that the email is included below.

Highlight the fact that you are waiting for their response - this gives you an excuse to follow up by phone. If you don't hear back after a week, its time to pick up the phone.

Phone follow-up

In order for you to make sure that the emails you've been sending have reached their destination sometimes you have to sit down and call the journalist you are targeting.

Before you do, double-check everything you've sent before, call them, say your name, say the company you are calling from and mention the company that you are representing. An example would look like;

'My name is Bruce Wayne, I am calling from Pinnacle Marketing Communications on behalf of Company X. I was wondering if you have a minute to talk?'

If they are willing to listen, they will tell you to go ahead. If it is clear that now is not a good time, then politely terminate the pitch. Where your contact is willing to hear more, tell them that you've recently tried to contact them via email about a product that they might be interested in. Follow this with no more than a 30 second pitch about the product and its features/benefits.

In a best-case scenario, they will ask you to send a sample. What usually happens is that they ask you to resend the email so they can see it again - if they do this, send them the email as soon as you put down the phone. They will be expecting it.

When they agree to review a product, politely thank them and arrange the delivery.

Deliver quickly, and carefully, and handle with care

Nobody likes to wait, and nothing annoys journalists more than feeling like they are being messed around. In this case, once they've requested the sample, make sure it is sent IMMEDIATELY unless a particular date and/or time slot is specified.

Once the sample is dispatched, let the journalist know and provide tracking numbers where possible. If the sample is to be returned, include details on how that will be arranged - and make sure they don't have to pay to return it.

Check-in to ensure the journalist has no problems. If the product is truly innovative, you may get the opportunity to suggest how they can best test the sample by submitting a reviews guide. On many occasions at Pinnacle, we have used technology whitepapers and product knowledge to help create the testing regimen that has enabled the reviewer to see the product in its full glory.



Say thank you

Always be grateful, but be prepared for everything. The reason you are submitting a review sample is not only to raise awareness with their audience, but because you are after the honest opinion of a tech professional. Any feedback is valuable and addressing positives and negatives could help further product.

Finally, thank the journalist for taking the time to feature your product. It's not rare to see that products that have performed well are usually endorsed by an award logo and/or a quote. If your marketing team is interested in using the material, ask to re-use it - most of the time the award and the quote will be freely available but it is always important to ask permission first.





Need help with **Organising Product Reviews?**

To find out, contact:

Bob Jones
CEO

bob.jones@publitek.com
Europe: **+44 1225 470000**
US: **+1 408 786 5151**

Publitek is the world's leading content marketing and technology PR agency for the B2B electronics industry. By complementing our in-house capabilities with proven partners, we offer a multi-lingual, global capability encompassing both corporate and technical communications.

Publitek Ltd,
18 Brock Street,
Bath, BA1 2LW
Tel: **+44 (0) 1225 470000**

www.publitek.com

