

Your Going Out of Business PR Plan – and how to avoid needing it

Frances owned a retail shop in a quaint small town. She loved her little shop and for many years, made a good living from it.

When the local economy suffered, Fran's shop suffered, too. Anxious about making payroll, she looked for every possible way to save money.

She began printing her 5,000-circulation "Book Notes" newsletter on the office copier, keeping only a few dozen on the counter. She restricted monthly author events to one per quarter and stopped serving refreshments. Sale ads in the newspapers, which never seemed to bring in much new business, were replaced by no-cost e-mails to her existing customers.

No matter how much or how often she cut back on expenses, Fran's books never seemed to balance. Eventually, she made the decision to close her doors.

If you've read a single book on marketing, you know why this business failed. But there's more to the story.

Fran's unique business had been in the same location for more than 15 years. The building, which she owned, had an interesting history. Some of the items on permanent display in her store came with fascinating stories about her city's most prominent families.

When she decided to go out of business, Fran sent a detailed press release to every newspaper in every community where her customers lived – to make sure they all knew what was happening.

She mentioned her going out of business sale to a friend who worked at a radio station. She bought huge "Going Out Of Business" signs that hung for several weeks across the front of her building, and placed additional signs on the back door.

Over the last two weeks her store was open, Fran's cashiers took in more money than they had during the previous **THREE MONTHS**.

Why? Because every local newspaper picked up the story and several specialty publications contacted Fran after reading so much about her. Her friend at the radio station shared Frances' story with a local talk show host, who booked her as a guest. People who spotted her banner signs from across the street walked in, saying they didn't realize she was there.

Fran's Going Out of Business Publicity Plan worked like a charm. She made enough money from her final sale to pay off all her bills and start her retirement with a little nest egg.

And she still has no idea why it worked.

Fran's critical mistake wasn't that she stopped promoting her business. It's that she never really started. She didn't see her author events and newsletter as critical elements in her marketing plan, so she didn't see how they drew in a regular base of clients who shopped and recommended the store to their friends.

Look at PR as something separate from your business, and you'll miss the big picture.

If you learn one thing from this small book, it should be this: Promotion isn't a part of your business. It IS your business.

Develop every aspect of your business with this mindset. Look at everything you do as a way to promote your business – product packaging, customer service,

Expect that most of it will seem to not work. Expect you will not see a dollar for dollar return on much of what you do. But taken all together, every effort you make will get you noticed.

And that's the point, isn't it?

Award-winning journalist Joni Hubred-Golden shares what she learned by reading more than 5,000 bad press releases in "Worth Every Penny: PR basics for business owners who don't have the time to drink a cup of coffee – or the money to buy one." Learn more and read an excerpt at www.jonihubredgolden.com