SIX STEPS TO GETTING A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM UNDER WAY FOR GERBER SCIENTIFIC

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The Value of Public Relations
A B2B public relations program should function as an integral component of an overall marcom effort, extending visibility and depth of presence for a company or organization before critical audiences. PR can complement advertising efforts while extending the reach of limited advertising dollars. It can also provide invaluable editorial coverage that can be reshaped as sales and marketing literature.

To be of best value PR efforts should proceed from a solid grounding in the client's business and be targeted intelligently at key trade and industry publications. Knowing – and responding to – each trade pub's specific editorial format and focus provides the best opportunity to achieve substantial results.

Getting Started
Step 1: **Undertake a Client Brain Dump**
The first step in developing a public relations program for any client is to become acquainted with the company, its products and applications, and the industry in which it operates. This can be accomplished by a site visit, meetings with key client personnel and review of applicable documents and Web-based info.

Step 2: Review all Previous PR Efforts
Conduct a PR audit to determine what's been done to date, what was planned and didn't get done, and what could be done now that a comprehensive effort is under way. Clients often don't recognize the extent of PR that can be done for them.

Step 3: **Develop a Media List and Editorial Calendar**
Surveying the applicable trade publications and evaluating their focus and format is a critical preparatory step. Developing a trade media list with up-to-date contact names, fax and e-mail addresses, and preferred means of contact is one step; development of an editorial calendar identifying placement opportunities is the other.

Step 4: Introduce Yourself to Editorial Contacts
Trade editors aren't like newspaper or magazine editors who are naturally wary – and sometimes even antagonistic – toward PR people. That's because trade editors depend on PR folks to help achieve each of their magazine issue's editorial content. With a new client to represent it's a smart practice to contact key editors, introduce yourself and your client, and discuss how best to work with the editor and his/her staff – what are their needs, how can we help you, etc. These contacts can help establish a mutually beneficial working relationship.

Step 5: Develop a Plan for the Next 12 Months
Clients and PR people work best with a plan of action in place. The plan should identify key tactics to be employed – press releases, feature stories, a trade show press conference, an

editorial tour, etc. – along with specific objectives to aim for and a timetable of completion. Because PR is an opportunistic endeavor – like being in the right place at the right time – the plan should also encompass seizing unforeseen opportunities as they may present themselves.

Step 6: Get Going

PR efforts can take time to implement. Press releases can appear anywhere from one month to several months and more after they've been distributed, and feature story sourcing, placing and executing can take months to accomplish. So getting going on all PR fronts without undue delay is critical.