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## Introduction

How do you make decisions about products you will buy, services you will try or things you want to learn more about? Chances are that some decisions will be influenced by what you read in newspapers, hear on the radio, see on TV or read on the Internet.

Public Relations (PR) works hand-in-hand with the media that your customers and prospects are exposed to every day. PR takes advantage of the media's role: To inform, entertain and provide information to their readers or audiences. With a few key tools, it is possible to work with reporters to create visibility for your business and the solutions and services you provide.

This visibility can provide valuable benefits to your business:

- PR can inform prospects about your capabilities and products, creating new business leads.
- PR can “condition” the market, by introducing your company name or strengths to potential customers. If they already have a favorable idea of your business, PR can shorten the time needed to convince customers to buy.
- PR can distinguish your business from your competition by highlighting your strengths.
- PR can reinforce your current customers' decisions to buy, by creating a positive image for your business.

This toolkit gives you the tools you need to perform PR that can make a difference for your business. It includes fundamental tools you can use to get started, including understanding how PR works and how it can benefit you, as well as actual examples of press releases and story ideas you can use today to get immediate results for your business.

Once you're finished reading this PR toolkit, you'll be ready to write your first press release and call up a news reporter with a great story idea to get your company in the news.