

### Robert Middleton Interviews Nancy Juetten

**Robert:** Hello, everyone. This is Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing and the Action Plan Marketing Club. I'm on the phone today with publicity expert Nancy Juetten. Our topic is "Main Street Media Savvy—Get Seen, Heard and Celebrated in Your Own Backyard and Beyond!"

Welcome to the call, Nancy. It's great to have you on.

**Nancy:** It's great to be here. Thanks for having me.

**Robert:** Before we start, I'm going to give people a background of who you are.

Publicity expert Nancy Juetten is fiercely committed to helping business owners everywhere quickly get up to speed on the best ways to use do-it-yourself publicity to share their messages in the traditional, online and social media.

Guiding you to achieve winning results for your product, service, ideas or cause with time-tested, proven and easy-to-learn tips without spending a fortune and spinning your wheels is her passion and commitment.

Nancy is a work-in-the-trenches publicist, media-savvy newspaper columnist, inspiring speaker, and creator of the popular "Media-Savvy-To-Go Publicity Toolkit" that has earned raves from business owners and publicity experts all around the USA.

She is also a Publici-Tea Workshop trainer who inspires business owners to take control of their media opportunities through consistent winning actions every day.

Her niche is serving clients with products or services that one day have the qualities to earn Oprah's attention. Seattle Chocolate Company, Olympic Hot Tub Company and Affirmagy are a few examples.

She's written hundreds of press releases since starting her career in public relations in 1997. She has written even more story pitches that have earned media attention in national magazines, such as *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, *Essence* and *Success*, as well as local newspapers and business journals in the Puget Sound region and beyond.

You have a lot of experience in this, Nancy. Tell us just a little bit about how you got started in the first place.

**Nancy:**

This is a funny story. I like to say I went from desperate housewife to PR diva. It all started with the desire to earn enough money to buy better crackers. It's so true.

You know how it is when you have two incomes and you go to one? I had a baby. I stayed home for a year. We were working to make the grocery budget go twice as far with half the money. So I was making the decision, "So, do I want to be buying the Nabisco brand wheat crackers for \$2.99, or do I want to buy two boxes of generic-brand wheat crackers for 99 cents?"

I'd come home with my \$2.00 victory, and my husband said, "Nancy, if the crackers taste good, it's a value. If they don't, they'll petrify in the pantry, and we'll be no better off." And I thought, "Oh my gosh! I have got to get out of the house and into some kind of productive career."

Public relations is really where I had the greatest skill. Today, in the world of small worlds, I do the publicity for

La Panzanella, which is one of the world's finest Italian rustic gourmet crackers.

**Robert:** Does that mean you get free, unlimited crackers?

**Nancy:** Yes, I do, and I couldn't be more happy about it. That's how it all started, with a desire for better groceries. Now my business is so busy I'm too busy to cook. So it just goes to show, if you follow your passion, good things do unfold.

**Robert:** That's great. So you've ended up working with all kinds of companies in all kinds of ways.

As you know, the people on this call are independent professionals. There are coaches, consultants, trainers, speakers, financial planners and all kinds of self-employed professionals. PR can apply to those kinds of businesses as well.

Folks talk about getting free publicity, but what does it really do for their business? Is it worth putting in the effort to do it? What's your take on free publicity for independent professionals?

**Nancy:** Well, I'm an independent professional, and I can't say enough about what the power of free publicity has done to build my brand and my reputation and bring more perfect clients to my door. Who among us independent professionals doesn't need more of that?

The beauty of free publicity is if you pitch your story to the right media outlet, instead of meeting people on- to-one over lunch or one-to-one at a networking meeting, your message can travel across the entire backyard of your community with so much efficiency and so much

credibility that the phone actually rings with people actually wanting to do business with you.

I can't say enough about the more success with greater ease that can result for everyone who puts publicity to work for their business.

**Robert:** As we get into this, we're going to learn some of the tips and techniques to do that.

I found out about you, Nancy, through the social media site Biznik. I posted a question about the fact that I'm media-phobic and where does one start if one is media-phobic. I think other people are media-phobic for various reasons as well. A few people suggested I ask you the question, and you gave a really great, long response. Then we talked, and I could really see you had a lot of enthusiasm for this.

How do you get started? What are the first steps in starting to get media exposure?

**Nancy:** The first thing is to remember that everyone wants to sell more products or services or have more perfect clients. If that is your need or want, most people in the media will say, "If that's your approach, go buy some advertising."

If you want to be seen, heard and celebrated in the media, the real art is figuring out why what you do and how you do it and the contribution that you're making is newsworthy. Is it timely, newsworthy, relevant, interesting and local? That is the ideal recipe to earn media attention.

These are challenging times for people all across America, and people are looking for answers, perspective, commentary about how to navigate these rocky waters to advantage in the worst of times.

If you are a financial planner who has unique perspectives in this regard, there are plenty of media avenues where your ideas and perspectives will be welcome, and then you'll be seen, heard and celebrated for helping people navigate. And then the phone will ring, and you'll have more people engaging your services so they can make their retirement dreams come true under your guidance.

**Robert:**

We're going to get into the techniques of the channels of the media later, whether it's pitch letters, articles, press releases or social media. The question I have first, and I think this is the issue for almost everybody, is, "I'm just a consultant, or financial planner or trainer. How do I think through my business and come up with a unique line that the media would in fact be interested in?"

I know this is why one hires a publicist. This is the first thing you do. We're going to give links to Nancy later, if you want to get help from Nancy. Nevertheless, we want to give you a few ideas that you might be able to use anyway.

How do I emerge with something newsworthy if inherently I don't feel very newsworthy, if you get what I'm saying?

**Nancy:**

I understand that question, and I just invite everyone who feels that way to turn that perspective to its side a little bit. You're an expert in whatever it is. There are plenty of other people who do not share that expertise, who have

problems that only you can solve because you happen to have mastery over a particular subject matter.

The simple way to answer that question would be, and I often say this to my clients, when you lay awake at night and dream and imagine where you would like to be seen, heard and celebrated, what media outlets are perfect where your perfect clients are paying attention?

Is it the *Puget Sound Business Journal*? Is it *The New York Times*? Is it *Oprah Magazine*? What is it?

The first thing you need to think about is who is your ideal client, and try to put as much specificity on that as possible. Then you say, “Well, what are they reading, listening or watching?” Then you really do have to start paying attention to those media outlets so you can have some sense of what they’re about and how your expertise could add value to the readers, the viewers, the listeners.

I’m going to bring this down to a real micro-level since a lot of your people are independent business professionals. The American City Business Journals is one of the premier business journals in America. They have the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, the *Portland Business Journal*, business journals all over major cities across America.

If the only thing you did as an independent professional who is a professional service provider were to pay attention to the American City Business Journal in your backyard to start getting a sense of the format and the kind of articles they write about and the kinds of things where you could fit in, you’re going to know that that’s the right place.

The other thing you can do is you can go to the media kit, which is posted online for most of these venues, and ask for their editorial calendar. That will tell you when they're planning to write about business, finance and investment, or healthcare reform, or environmental consulting, or construction and engineering.

If you have expertise in any of these little niche areas, you can anticipate those editorial opportunities and send an inquiry about how you can add value for the readers. It's always about adding value for the viewers, not necessarily about selling you. That's true in anything that you do, if you're trying to make a good connection.

**Robert:** I can actually give an example of this. There's a magazine called *Choice* which is the magazine for coaches. I did look at their editorial calendar, and the one coming up was the money issue, making money in your business, and the struggle to make money as a coach.

I sat down and wrote a 1,500-word article on overcoming under-earning and the fear of rejection, which are very much related. Because of the fear of rejection, we don't earn. I wrote that article and submitted it, and they actually accepted it. It's going to be coming out in the next issue.

**Nancy:** And how many of your perfect clients are going to see that?

**Robert:** Quite a few. I can't remember the exact number of people who subscribe, but coaches are right in my target market.

**Nancy:** So let me say this about that. I'm sure it took you a few hours to write this article, correct?

**Robert:** Yes.

**Nancy:** How many people need to pick up the phone to sign up for your newsletter or join your Action Plan Marketing Club or engage you in some other way for those two or three hours of article-writing to pay off for you?

**Robert:** Not many. If a couple of people sign up for my club, it pays for itself.

**Nancy:** See? That's what I'm talking about. That is the beauty of public relations. If you have expertise that you can share in an article or interview and it actually gets spread over a wider kettle of potential perfect clients, with great impact and efficiency, you can earn credibility with those people and invite them to actually take action to get in touch with you.

If you're actually answering the phone and getting to yes faster, what is that worth to you in your business? It's priceless. There are many people that would much rather spend a lot of money on advertising because it's easier, but it's not necessarily more effective. That's the thing I would like everyone on the call to pay attention to.

**Robert:** The truth is that for most independent professionals, advertising isn't very effective.

**Nancy:** And it's not even in the budget.

**Robert:** No. That's why I'm always recommending things like speaking, networking, joint ventures, teleclasses and all of those. But we really need to think of adding media and publicity to that. In the same way, it can be done very inexpensively.

What you're saying first is to look at the media, websites, blogs, business journals and magazines that your potential clients are reading. Get a sense of them first before you approach them. Look at the editorial calendar, the kind of content, etc. Then make your first move.

**Nancy:** Absolutely. And can I offer an example of how this works? Sometimes people say, "Well, I'll just write a press release, and I'm going to send it to the world with one click, and I will have done my job. Then I'm waiting for the Red Sea to part and for everyone to come beating a path to my door.

**Robert:** That's "silver-bullet publicity," right?

**Nancy:** It's so disappointing. It never really unfolds in that way. But if you take a little but more time to think about it, I'm going to give you an example from La Panzanella, my gourmet Italian cracker company.

No one had ever told the business story behind this remarkable gourmet success in the Puget Sound region, which is where they are headquartered.

I spoke with the owner and found out that he quadrupled sales since buying the company since 2003. I learned that there were five essential lessons he had learned in growing his business that could be potentially beneficial to other people in a similar scenario.

I knew that there was a reporter at the *Puget Sound Business Journal* that covered food manufacturing. I said, "I'm bringing this to you first because this is your beat, the story has never been told, and there are five essential lessons from which this business has benefited that your readers can profit. Here's the background. Here's the

detail. Have I captured your interest? I'll call you in a couple days unless I hear from you first."

Less than 20 minutes later, he wrote back. He said, "I'm interested." The interview is happening this Friday! I demonstrated in my email pitch that I knew he was the right guy to write about this, that I was giving it to him before I gave it to anyone else, and that I gave him proper support so that he had enough juice to work with to demonstrate to his editor that he had the perfect story.

Anyone can follow that same recipe and have a similar result. It is so rewarding because I spent 30 minutes writing a thoughtful email that saw, heard and celebrated him for the job he's doing and made his job easier to pick up the fork and pierce my story. Now we're going to be consuming fabulous news in a couple of weeks.

**Robert:** So the article is going to be, "Here's a local company that did well," and they often do articles like that in the business journals.

**Nancy:** Yes. I happen to know that there's a Growing Your Business section, and I've read enough of those stories to know that you have to be above a certain amount of revenues, you have to have above a certain number of employees, you have to have learned five essential lessons from which the readers can profit, and you have to be local.

It met the recipe. I served it up on a platter. He said yes. It was decisive and immediate.

I want to give you another example. I subscribe to a service called PR Leads which sends me active media

queries every day from national and local media people who are looking for experts.

I got something from *Forbes* magazine just yesterday looking for financial planners who were looking for people where the wife was earning more than the husband, and how was that shaking out in the marriage, and did they have any specifics to share about how to navigate what can be somewhat rocky territory.

It just so happened, I was at the gym yesterday and talking to a financial planner who was in this very same scenario, so I sent this lead to Miss Financial-Planner-Firm today, and she got an interview with *Forbes*. How amazing is that? From the treadmill to the pages of *Forbes* magazine in less than 24 hours!

If you are paying attention to the media opportunities, and you are sharing your replies in a way that lets the reporter do their job without having to sift through a lot of “buy me, buy me” detail, you’re set up to succeed.

That’s a big shift for a lot of people who are just trying to get to the next client. Think about it from the standpoint of how the readers will benefit, why this is new, why this is compelling. I hope that answers the question.

**Robert:** It does, and that’s really a good start.

I want to take a look at something else that I think is very important that you emphasized that a lot of people don’t know about. Many business owners are very busy. They just want their ideal clients to find them faster. You have a couple of tried-and-true outlets that you’ve found to help them get this mission accomplished.

One is called Google, putting your business on the Google Maps, and one is [www.Yelp.com](http://www.Yelp.com). Can you tell us a bit about both of those?

**Nancy:** Oh, sure. Let's face facts. If you're doing professional services, consulting, or anything that's high involvement, 94% of the people are going to Google you before they call you. What you want is for people to be able to find you faster.

Google, which is one of the preeminent search engines, actually has a way for you to put your business on the Google Maps. You can sign up for a free Google account, and then you can actually put your company on the Google Maps with a profile. With your profile, you can include photos of your products, video of you in action, links to testimonials. It's very robust.

I just put this to the test two weeks ago for my own business, Main Street Media Savvy. If you Google "Main Street Media Savvy", my Google map shows up third on Page 1 of a Google search. If you click there, you get my whole company story and have access to photos and videos and access and information that helps people get to yes a whole lot faster.

The beauty of this is it's free to do. It takes like less than five minutes to set up. And then when you check your Google rankings, there you are. How much easier can it be?

**Robert:** So if I do this and people look up "Action Plan Marketing," they're going to find my Google map.

**Nancy:** I hope so. Have you done it already?

- Robert:** I have not done it yet.
- Nancy:** Well, just for fun, I'm just typing in right here.
- Robert:** If you put in "Action Plan Marketing," I'm going to be at the top anyway, but not with a Google map.
- Nancy:** I'm just checking with my own company name to see what happens when the Google search comes up. It comes up three on Page 1. How cool is that?!
- That's one easy-squeezy lemon-easy way to help people find you faster.
- Robert:** Note that technical term: easy-squeezy lemon-easy. I love that stuff!
- Nancy:** Oh, good! Well, here's another one.
- Robert:** We're going to give you a link to this. It's [www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com](http://www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com), "Want to Put Your Business on the (Google) Map? Here's How." There's an article there that will help you.
- Nancy:** Excellent. And I'm telling you. A lot of people say, "Oh, I don't have time for PR. I don't have time for any of this." If you don't have five minutes to do this, then you deserve everything you get.
- Robert:** You might not have a lot of videos and stuff, but you can put a few things up. You can find something, for goodness sake, and then you can add to it later.
- Nancy:** Absolutely. The key is make it easy to buy, easy to own, easy to refer. Those are tips that my good colleague and former client Alice Cunningham of Olympic Hot Tub has

always said. If they can't find you, you can't get to square one, so make it easy for people to find you.

**Robert:** The fact that you're there on Google because Google is so popular, it adds a little bit more credibility. Sure, they'll click through to your site as well, hopefully, but this just adds a little edge.

**Nancy:** Absolutely. It doesn't cost you anything, and for the return you get, it's well worth it.

**Robert:** The other one is one I hadn't heard before, [www.Yelp.com](http://www.Yelp.com). What is Yelp all about?

**Nancy:** Yelp is a customer review site that also has very robust search engine optimization. We've all heard that having a third-party endorsement of your product or service is a really great way to get people to feel more comfortable saying yes to you.

If you go to Yelp and set up an account for your business, it's free. You can set up your Action Plan Marketing account at Yelp, and then you can send an electronic newsletter or make a blog post or send an email to your 10 or 15 most loyal, delighted, happy clients and invite them to visit that site and give them your Yelp link and say, "I would be so honored if you would make a comment about the experience you've had working with me as a member of the Marketing Club."

If they go there and actually say something and post their picture there and say, "This is the best thing I've done for my business since I opened my doors. Business has escalated threefold since Robert Middleton showed me

the way,” that’s a beautiful thing. They can give you a one, two, three, four or five-star rating.

The same thing happens when people do a Google search. The Yelp reviews come up. The thing about a Yelp review is you, the business owner, cannot doctor it. If John Smith goes in and says, “Robert Middleton is the greatest thing since sliced bread,” you can’t do anything about it. I mean, there it is.

Some business owners are fearful that former unhappy clients might go to Yelp and say something unfavorable, but even the CEO and founder of Yelp said that favorable reviews outpace unfavorable reviews by a 6-to-1 ratio.

If your 10 best clients go and say that you are a five-star service provider that they would not hesitate in recommending to anybody serious about growing their business, when people land there and see that, it just makes it that much easier for them to get to yes.

Here again, it is free to do. It takes virtually minutes to set up. And the influence that it can have is priceless because those links live on forever indefinitely on the Internet.

If of all the top 10 things that come up on Page 1 of a Google search are your website, your blog, your Google map, your Yelp reviews that give you five-star ratings, and you have a serious customer standing on the line trying to decide, “Is this a good risk? Do I want to take it?” you’ve just made it a whole lot easier for that person to get to yes, and isn’t that what it’s really all about?

**Robert:** Absolutely. In a previous interview with Jason Alba on social media, we talked about your profile and

recommendations on LinkedIn, which is similar, but it sounds like this is more accessible to search engines. I don't know exactly what the parallel is, but you might as well do both.

**Nancy:** Yes, I think so. The thing about LinkedIn which is great is that people like to do business with people they like, trust and respect. When you're linking in with people, by definition, you've all met that criteria.

So if someone you know, like and respect says that Robert Middleton's the greatest action plan marketing guide on Earth, you're that much closer to believing it because you know and like and trust that guy, and it feels like less of a risk.

With the posts that get posted to Yelp, hopefully most of them know who you are, but if you are someone who sells products, for example, like Kentucky Fried Chicken or Jamba Juice or some kind of an item, maybe you never met that person or worked personally with them in a teleseminar. You don't really know all those people because they're just going to the store to buy whatever you have.

**Robert:** I certainly don't know everybody in the club. They know me, but I don't know them. But nevertheless...

**Nancy:** One of my clients makes these purse hangers called Zook Hooks that keep your purse off the ground and add a bit of bling at the same time and make sure that your purse is always free from germs. It's a great thing.

I carry one of these around with me, and people say, "Where did you get that? I really love that." People are

very passionate about these little products. So if they go onto Yelp and say, “My Zook Hook purse hanger is the greatest thing I’ve ever done to protect my purse investment and protect my family from germs, and you should have some too,” hotdog hallelujah! That’s really great for Zook Hook!

**Robert:** Exactly. So, everybody, check out the Google Maps (Just click on the Maps link at the top left of your Google page.) and [www.Yelp.com](http://www.Yelp.com). Put a little time into it. Don’t say, “Oh, I didn’t get around to it.” Get around to it. These are not hard to do. They don’t take a lot of time. Over a period of time, you get that visibility and credibility that’s there all the time. It’s working for you 24 hours a day.

**Nancy:** You get the return within minutes of doing it. That is the thing that I think people get hungry for. People get compelled with Shiny Bright Object Disease, and they go to the next shiny bright object before they finish whatever they started.

The beauty of these two things is if you did the Google map today and the Yelp account tomorrow, you are golden because the day after, those search engine results are returning favorably for your business.

You don’t have any time to waste. This is a challenging economy. You need more of the right people showing up now. Why would you delay something that’s so immediate and within your control?

**Robert:** Nancy, I love what you’re saying. I love it that other people are saying the same kind of thing I’m saying. It’s about action, targeting, focus, etc.

Let's get on to the next one. We're going to cover some of these basic PR tools that you've all heard about but maybe aren't very good at. We'll spend a little bit of time on the basics of them. These are targeted pitch letters, bylined articles, press releases and responding to active media queries.

What's a targeted pitch letter? Who do we send it to? When do we send it? How do we use that tool?

**Nancy:** A targeted pitch letter is the quintessential way to see, hear and celebrate the media outlet where you most want to be seen. Earlier in this call, I said I knew that Steve Wilhelm was the food manufacturing reporter for the *Puget Sound Business Journal*. I was familiar with his work. I knew what kind of stories he writes. I knew that my story about La Panzanella would be perfect for him.

I wrote an email to Steve Wilhelm. I put a sassy, provocative comment in the subject line that I knew would grab his attention.

**Robert:** Which was what?

**Nancy:** I will look for that while we're talking.

I said to him, "As the food manufacturing reporter for the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, I know you're always interested in interesting local stories about companies overcoming great odds to achieve great things, and I am bringing you just such a story today. Here's the gist of it."

**Robert:** You were very straightforward with an emphasis on the benefit. Can I send that from my business, as opposed to a publicist sending it like you did?

**Nancy:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** It doesn't make a lot of difference, you don't think?

**Nancy:** I always like to tell this story. When I started my business in 2001, I was not number-one ranked on Google for "do-it-yourself publicity" or "publicity expert" or "Bellevue publicist" or anything like that. I was just hanging out my shingle, trying to find good story placements for clients that were trusting me to do my job.

A good approach is better than a fancy name every day of the week. Today, eight years later, when people see my name in their inbox, they open my email because I've earned a reputation of being really good at what I do.

But if you learn how to do this from experts like me and make an excellent approach, it doesn't matter if it comes from a publicist or from you. If you make a good approach, you've got a good story, and good stories always stand on their own merit. So put that to rest.

**Robert:** What should be in this pitch letter? First of all, there should be a great headline. There should be a great reason right off the top. There's no beating around the bush. "We have a good story for you of real interest that will interest your readers, and here it is."

**Nancy:** Can I just read it? The headline says, "Nancy Juetten sharing a food manufacturing story to business success that is paved with Italian artisan-made crackers and useful lessons from which others can benefit." A little long, upon re-reflection, but it didn't stand in my way of getting what I wanted.

Then I say, “Hi, Steve. We’ve worked together over the years to break food manufacturing stories from the likes of Fran’s Chocolates, Oberto Sausage Company and TalkingRain Beverage Company. Today, I come to you with a food manufacturing story about better crackers that hails from Tukwila, Washington.

“The good news is that the business story behind this award-winning company has never yet been told, and there are some powerful lessons the owner has learned from which other business owners can most definitely benefit.

“I’m bringing this story to you first because I believe the readers of the *Puget Sound Business Journal* will want to know more about this local company and benefit from the lessons the owner has learned since taking ownership of the company in 2003.”

That was my lead paragraph. I told him, “You know me. We’ve worked together. I’ve got something just for you, and it’s got great lessons from which your readers can profit.” Ding, ding, ding.

Then I have another paragraph that explains the company and offers an active link to the website so the reader can learn more. The news hook is that, “This profitable company that enjoys national distribution of its award-winning Croccantini line of gourmet crackers is introducing a new line of spicy artisan-made Italian crackers called Fieri.”

Then I say, “Since the Growing Your Business features within the newspaper typically share useful lessons, here are a few to capture your interest.” Then in bullet point

format, I offer seven amazing lessons that are newsworthy, interesting and provocative.

**Robert:** And those are around how they built their business?

**Nancy:** Yeah, I say, “It pays to narrow-focus and apply focus to a high-growth potential product while never compromising on quality. Attention to production, operations, management and manufacturing best practices delivers powerful dividends for productivity and profitability.

“New, well-maintained production equipment beats repairing old equipment every day of the week. Focus on distribution, earning yes decisions from quality specialty food retailers and national grocery store decision makers lends powerful fuel to achieving national distribution.

“When you have winning recipe, extend the line and offer your customers choices for quantity. Welcome international distribution. Create new product lines to reflect changing tastes. The spicy Fieri line is coming to market in June, 2009.”

Basically, I have little headlines. It’s not, “Buy me. Buy me. Buy me.” Then I say, “These are the useful lessons this business owner has learned to quadruple his business since buying it in 2003. Who among us would not want to be in this gentleman’s shoes quadrupling our business in such a short period of time? He must be doing something right. Maybe we have something to learn.”

**Robert:** I’d like to say that this also taps into what I call my “Contribution Factor.” By getting this article published, it helps other people, which is a good thing. Plus, it helps

the cracker manufacturer because more people hear about them, so it's all good, all ways.

**Nancy:** Absolutely. Then the other thing that you want to include which is where the sitting down and doing the work is involved is I say, "Steve, I have a backgrounder, a bio and a photo and a press release to share that offers even more details to support your potential reporting. Can I compel you to read more and set up a meeting with this local business owner who's successfully growing his company even in these daunting times? I'll follow up with you in a few days unless I hear from you first. Thank you for your consideration. Looking forward to taking the next step."

You do want to have a press release, a backgrounder, a photo ready to shoot when he says he wants it because when you do, that's exactly what happened.

He says, "Yes, I want more." Then in the next email, I'm able to send him exactly what he wants, and he gets it in record time. The beauty for the business owner is we've taken the time to explain, "It all started here in a little log cabin in Minnesota, and look at us today."

**Robert:** You're making it easy for the reporter, as opposed to, "We have a business that we think is really good. I think you might like to interview them. Give me a call." That's not going to do anything. It's too much work on their part.

**Nancy:** Absolutely. That is the beauty of doing publicity properly. When you say, "Here's the press release. Here's the backgrounder. Here's a photo. Here's a photo of the product," you have just made it so easy for this reporter to get his job done. When you do that, you always win.

If you are a time-strapped, deadline-burdened professional who has been there, done that, got the T-shirt for the last 25 years, you want to earn his esteem immediately rather than make it hard for him to do his job. It's really all about customer service.

You know something else I've done in the past that's really worked well? Two years ago in April there was this horrible scare with pet food, and pet owners were afraid of what to feed their pets for fear that they would get ill.

**Robert:** The pet food from China was adulterated with some bad stuff.

**Nancy:** Yes. It was big, big news, and it was front page all over America. A local company called me and said, "I serve organic dog food, and my phone is ringing off the hook. I think I have a solution to people's angst right now that can help them bridge this difficult time." I said, "I think you do too. I think that's really a good answer."

Rather than saying to the reporter, "Buy Darwin's Natural Pet Products because that's the only answer," the big story is, "What do troubled pet owners feed their pets right now?"

**Robert:** That they can be sure is going to be safe.

**Nancy:** So I wrote the reporter and said, "This is a question on the minds of anyone who loves pets." Here in Seattle, more people have pets than children, so pets are a big deal here. I said, "Would it interest you to know that there are three natural pet food companies here in the Seattle area that are all having escalating demand for their products? They

are A, B and C manufacturers. In fact, my client, Darwin's Natural Pet Products said, ' \_\_\_\_\_'”

Not only did I help the reporter get access to my client who was the person who called me, but I was also able to help the reporter contribute to the report by saying, “And here are two other local food companies that make pet food that is natural,” and I'm making it easier for him or her to do the interviews because they don't want to have to go searching.

Even though I was spreading the net over a wider kettle of pet food providers, my client landed on the front page of the paper, and I ended up looking like a superstar for having made it happen. It was a bigger story than this guy selling more pet food. A lot of people need to be buying better pet food right now.

**Robert:** I'm sure that helped his sales a lot.

**Nancy:** Oh, yes! That sort of gets to that topic of making a contribution. Yes, you want to sell more products or services. Yes, you want more of the right people to show up. But if the issue is bigger than you are and there are other people who can also contribute to the conversation, that makes for better newspaper reporting. If you're the person that brings it to the newspaper reporter, you always look better for being generous.

**Robert:** That's sort of a primer on targeted pitch letters. Know who the media is, know certain publications, know what's happening in the news at the moment, and see if something that you have could be a story. Then pitch it to them with benefits to their readers, not just, “Buy me. Buy me. Buy me.”

Obviously, there are a lot of moving parts in there, a lot of things that you have to do, but that's the basics and a great place to start.

Let's look at bylined articles in traditional, online and social media. Mostly, I've done articles through my ezine and some through social media. The last article I did for Biznik was the most popular article for two weeks, getting over 2,000 people reading it.

**Nancy:** You're a rock star!

**Robert:** At least in Biznik! And I've done a few other things. We've talked about articles with other people, but I'd love to get your take on traditional, online and social media articles.

**Nancy:** Let's say there are some people in your Action Plan Marketing Group who want to be known as experts in their field. One of the best ways to earn that reputation is to write articles and have them appear in the media that your ideal clients are reading or watching or paying attention to.

**Robert:** Like *Choice* magazine, Biznik, etc.

**Nancy:** Like the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, like the *Snohomish County Business Journal*. There are so many different avenues. The benefit of it is this. A lot of people say to me, "But what I really want is a column in *The New York Times*."

**Robert:** Don't we all?

**Nancy:** And I'm thinking, "Well, good for you. You have to start somewhere." What newspaper, magazine or venue in your own backyard could you contribute to on a regular basis

to develop a track record as a quality contributor of useful, savvy and provocative content?

Then those of us who get what we want usually ask for what it was we wanted in the first place. And so one of the things you can do is read that publication over a period of time, notice that other bylined articles are appearing, and thinking, “You know you want it when you have print envy.”

You colleague or your friend or your neighbor across the way is in the newspaper and you’re not, and it’s making you mad. You say to yourself, “If he can be in the paper with whatever he has to bring to the party, then I should be able to be in the paper too. Why haven’t I gotten started any sooner?”

You just ask. It’s the same kind of thing as sending a targeted pitch letter.

I’ll tell you something from my own life. I wanted to earn a Media Savvy column in the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, which is the most well-read business journal in this region of the country, in Seattle.

I knew I couldn’t get it right out of the box because they’re really picky over there and very particular, but there’s another quality business journal in town called the *Snohomish County Business Journal*.

**Robert:** Is it also related in the same network?

**Nancy:** No, they’re not even in the same family. They’re totally separate.

I was talking to the editor and she was late for a call. She said, “I’m so sorry I was late. I was kept way too long at the Marysville Chamber of Commerce because everyone there wanted to know how to earn editorial attention and I had to stay and help them know how to do it.”

I said, “Boy, that sounds like a really hot topic.” She said, “It sure is. I was there an hour longer than I’d planned.” I thought, “There’s my opening.”

I said, “Tell me, would it serve the readers to have a regular column in your business journal that would people navigate how to get in the paper, and not only the paper but every other media that would matter to them, to hear from an expert who could show them time-tested and proven ways to get the job done?”

She said, “What a great idea! Let me talk to my editor about that.” About a week later, she said, “We want you to write that column. Are you willing?” and I said yes.

**Robert:** “Funny you should ask.”

**Nancy:** So for six months, I’m writing these columns in 750 words. I’m not selling. I’m sharing. I’m making a contribution. The readers were loving it. The editors were loving it. I was proud of the content, but I knew the big, shiny, bright object on my horizon was I wanted a column in the *Puget Sound Business Journal*.

As luck and timing would have it, I got invited to a Women of Influence event here in Seattle a couple of Novembers ago. I’d never met the publisher, but I asked someone I knew there to introduce me to him. He had a glass of wine.

I said, “Hi, Emory Thomas. I’m Nancy Juetten. I’ve been writing for the business journal as a ghostwriter for the last eight years. It’s so nice to meet you.” He smiled. I said, “I’m here to make a request. I’m going to make a big, hairy, audacious request, and all I’m asking is for you to consider it.” And he smiled.

I said, “I’ve been writing a Media Savvy column for the *Snohomish County Business Journal*, and what it’s about is do-it-yourself publicity and how to help people earn their own publicity without spending a fortune. The readers love it. The publisher loves it. It’s helping thousands and thousands of people.

“My big, hairy, audacious goal is for your newspaper to consider bringing this information to your readers. When I have six really great months of columns to demonstrate what a powerful contributor I am, would you do me the honor of taking a look at them?”

What could he do? He said, “You know what? Fair enough. I’ll be happy to look.” I said, “Let me get you another glass of wine. That’s all I needed to know. Thank you very much. Enjoy your evening.” Less than five minutes.

So, when my six months of columns were in the can, I wrote to him. I said, “You may remember me, making that big, hairy, audacious request at the Women of Influence banquet. Here are my six columns. I would be so honored if you would consider blah, blah, blah.”

And I said, “And the reason this is more timely now than ever before is because yada, yada whatever. I’d be so honored to earn your consideration.”

Two weeks later, I get an email from the Small Business section editor, and he says, “We want your column. Here’s the paperwork.”

**Robert:** So you didn’t do a new column? You did the same column, but it was in both papers?

**Nancy:** Well, no. Their only request was that I discontinue writing for the other paper so they could have me exclusively. And I said, “Okay, if that’s the way we’re going to do it, can I request a three-month delay so that I can exit gracefully from my current commitment and do a great launch job when we start in September?” And he said, “Yes, we can do that.”

I’ve been writing for them for almost two years now. When in doubt, ask for what you want because you just might get it.

**Robert:** Did you say some of your articles had been reprinted in other business journals around the country?

**Nancy:** Yes. The neat thing about the *Puget Sound Business Journal* is it’s part of the American City Business Journal family. Several of my articles have run in San Antonio, Sacramento, Houston, Seattle, Portland. Once you get into the system, the other Small Business editors across the country can have access to your content, and if they consider it good, they’ll run with it.

How much more efficient is it for you to get seen, heard and celebrated in your own backyard and beyond than to have a family of newspapers use all your content everywhere they are?

Here's the thing. It's not easy to get a column right out of the box, so I often tell people to start with a lot of à la carte article submissions to a variety of publications that are right for your message and serve your people because most people are information-overloaded and can't remember where they saw you last.

They just remember they keep seeing you everywhere, and you must be somebody special if you're in all these different publications. It just makes it that much easier for people to get to yes faster.

**Robert:** In most cases, you don't write the article and just send it. You send a pitch letter for the article as well, right?

**Nancy:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** So, "Here's my idea for the article. Here's a basic outline. What do you think?"

**Nancy:** That's pretty much it. I'll just give you specific wording that I've used on more than one occasion that you can use too and have great success.

You say, "I see you've got a Healthcare Quarterly coming up in June, 2009. Here it is May 1st, and I'm connecting with you because I'm an expert in this aspect of healthcare and have an article idea that relates to this trend, why it matters, and what readers can do about it right now.

"Here's a link to my website, my bio and my executive headshot, and here are links to other articles that I've written that demonstrate my writing skill and provocative style of sharing information. I can't wait to talk with you about this article idea and how it will serve your readers. I

will call you in a few days unless I hear from you first. Thank you very much.”

**Robert:** How often have you done that similar kind of letter?

**Nancy:** Oh god! Thousands of times.

**Robert:** What’s your hit rate?

**Nancy:** Oh god. Eighty percent.

**Robert:** No kidding? Listen to that, everybody. You write a well-considered targeted article to the right person at the right time, with a good idea... These are articles that you’ve written for yourself and you’re pitching yourself in many cases, right?

**Nancy:** Oh, yeah, absolutely.

**Robert:** This is not just for her clients. You have to remember that these papers, magazines and publications are looking for content. If they don’t have content, they don’t have a magazine. You’ll do it, and you’ll do it for free. If you know what you’re doing and there’s a lot of credibility there, why wouldn’t they take it? You might not get 80% to start, but if you got 50%, it would be pretty good.

**Nancy:** And here’s the thing. I love telling this story because you could’ve knocked me over with a feather. I wanted to get known beyond my own backyard. I’ve been writing this column for 19 months or two years or something. I get this call from this business owner in Napa Valley, which is beyond the Seattle backyard.

He says, “I’ve been reading your column for quite some time. I think a lot of it. I’m coming to Seattle. I’ve got a

project. I'm wondering if you would take a meeting with me," and I said, "Sure."

So I go and meet this fellow, and we have a very good conversation, and he has this notebook in his hand. And I said, "Well, what do you got there?" And he said, "Well, let me show you." It was a notebook with five tabs.

The first tab had all of my *Puget Sound Business Journal* columns printed neatly with yellow highlighting. The second tab had all of my *Snohomish County Business Journal* columns printed with yellow highlighting. The third tab was pages from my blog, [www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com](http://www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com), which he had printed and saved. The fourth tab was my newsletters that he had printed and saved.

**Robert:** It sounds like he was stalking you!

**Nancy:** I know! But it was like I sat there with my mouth open. Then there was this pregnant pause, and he says to me, "As you see, Nancy, I'm a big fan of your work. There is no beauty contest here. You're the only one I'm talking to to take on my five-figure project. Will you do it?"

**Robert:** "Well, let me think about that."

**Nancy:** The reason I tell this story is sometimes whether your blogging, writing an article, doing whatever, there's this fear and self-doubt that nobody's reading your stuff. I don't want to waste my time and send my stuff out into the world and not have anybody reading it.

The fact of the matter is if you're strategic about where you place your information so that it gets seen by the right

kinds of people, the right people are going to show up. And how many five-figure projects do you need for that two-hour investment of writing an article to pay off for you?

Not to go on and on, but there are article directories on the internet. My favorite is [www.EzineArticles.com](http://www.EzineArticles.com). You can post articles there for free.

They even have a reports function that will tell you how many thousands of people have read your articles, how many other ezine article writers have used your articles, how many people have clicked actively to your website. You can get some really good immediate feedback that people are reading and using your content. That should buoy your confidence that you want to do it some more.

With Biznik, my goal is write five articles that earned an 8 or better on a scale of 1 to 10 so I could earn my Expert badge. As a result of earning my Expert badge, I've had numerous people sign up for my Publici-Tea workshops, numerous people buy my information products, and also post public compliments on the site to say, "You are really making a contribution to our success."

It doesn't cost me anything to write down what it is that I know how to help people with other than a little bit of time, but I gain so much in terms of the new customers that I have the opportunity to serve and the success I'm able to support and the fact that these articles live on on the Internet forever.

I have to tell this story too. This is very funny. When I started my business in 2001, if you Googled my name, what you would find it that I ran 10K races really slowly.

There was nothing there about what kind of expertise I developed.

I challenge you to Google my name today and see how many hundreds of pages that come up that reinforce my expertise as a do-it-yourself publicity expert, a trainer, someone you could like, trust and respect in serving your needs.

**Robert:** So many of those are related to articles that you have online.

**Nancy:** Absolutely. Rome wasn't built in a day. It happened brick by brick. If you're trying to build a professional reputation for yourself, make the commitment that you're going to write four articles in 2009 and place them where your ideal people are going to see them.

Write four articles and have them show up on your Internet search and reinforce your expertise. It doesn't cost you any out-of-pocket dollar. It brings you immediate return on your online reputation, and if that gets somebody closer to yes faster, it's a no-brainer.

**Robert:** You sold me! This information is just great, Nancy. It's really valuable.

Let's look at press releases, the famous press release. When does one use a press release, and what's the basic format? Is it done by paper anymore, or is it all done by email?

**Nancy:** What is a press release? A press release is typically a one-page document, double-spaced, that explains, with the most important information first, the who, the what, the

where, the when, the why, and most importantly why anybody should care.

There's usually a headline at the top of the page, your contact name and email and telephone, who, what, when, where, why and how. At the end of the press release, there's something called a "boilerplate paragraph" that would say something like, "About Action Plan Marketing. Action Plan Marketing is a company run by Robert Middleton. He's fiercely committed to helping small-business owners everywhere market their businesses effectively so they can have immediate prosperity and lasting success."

**Robert:** "And he's the author of the 'InfoGuru Marketing Manual' and the 'Web Site ToolKit'."

**Nancy:** All that stuff. You want to get all that on one page.

If you want to see what a good press release looks like, [www.PRWeb.com](http://www.PRWeb.com) has thousands and thousands of press releases that are posted on that site that you can read so that you can write your own press releases in the same format.

**Robert:** So a press release doesn't necessarily have to be current news?

**Nancy:** It should be. It's got to be newsworthy.

**Robert:** So I could do a press release about the Action Plan Marketing Club, for instance.

**Nancy:** Well, you could do a press release, "Action Plan Marketing debuts new club to empower budget-challenged business owners with proven success tips." You've debuted

something new, so that's new. You just don't want it to be "blah, blah, blah boring." There's some kind of a news hook. "New cure for cancer discovered." "Easy Button demystified." Try to have some fun with it.

Getting back to the format, the reason the format is important is most journalists, bloggers, editors and writers are used to receiving information in that format. So it just sets you apart from anyone who just sort of schleps together the information in a very conversational way.

**Robert:** So you go to PRWeb. Can you then search on kinds of press releases for kinds of businesses and stuff like that?

**Nancy:** I believe you can, but it doesn't even matter. The format is the same no matter what kind of business it is.

**Robert:** So if you read a dozen or so of those, you can start to get a clue about what works and what doesn't.

**Nancy:** Right, but what works and what doesn't, this is the most important thing: What do you want the press release to do? If you are Microsoft, if you are Amazon.com, if you are some big name company that everyone knows about, there are reporters all around America whose job it is to follow those companies.

So if you're in a big company like that and you know everybody's going to be waiting on your next new product introduction, a press release is a very efficient, complete way to share the essential information and give reporters access to what they need to know to write about your news.

Unfortunately, for Ma and Pa Business Owner on Main Street, USA, the reporters in America are not sitting on their hands waiting to hear from you. So a press release typically does not open the floodgates of lead opportunity just by sending it out over a wire service.

What is good about doing the press release is you get all the essential information in a format that is friendly to the people who are responsible for reporting the news.

What makes the press release better is when you actually write an email ahead of the press release, or you embed the press release in your email and say, “Dear Bob. This is perfect for KAIRO News at 7 and here’s why.” Then you offer some kind of personal commentary that helps them know that you’re the guy that they can’t wait to talk to. Does that make sense?

**Robert:** Yes. And then you’d have a link back to that press release where they could open it up.

**Nancy:** Yeah. It’s like somebody says to me, “I had the business plan. I’ve got the website. I’ve got all this stuff.” It’s like that old movie, “Field of Dreams.” If you build it, they will come. She basically said, “Well, I’ve got all this. I’m going to send the press release out over the PRWeb, and then I’m just going to take orders.” I said, “Is that really what you think? Because that really isn’t what’s going to happen.”

A press release can build awareness. A press release can send your message across the wires so that Yahoo and MSN and CNBC and all these people will have access to it. It will show up on an Internet search when people go

looking for you. It will reinforce your expertise, your product. It may invite some orders.

I'm going to talk about my cracker company for a moment. He's got a business success story, but he's also got a whole bunch of food stories, like, "What are the new ways to deal with hors d'oeuvres in the sassy summer months when people aren't going out to eat anymore and they're eating at home?"

"What are the best pairings of ingredients with this particular flavor profile of cracker?" His own community newspaper in his own neighborhood: "Who knew that somebody from their own neighborhood's path to prosperity was paved with Italian rustic crackers?"

You sort of want to start to think about what are all the different ways that you could frame your story so that different kinds of media outlets would be interested. Then you target.

Another one is in-flight magazines. When people are on their way to Latin America, they're reading an Alaska Airlines magazine or an American Airlines magazine where they're wanting to read about food and wine and cigars. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they were reading about your product too?

Just start to think about, "Okay. This guy sells delicious gourmet Italian crackers. What are all the different ways that you could frame that story so that different kinds of publications would be interested?"

Then you share those three amazing ideas in your letter to Bob, "Hey, Bob. There's three ideas for *Food & Wine*

magazine that are just perfect for you. Below is the press release with all the nitty-gritty details. I can't wait to talk to you about how this will serve your readers."

When you give them the three nitty-gritty, fun, sassy story ideas that show that you have some insight about what that magazine is all about, you're already that much closer to yes. It's a beautiful thing.

**Robert:** In this case, you're stimulating them to hopefully write an article for you. They don't take that press release and print it verbatim anywhere. That virtually never happens.

**Nancy:** Well, sometimes it does. It happens in your community newspapers. It does happen. And speaking of community newspapers, please don't ignore them. If you do business on Main Street, USA, your community newspaper gets delivered to every household in your ZIP code, and those are your people.

I love this story: There as a lady in Santa Barbara, and her mainline business was sidelined because of some economic challenges, but she really loved making toiletries, really nice creams and lotions and soaps. So she created this line of soap, and she had it for sale at one of the local retailers.

The local newspaper wrote about this line of toiletries that were really creamy and delicious. The Secret Service calls and says, "We're interested in talking to you about your product line because there's a retail store on Pennsylvania Avenue next to the White House, and we think that you should be in the store." She said, "Are you out of your mind? This is a crank call," and she hangs up.

They call back. “This is the Secret Service. This is not a crank call. We’re serious about your toiletries. We want to bring them to Pennsylvania Avenue.” There’s a seven-year licensing deal for her 1600 Pennsylvania line of toiletries that are now for sale in the White House because she had her story told in a community newspaper!

If you discount the value of your community newspaper, think again. Even though your major daily may be getting thinner and thinner every day, the people in your backyard are reading the community newspaper because they want to know who was burglarized. They want to know what high school team won the latest whatever.

**Robert:** We get a paper like that. If you’re a financial planner, tax preparer or some kind of local business consultant, you could probably find an angle if you have local clients. It could really make you stand out.

**Nancy:** Okay, so can I tell you one more story along these lines?

**Robert:** The stories are great, Nancy.

**Nancy:** Okay, so mortgage. Really challenging time to be borrowing money. This has been going on for a while. So there was this article in the *Bellevue Reporter*. I live in Bellevue, Washington. It was about this local Bellevue author who wrote a book to help people get a mortgage and avoid all of the little handy-dandy extra fees that added up unnecessarily.

She was solving a problem that was deeply felt at a time in the marketplace when this help was desperately needed, and she just happened to be a Bellevue author. There was

a picture of this Bellevue author with her book, and there she was on the front page of the *Bellevue Reporter*.

The reporter who wrote the story's name was Lena Crowell I thought, "Ha! That's very interesting," because I wrote a book called *The Media-Savvy-to-Go Publicity Toolkit* and I was trying to solve a different kind of problem that my own local neighbors were trying to solve, which was how to get seen, heard and celebrated without breaking the bank on advertising.

So I basically wrote to Lena Crowell, and I said, "I really enjoyed your story about Mary Jane and her book about navigating the mortgage mess. This is really timely information. I know it's going to serve a lot of people.

"The reason I'm calling you today, in addition to sharing this compliment, is to let you know that I'm a local author in Bellevue who's written a similar kind of guide that helps people navigate an entirely different kind of problem, and this is what it's all about.

"Would it be of service to the readers to showcase how this local author is making a difference in her own unique way? I'll follow up with you in a couple of days unless I hear from you first."

I followed up with her in a few days because they never call you back because they have 800 emails waiting for them.

**Robert:**

This is something to underline, everyone. Don't send it out and cross your fingers. Send it out and follow up.

**Nancy:** So I call her up, and I said, “Hey, Lena. I just wanted to follow up on that story pitch about the local author helping people solve publicity problems that desperately need to be addressed. Would it interest you in having a conversation?”

Then she says, “You know what? Your pitch was on the short list of people I wanted to call this week. I would like to meet with you, and I would like to do a photo shoot in your backyard. Would that work for you, and when can we do it?”

Because I’ll all about “in your own backyard and beyond,” so I had this beautiful garden that she brought a photographer to. We interviewed in the backyard, and the next week, the story was on the front page of the *Bellevue Reporter*, the same day that our children were having a swim meet at the community swim club.

I show up there in my jeans and my T-shirt, and all the parents are going, “There she is! There she is!” Well, someone emerged from that readership and engaged me for a four-figure project just because my story was in the newspaper.

Not to go on and on about that, but please do not discount your community newspaper. Most people on Main Street, USA, that’s where you live. You know, it’s like that movie *George Bailey* and “*It’s a Wonderful Life*.” He says, “Most people, they just want to be doing business with their neighbors and living the life and sending their kids to college.” That’s all happening on Main Street, USA. It’s not necessarily happening in *The Wall Street Journal*.

**Robert:** That's so smart. The thing that I like that you keep coming back to, Nancy, is that you're creative and proactive, and you follow up. You come up with an idea, you write up something, you send it out, and then you follow up. And a certain percentage of those are going to say, "That sounds pretty good." After a while, you start to get pretty good at this.

**Nancy:** It's like anything. Any muscle that you exercise regularly is going to be in really great shape, and anything that you just sort of schlep out once a year because you have to is going to be really uncomfortable.

So, decide to get in shape with the skills and abilities that are going to allow you to build the buzz with efficiency and impact. Decide to get in shape. You don't get in shape immediately. You don't run a half-marathon tomorrow. But could you write a press release tomorrow? You bet! Could you do a pitch tomorrow? Yes. Could you put your business on Google Maps today? You bet.

**Robert:** Now, we have one more on this list: responding to active media queries from services such as [www.HelpAReporter.com](http://www.HelpAReporter.com) and [www.PRLeads.com](http://www.PRLeads.com). Help A Reporter Out is free, and PR Leads has a fee. Also, there is [www.GiftListMedia.com](http://www.GiftListMedia.com). Tell us briefly about those, if you would.

**Nancy:** Everybody wants more success with greater ease. How cool would it be if you sat down at your desk tomorrow and had leads coming to your inbox that said, "I'm looking for a marketer who I can interview for my blog or radio show who can comment about the kinds of things you teach your students to do every day. And I need to

hear from you by Friday, June 12, and I need your headshot, etc.”

If you woke up tomorrow and you got leads like that coming to your inbox and you responded to them in an effective way, all of a sudden, you’re going to start being seen, heard and celebrated all over America just because you responded to something that came in your inbox.

That is what [www.HelpAReporter.com](http://www.HelpAReporter.com) is all about. It is free. You sign up. You get the feed, and your job is to learn to quickly scan these leads, which are organized by Lifestyle, Business, Finance, Health.

**Robert:** So they say, “We’re looking to interview people with knowledge in this area”?

**Nancy:** Yeah. So like earlier in the call I said that someone from [www.Forbes.com](http://www.Forbes.com) was looking for a wife who was out-earning her husband who was a financial planner who could comment about A, B and C. I just happened to know somebody who fit that criteria exactly, so I sent her the lead. She responded, and she’s being interviewed. Within minutes.

It doesn’t cost you anything to join [www.HelpAReporter.com](http://www.HelpAReporter.com). You start scanning them. If you have an assistant, have your assistant do it. You find the leads that are right for you. You note the deadline, and you respond on or before the deadline in a tight, compelling and provocative way, just in some of the ways I’ve described.

Don’t waste the subject line. Say something sassy and provocative. Be brief, compelling, concise. Give them a

link to your website, your bio, etc. And be of service. Pretty soon, you start getting interviewed, and all of a sudden, you're everywhere.

Gift List Media is a service that you purchase for a fee, and it is a particularly useful service for companies that have products that they want featured in holiday gift guides, like in *SUCCESS* magazine, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, *Food & Wine*.

The beauty of buying the list, which I think is about \$549, is it's really time-consuming to go looking for the editors who are responsible for making new-product decisions at all of these magazines. So if you could buy the list from a service whose job it is to compile it, and then you work the list, you're already calling the right people. You know where to reach them.

There are actually descriptions. Like I'm looking at one this morning from Gift List Media. I'm working to find placements for my Italian crackers.

"American Airlines *Nexos* magazine reaches 13 million people annually in 33 countries. They target upscale, worldly American Airlines passengers traveling to and from Latin America. They do product roundups in each issue, and they love to cover wine and food and things with a cultural relevance."

Ding, ding, ding! Hallelujah! This is perfect for my client with his new line of Fieri snack crackers that have an Italian flair and all kinds of sassy flavors, so you can bet I responded to this one.

Basically, they set it down for you. This is her name, this is her email address, this is the way she likes to receive information, and this is exactly what she's looking for. If you have what she needs, respond to her by her July 15 deadline and you're in good shape.

**Robert:** Given that the majority of people on this call are not product-related, they're more service-related, what is [www.PRLeads.com](http://www.PRLeads.com)? Does that work more for services?

**Nancy:** If Peter Shankman's listening to this call, he'll love this. Help A Reporter Out is a free service, and it is a very popular service. There are over 70,000 people who are subscribing, and more are joining every day.

PR Leads is a subscription service that costs about \$99 a month. If you're really on a tight budget, Help A Reporter Out is a no-brainer. I'm of the philosophy that all leads are good leads, and I want them all because I want to serve my clients in the ideal way, so I subscribe also.

PR Leads comes from ProfNet which is a division of PR Newswire. In my experience, and I'm sorry if this is a little dicey to explain, PR Leads tends to be more from the traditional, from *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, The Associated Press. Some of the really big hits that I've ever gotten for clients came to me because of a PR Leads inquiry.

Some of the tried-and-true, sassier, blog-oriented placements have happened from Help A Reporter Out. I like to work both sets of leads because all leads lead me to better success for my clients.

**Robert:** Right. You might want to start with [www.HelpAReporter.com](http://www.HelpAReporter.com) first before you do PR Leads. For most people, if you're a self-employed professional, it's probably not a great fit.

**Nancy:** This is why I'm stumbling on this one because the fact of the matter is that this is a challenging economy for most people, and anything that's free and high-value is going to be higher on people's love list than things that cost something.

As I look back on the last year in particular, my biggest media hits came from PR Leads, and my consistent and regular media hits came from Help A Reporter Out, and I want both.

I am a professional service provider. Many of my clients are professional service providers. Having Seattle Chocolate Company be picked up by The Associated Press because of a PR Leads inquiry in January was probably the best thing that's happened so far this year for this chocolate company that loves to be in the media, just in time for Valentine's Day.

**Robert:** If you're working with a publicist, you want to make sure they're subscribing to and using both of these services.

**Nancy:** Absolutely.

If you're not somebody who is comfortable identifying trends, knowing what a trend is, or having a sense of what people are writing about right now, when you read these leads, you very quickly find out what people are interested in.

Right now, staycations are hot because nobody can buy a plane ticket. Environmentally friendly things are hot. Anything to do with managing money's hot. When you read these leads, you say, "Oh! That's what makes it a trend. That's what makes my expertise fit in. I totally get it now." That's another thing.

Another thing about Help A Reporter Out (HARO) and PR Leads that a lot of people don't know is that if you are writing a book, if you are looking for experts to interview, if you are looking for commentary for your own blog or newspaper article or whatever thing you do, you can post something called a "reverse query" to either of these services, and the right experts will respond to you.

Hopefully, they will be listening in on this call, and they will be responding in a compelling, concise and credible way so that whatever project you're working on will be made better from their commentary. Isn't that something?!

**Robert:** That's powerful.

**Nancy:** I did one of these reverse queries one time because I'm a publicist and people hire me to do whatever it is that I do, and sometimes they start the conversation in a really funny way. They'll say, "I don't have any time and I don't have any money, but you absolutely must spend time with me to help me evaluate my problem."

Two or three people will call and say something like that, or "God told me to pull over the car in the middle of this traffic to call you, and here I am." I thought, "These are so funny. I wonder if other people have had similar things happen to them."

So I posted a reverse query to HARO and I said, “I’d really like to hear from public relations professionals across the country with the funny one-liners that potential clients have shared that have had them running in the opposite direction.”

I got inundated with funny stories from people saying the funny things that clients say when they think they want to hire a publicist, and I wrote a newspaper column about it that traveled around the world. It made people laugh. It was very, very funny.

**Robert:** I have one like that. “My grandmother has this incredible strawberry jam, and if you put in all the money, all the time, all the effort, we’ll be rich!”

**Nancy:** Bless the Lord! Hallelujah!

**Robert:** “I don’t have a dime, but if you can trust me, this is the best strawberry jam recipe in the world.”

**Nancy:** It’s kind of funny.

Reverse queries is something that a lot of people have never tried, but if you do it one time, you’ll be hooked.

**Robert:** I see you could do some instant research that way.

**Nancy:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** Nancy, we’ve covered so many great ideas in this interview that I’m sure people’s heads are exploding with information. This is the kind of interview where they really want to go over the transcript step by step and think of the things they really want to start applying to themselves.

We need to wrap up with this soon, but I want to cover one other topic that you suggested. That's what you call "shiny bright object fixation." What is that about?

**Nancy:**

In today's world, Twitter, social media, LinkedIn, YouTube, you name it, every other day, there's some new technical application or some new social media platform that everybody's rushing to find out that that's the next greatest thing to delivering their message and finding more clients with greater ease.

I just want to invite everyone to recognize that social media is really, really important and it definitely has a place, but these other things that we've talked about are tried-and-true things that continue to deliver meaningful, prominent and compelling media results for clients near and far.

When you're thinking about adding new ingredients to your marketing mix, don't stray too far away from things that deliver the goods immediately, because that's where the revenue's going to happen.

Go ahead and sample some of these other social media and weave them into your daily life, but do so in a manner that doesn't take your focus off the things that are really going to deliver the goods.

Even Twitter has not figured out how to monetize their model with their bazillions of people who are being followed and following. You need to monetize your model, so don't spend too much time trying to figure that out when you can get an article placed in your local media and bring more of the people to the door today.

That's my headline about that.

**Robert:** You can take a section of the Fast Track program on marketing plans and marketing strategies, and plug in a marketing strategy to any of the media strategies that Nancy talked about: creating a press release, doing the pitch letters, doing the articles. Create a step-by-step marketing action plan for those, and then you're off and running.

**Nancy:** Absolutely.

**Robert:** Nancy, thanks for this. It has just been great. There are so many ideas that I want to try. I don't know if I can do all of this, but I definitely want to try some of these things. As you know, I've had some degree of media phobia for whatever reason, but you're making it sound easy and fun, and that's what I really like.

**Nancy:** Let me say this about that because this is a really important point. Jack Canfield wrote *The Success Principles*. I love that book. If you're feeling a little bit overwhelmed, he said that even the biggest tree in the forest will come down if you take five swipes of an ax at it every day of your life.

If you are overwhelmed and you heard a lot of things and you can't focus, listen to this call again and say, "What five things did Nancy recommend that I really can do, that are right for my skill set, that resonate with where I want to play in the marketplace?"

Can you do five things consistently? That's all I'm asking. You'll find that if you are consistent and persistent,

tenacious and passionate in your approach, you will have success and you will wonder why you did not start sooner.

**Robert:** That's the key. For me, it's just been writing the ezine for every single week for 12 years. That kind of persistence has generated hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in business.

**Nancy:** I love that. This is a really good question for Action Plan Marketing students to consider. I heard this lady say, "What are the most powerful lead generation techniques in practice, and how consistently are you applying them?"

Most people fall down on the consistency piece, and that's why they are struggling. For 12 years, you've been doing an ezine and you've been doing great. Choose the activity where you're going to be consistent and you're going to be passionate and tenacious. You'll have results. Anything you do one time never works.

**Robert:** Absolutely. Nancy, tell us how people can be in touch with you. Give us your website address, and tell us a few things that people can get on the website and check out on the website.

**Nancy:** I would be so honored if everyone on the call would visit [www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com](http://www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com) which is my do-it-yourself publicity blog and make a habit of reading it every day. Every week, there's five to seven new posts to empower your do-it-yourself publicity success.

You can also go to the blog and sign up for my Media-Savvy-to-Go ezine, and immediately by digital download, you will receive my blogging reports that tells you how to

get over your fear of blogging so you can build the buzz and grow your business now.

We didn't have a lot of time to talk about blogging today, but I can't say enough about the power it has delivered for my business growth. It can do the same for you if you just get over the fear.

The other thing I'd like you to do is get familiar with some of the other audio files that are immediately available on the website. You can just visit the category called "New Audio File to Support Your DIY Publicity Success" and listen for hours to commentary, interviews and podcasts just like this one that can tell you different things about PR.

While you're multitasking in your office, you can be listening to me, gaining some useful perspectives, and hopefully building your business through the power of publicity. That's what I'd like you to do.

Check out [www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com](http://www.MainStreetMediaSavvy.com). Become a regular visitor. Tell your friends. I'm on a mission to empower business owners everywhere around the world how to do this for themselves, and I would be thrilled to have you in my community.

**Robert:**

Nancy, thanks so much. You're one of my great discoveries this year, and we've had some fantastic interviews. This was absolutely, definitely one of them.

Nancy has such a wealth of experience on the web. You can spend a little money with Nancy as well, but there's a lot of free stuff that you can start with.

Again, thank you very much. I really appreciate you taking the time.

**Nancy:** It was my pleasure. Thanks for having me. Remember, good publicity lasts forever. When will you start?

**Robert:** Those are great parting words. Thank you very much.