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## From Trade Media to the Wall Street Journal: Building National Credibility for a Start-up Company

### The Company

Scott Public Relations' (SPR) client had developed a web-based product to educate patients about healthcare procedures that was interactive, more comprehensive and much more user-friendly than other methods.

Target markets included insurance companies who might offer discounts on malpractice insurance for physicians and/or hospitals who would use the programs to educate patients and to inform them about upcoming procedures, health plans who could offer the product to their members, and medical device manufacturers.

### Strategic Issues

The company needed to "make the market" by educating a wide variety of potential customers about the problem and about their radically different approach, with its implications for malpractice reduction, patient satisfaction, and patient safety.

### The Tactical Solution

Because the company was a start-up, SPR developed a four-phase approach to build awareness and credibility, first locally and in trade media read by physicians, health plans and insurers, and then nationally. Tactics consisted of:

- News releases on new products and customer wins.
- Bylined articles in key publications reaching the firm's vertical markets (insurance, hospitals, physicians, and health plans).
- Developing relationships with customers as their experience with the system grew, to involve them in media relations opportunities.
- Leveraging the company's growing network of supporters and trade media coverage to obtain national business coverage.

Each phase of the public relations program was sequenced to build a foundation of credibility and communicate the momentum of this fast-growing firm.

In Phase 1, the company's venture capital funding and launch was announced to local and trade media, resulting in coverage in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun Times* and selected trade media.

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In Phase 2, the company's channel alliances with insurance companies and early adaptor physicians were leveraged in news releases, interviews and bylined articles to create awareness in trade media targeting insurers and physicians such as in: *General Surgery News*, *Cosmetic Surgery News*, *Health and Informatics Management*, *Health Data Management*, *Group Practice Journal*, *Best's Review*, and *Insurance Journal*.

SPR worked with the company's customers to develop releases, features and interviews on their experience with the product, and involved them in bylined article opportunities.

In Phase 3, the company's increasing focus on patient safety and sales in the hospital and device markets were leveraged into placements in key trade media read by hospitals and medical device manufacturers such as *Healthcare Informatics*, *Managed Healthcare Executive*, *Health Data Management*, *Hospital Business Week*, and *Health Management Technology*.

In Phase 4, the company's alliance with a non-profit healthcare organization in a national patient safety program, plus its involvement with patient safety at a high-profile hospital, were packaged into a lengthy feature article in *The Wall Street Journal*.

### Results

In two years, more than 100 media placements were made, generating a solid flow of inquiries and sales leads from insurers, physicians, hospitals and health plans, culminating in *The Wall Street Journal* placement. These placements not only built product awareness, but generated an average of three unsolicited sales leads a week from hospitals, insurers and physicians.

### Scott Public Relations...

"A Step Ahead" is a publication of Scott Public Relations ([www.scottpublicrelations.com](http://www.scottpublicrelations.com)) a public relations firm specializing in business-to-business communication for firms in health care, insurance and technology. Scott Public Relations helps its clients, ranging from Fortune 100 firms to start-up companies, stay "A Step Ahead" in their marketing programs and in their industries.

### For More Information

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### Will this strategy work for your start-up company?

Yes, if:

- You have a product or service that is an innovative solution to a major industry problem.
- Your case is supported by a reputable third party.
- Your customers are willing to speak out about their experience and your solution.
- You are involved in a national initiative with non-profit or public source organizations that can garner national media attention.

If the answer is "yes," then developing a robust media relations strategy could be the key to accelerating your company's profile in the market and increasing the number of consumer hits to your website.