



PR Guru interviews Jennifer Dalitz, sheEO of Sphinxx for DIY PR success stories series



1. Tell us about your business? Sphinxx is a social enterprise committed to advancing women as leaders. It provides professional development for women and consulting advice to help employers find and keep the best women on their teams.

2. Why did you choose PR to promote your business? In recent years, the advancement of women in business has gained momentum. As a topic it's featured in business and mainstream media almost daily – and it occurred to me that there would be opportunities to promote the business by using PR. I also felt that PR would also be more effective than traditional forms of marketing including advertising and direct marketing, in building brand profile and promoting my expertise and this has certainly been the case. Also, as a small business I had a very limited budget and PR seemed a good fit with my knowledge-based business.

3. Did you use a PR consultant or have you always done it yourself?

Initially I decided to go with a PR agent. At that time I had a newborn son and felt I needed some guidance from a professional, at least to get started. As a writer it made sense for me to be involved in researching and generating content, and it was very much a collaborative partnership so much so that at the end of the 4 month campaign we decided I was well enough placed to go it alone.

4. What do your PR efforts involve? I've really made a determined effort to make it part of my daily work routine. I have built up connections with a number of key journalists. I spend time tracking hot topics and responding, and have developed a PR plan that includes a calendar of key events I could tap into. I also keep an eye peeled for opportunities to contribute to stories as an expert, these come from relationships I've built over time and from SourceBottle.com.au.

5. Which media story about your business created the biggest response for you and why? Contributing to 'side issues' has worked well. One of the biggest stories for me was about the difficulty working women face in finding quality and affordable childcare. I provided commentary to the *Sunday Sun Herald* based on my own experience as well as the women in the sphinxx network and provided a lot of flow on PR opportunities.

Also, a media release with survey findings around equal opportunities for women and bias and stereotypes in the workplace was picked up by a few different journos including the Daily Telegraph, the Courier Mail and Adelaide Now and generated a number of speaking engagements for me including ABC Radio National. Last year I secured PR exposure in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, In The Black, The National Accountant, marie claire, madison, Working Women and Latte magazines to name a few, plus TV including Lateline Business and Sky News Channel on issues relating to women in leadership.

6. What 'must-do' would be at the top of your list if you were advising others doing their own PR? Give them something new either your own content or a new angle or response to a news story and be relevant

to the media. I keep a working document of my key angles and positions and will then tailor it to the different audiences of each media which is important in getting a run.

7. How did you get your media contacts? At conferences. I met a Fairfax journalist at one conference and a TV presenter and producer at another, and using a finely honed elevator pitch was successful in getting one initial run that has been followed up with several since. Also, by ringing around to targeted publications, letters to editor and entering awards and accepting nominations for awards. As a finalist in the Telstra business awards I met a journalist from News Limited who has used me as a source on a number of occasions now.

8. What's the best feedback/piece of advice you've received from a journalist? Be timely and understand their deadlines. I didn't realise initially how important it is to be able to respond immediately or at very short notice and once it was explained to me and I started responding immediately, my uptake really skyrocketed. Also related to this point is understanding that the journos won't necessarily go with the best known expert they'll go with the best available expert so if you can be timely, help them find other sources, open up your little black book, they'll be more likely to ring you now and next time too. It's all about helping them to get their story out, on deadline.

9. What is your ultimate PR goal? The goal of my PR is really to position myself as an authority on the issues women face in forging their careers. Ultimately I'm hoping that as my personal brand continues to grow it will help me to secure a regular column in a business mag, such as BRW, and a regular TV segment. In other words I want to be known as Australia's leading authority on women in business.

10. Complete this sentence "The best thing about doing my own PR is..." Being in control and being able to really make the most of PR opportunities by jumping on them quickly. When you're dependent on someone else, it often comes down to where you fit in their overall schedule of work and no matter how good your PR agent is, they'll never be able to replicate your passion and knowledge as well as you can.

11. What works best for you: Traditional media or social media? Traditional media i.e. newspapers, magazines, their online websites and now TV although I do use both. I find that many business decision makers that I deal with still place much more credence on traditional media so I need to be there. Also in terms of accessing women, the women's mags have been great for that. In terms of social media, TheSheEOblog.com is a key distribution channel (we get up to 20,000 page views a month) and LinkedIn has been successful for building a reputation for expertise within my network but I think it can be harder to be read across some of these media.

About Jen | Jen Dalitz is the founder and SheEO of sphinx.org and Australia's thought leader on gender balance. She is the author of "Little Wins for Working Women" and thesheeoblog.com

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