

## Publicity is Like a Drug – Take it and You’ll Become Addicted

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Positive articles about your company and awards programs are a great way to promote your company but it is essential that you keep them in perspective. The danger is that you hurt the culture of your company by taking them too seriously and starting to drink your own cool aid. They are like a drug and if you take them indiscriminately, you will become addicted and your judgement will be impaired.

I achieved explosive growth in my computer service business through a highly effective Public Relations Program. We used the Program to generate articles which we then reprinted and used as collateral materials. Very few of our prospects saw the original articles, but when we reprinted them and used them a mailers and leave-behinds, they carried with them an incredibly valuable third-party endorsement.

We also successfully entered events like Entrepreneur of the Year and Service Excellence that gave out awards, and were featured regularly on national lists like the Inc 500 and local programs that recognized fast growing companies. We used these very effectively in press releases and amalgamated all the recognition into a collateral piece that we updated every year.

Other people can say good things about you that you can never credibly say about yourself, and this kind of third party endorsement and objective reporting is a very effective tool. The danger is that you may start to believe your own propaganda, and the resulting ego trip can become extremely dangerous. Even worse, your people start to believe it, and when you go down that road there are very serious consequences.

I always recognized the purpose behind what we were doing, but as awards and articles piled up I probably was affected. I think I did a pretty good job at staying level-headed (though I’m sure some would disagree), but my people became over-confident. On more than one occasion I heard them belittling the competition and I told them repeatedly that if this was easy everybody would do it. I told them that there was no room for complacency but I suspect that the damage was already done.

So that’s why publicity is like a drug. In the right circumstances, it can be very effective in making your company better and more successful, but if you take too much, you’ll get high on your own self-importance and become addicted. When that happens, it will impair your judgement and may detrimentally affect the quality of the decisions you make.