

Speaker 1: 00:01 Hello, welcome to the same side selling podcast dedicated to modern sales and marketing innovation and leadership. Here's your host, Ian Altman.

Ian Altman: 00:15 Hey, it's Ian Altman. Our guest this week is Christina Daves, the DIY PR Strategist. Christina taught herself everything she could about generating publicity for her own product that she invented. She has appeared on over 1000 local and national media outlets and as a regular segment on good morning, Washington television together with her clients, Christina reached over 873 million views and generated over 10 million in sales from free publicity in just one year. I'm going to be highlighting bits in her latest bestselling book, the DIY guide to free publicity. We'll discuss the biggest misconception about PR, which PR pitfalls you can avoid. How do we become a valuable asset for media outlets? And we'll cover specific steps you can take to become PR famous. You're gonna learn a ton from Christina Daves. Christina, welcome to the show.

Christina Daves: 01:12 Hi, thanks Ian. I'm so excited to be here.

Ian Altman: 01:15 Hi. I'm thrilled for you to share your wisdom with our audience because I learned so much from you and from the book and I'm sure they will too. Can you start by sharing something surprising about you that they may not know?

Christina Daves: 01:29 I am a die hard sports fan, but slightly different. I'm diehard college football, Virginia Tech Hokies who someday I pray will win a national championship and die hard hockey fan. I, we're season ticket holders of both Washington capitols and Virginia Tech and that is what my fall and spring consists of. Sports,

Ian Altman: 01:52 you know, we've known each other for awhile and I did not realize that we are both capitols fans.

Christina Daves: 01:57 Oh, well they finally won the stanley top. I cried, I sat on my table and I cry.

Ian Altman: 02:03 You are a way more avid fan than I am because I didn't cry at all, but I was further pumped up about it.

Christina Daves: 02:10 Yeah. Did you go to the parade?

Ian Altman: 02:12 Um, I did not go to the parade, but my son went to the parade so I was there by proxy. Okay.

Christina Daves: 02:17 We got there at 6:00 AM so we were front row.

Ian Altman: 02:20 Those are diehards. Those are diehards indeed. And, and I know a lot of people would probably have interest in Washington capitals hockey and hokie football, but um, I want to talk to you about your wisdom when it comes to PR. What's the greatest misconception that you feel that people have when it comes to PR?

Christina Daves: 02:41 Oh, absolutely. Hands Down, I've trained thousands of people. Everyone is so afraid of the media there. They're afraid to pitch, they think they're this secret little group that nobody can get to and they don't want you. And, and what everybody to realize is the media now is 24, seven, three 65. It's constant. And, and the jobs have all been cut. You know, used to be, you had a writer and an editor and a lot of the things you see on the news that news anchor is doing all of it. So if you can become a valuable asset to them, if you can pitch good, newsworthy story ideas that they can use, you know that you've done your homework, you know, it's the right media outlet. You know, you fit in with them, you will, they will welcome you for life. You will be in their tribe.

Ian Altman: 03:37 Yeah, it's, it's interesting cause I, I wrote for years columns in Forbes and inc and obviously I'd get pitched by people who never in a million years would I want, there were people who would say, well I want to, I want to build my credibility. So how do I get one of your articles? I'm like, well it kind of works the opposite way. Like once you have credibility, and I might want to reference you in an article, but it the, you got it backwards. So what are, what are some of the traps or mistakes that people make when they're trying to pitch? Because I mean you started off that people are fearful of the media, so they're afraid to pitch. But then I think also what happens is some people say, oh yeah, fine, I'm past that fear, I'm going to pitch. And they do it horribly. So what are some of the pitfalls or mistakes that people make when they're trying to pitch ideas?

Christina Daves: 04:26 So one of the things I always tell people is do your homework. You're going to be so much further ahead by knowing really getting to know that journalists. So when you send your pitch in, which should be by email, personalize it, don't let them think that this is a blanket email that you're sending to a hundred journalists. Find your five year, 10 year, 15 ideal people that you want to connect with and, and make it personal. I actually met the, um, and I just found out he's now the former editor of the Washington business journal and when he found out what I did, he said, you would not believe the things that I get where he would get emails that say, dear bracket, insert name here, closed bracket. You don't want to do that. Let show them the love. Really, really these are the people that you really want to connect with. Because once you do, and I, I say this from experience, I walk this walk. The relationships that I have with producers, with anchors, you know, people I've worked

with, I have their phone numbers in my cell phone. I can text them anytime or call them. I've built those relationships because I cared and because I did my homework and because I went the extra step.

Ian Altman: 05:44 The thing I want to make sure that people pick up on here is that it's less about you pitching something that is in your own interest. And it's more about how do you position yourself as an asset to them in whatever it is their task is. So if they have to, if they have to create stories of interest in certain areas and you can help package that for them. So they just flip the switch and it happens, then you've, you've delivered a great service if you show up just to self promote that actually works against their interest.

Christina Daves: 06:20 Exactly. And remember, you know, we would all love an expo, say, you know, a 30 minute show about Ian Altman or Christina Daves probably not going to happen. Um, but, but being an expert in your field and being quoted and source, that's what, that's really what we're looking to do. And that's where the credibility comes in and the value comes in and you're exactly right. It's what's the, what's the benefit to their audience? Again, doing the homework on the demographics and you can do that on Google. You know, if you're, if the demographic is a 40 year old female, you know, most, you know, most of their listeners let's say, or most of their viewers, make sure your story aligns with that. It's just really important to know, you know, I always say you wouldn't, you wouldn't pitch the same story to buzzfeed that you would to AARP, but you could pitch to stores. You could be the expert for story for either one. Just make sure your pitch relates to their target market.

Ian Altman: 07:23 Got It. Got It. That's, that's, that's great. That's great advice. And I, and I know that that throughout the book you've got a ton of different tips and, and pointers for people that help them and essence DIY, their PR and make it so so that they can get, you know, this, they can basically, without hiring a big ad agency without hiring a big PR firm, they can get a ton of media coverage on their own. And I, I love the, I love the tone of the book, the DIY guide to free publicity. So what are, what are some of the, what are some of the biggest things that people can and should be doing that can move the needle and help them get that free publicity on their own?

Christina Daves: 08:08 Right? Here's the first thing that, and I'm really, really working with my clients on this because it's getting more important every single day and, and people aren't thinking about this. The media is going to check you out before they use you. Just like before we hire anybody or work with anybody, we're going to Google them. So you need to make sure that you check out, make sure that your website is consistent with your social, whichever social media platform or platforms that you're using, make sure that

it's all consistent. It's the same colors, it's the same font, it's the same messaging because you want to make sure they know that's you and they're not going to spend a lot of time digging. I actually saw a media query the other day that said, send me everything. Don't me go to Google or I won't use you.

Christina Daves: 08:57 Yeah. So, so that's the first part. You really need to look your part, look your expertise in your great example of that. You have a great website. Uh, you've got the, the history and the background you've written for top magazines. You've got that credibility. And it shows, you know, when people, when the media goes to your website, you're going to check out. And that's what, that's the very, very first thing. And you've got to have some content out there. Uh, and, and ideally you're going to have somewhat of a good social media following because here's the thing. Now, if they have the option to use two different experts, they're gonna use the one that has an engaged social media following because that's going to help them spread their story out to more people. So that's, you know, make sure that your packages all put together, you know, put a nice little bow on it. You've got content, you've got a good, you're engaging with your followers. That's really important. More so than numbers, but engagement. And that your, your website just really looks credible.

Ian Altman: 10:04 Yeah. I, I think that that notion of consistency is so important. And it's interesting because oftentimes on social media, my initial reaction when I see something is, okay, I'm gonna throw a grenade and I have to stop and say no because a, that's not going to get me anywhere with, with anybody. Like, you know, if all of a sudden I'm just screaming at somebody else, it's not going to help. And more importantly, it's going to damage my brand because now it's all this person's a loose cannon and we got to watch out for that. Right. I mean, how often do you see that where somebody doesn't even realize how they're showing up on social media?

Christina Daves: 10:41 Oh, I see that because when I work with people, I do a full assessment of everything. Uh, and you would be surprised some of the things I've seen. All right. I had a call this morning with a brand new client and, and I finally said, you know what, we, I just need to talk to your it person and we're going to start from square one. I said, we'll keep you in the loop on everything, but you just have to let us do, just literally start from square one. He's releasing a book and he's a speaker, but his branding, the whole package is not good, so we've got to start from scratch.

Ian Altman: 11:18 You know, that's, and it's interesting, there was a, there was a company in the hospitality space who I was helping and, and one of the, one of the founders of the

company was extremely outspoken politically in a very confrontational way. And I just said to him, I said, you know, you probably want to get rid of all this stuff. And they said, well, this is the way I feel. I said, no, I get that. I'm not looking for you to be inauthentic. But if you're looking to partner with a big hotel brand, they don't want an h. They don't want to alienate half their audience. And it

Christina Daves: 11:54 is half. It's, we're split 50 50 in this country right now. So you're, you're right. You, I tell all my clients stay away from that topic. Yeah. Anyway, from it.

Ian Altman: 12:05 Yeah. It gets, it gets, it gets to be a cause to be a crazy element. So where are some of the opportunities for executives to create an aim either for themselves or for their companies? Like how do they, how do they feel like of a better term news jack or how do they find what else is going on out there that they can tie their messaging into?

Christina Daves: 12:27 Right? It's, it's two fold. What's going on in the world right now? look@trends.google.com you know, what are people talking about on Google that you can relate to your business and you use the term newsjacking. That I think is about a five year old term. Somebody in the industry created that. But that's really what we do is, is you, if you hear something in the news and you, you, your reaction is, Oh, you know, I, I have something to say about that. That's newsjacking. And, and if it's a hot topic, the media is looking for, you know, story breaks and that's the breaking news. But when it's hot, they want to keep it going for a few more days. So the breaking news is over. What can you add to it? And if you can add on the opposite side of of what they're talking about. Let's say a big company decided to do x, but you think you think that's not a good idea. That's a great way to get publicity. If you, if you can back it up with what you're doing and what you're saying.

Ian Altman: 13:29 On October 15th in the Washington DC area, I'll be offering a same side selling immersion program open to a maximum of six companies. If you'd like to learn more about it, visit ian.altman.com and you'll see a link on the homepage. It was interesting. I remember when when Google came out with Google glass. Yeah, I wrote, I wrote an article that said, I think it was the, I may have been the apple watch or something else related to it. And I said, I said, look, you know, my, my article I believe was, um, why Google glass failed and why these other products might fail too. And it was, it was a hot article because everyone was reading it and they'd say, Oh, I disagree. And then of course, six months later when Google glass was going nowhere, everyone said, how'd you know? I'm like, well, read the article. It's right there. And I think it was David Meerman sky. It was a, a fellow speaker who came up with the term newsjacking.

Christina Daves: 14:25 That's exactly, I couldn't think of his name. That's exactly who it is

Ian Altman: 14:28 to make sure we give a shout out to David for that. And uh, is, is a great guy, but he talks, he talks about how you, um, how you do that. And I believe his book was a newsjacking also. And it talks about how you, how you ride it, how you ride on the waves of, of other trends. But I think that idea of going to trends.google.com is one obvious place for people to get insight into what's trending and then think about, okay, how can I add value to it? Not How can I, you know, how can I get something for it? But how can I add value to the discussion, which I'm guessing is way better then how do I get something out of it?

Christina Daves: 15:10 Absolutely. Absolutely. And I'll give you an example. I have one of my clients is a top real estate agent and Redfin had come out and big news, they were no longer going to do buyer agency. They were no longer going to represent buyers. And she was really upset by this cause she texted me, she said, you have five minutes for a call. And she explained to me exactly why this was a bad idea. She represents a lot of buyers. And I said, I said, pat, that's your story. Go Pitch The Washington Post. That's a great story. They did a full article about what Redfin had done and why this top agent doesn't think that's a good idea. And she had the facts and she had a full article in the Washington Post. That's great. Yeah. And if somebody's looking for a buyer's agent, who do you think they're going to use now? Pat. Because that's who the post used.

Ian Altman: 16:01 Yeah. That's brilliant. That's brilliant. So what, give me, give me some other examples of companies who maybe, maybe they thought, look, I don't have anything newsworthy. And then kind of a story of what they did and what the results were. Cause I think that I want to make sure the audience, our listeners can think to themselves, wow, that's just like me. I could do that.

Christina Daves: 16:21 Right, right. And again, doing your homework. I say this a lot and it's not a lot of work. It's really simple once you do it, but, but if you do your homework, so I had another client who was a product preneur is a product Preneur invented a product. What products are hard to get on on television by themselves. You know, you've got to come up with a story idea. Well she got on because they do a hometown heroes segment consistently and she hires kids who are paying their way through college and women who have left abusive relationships to make her products in the hometown. So just a different angle. I knew it was an infomercial, it was her book and her speaking. And because she's empowering, you know, women and everything that she does all because she did a little bit of homework and found the hometown hero angle.

Ian Altman: 17:13 Yup. I love it. So, so someone more

traditionally might've said, how do we get this product to have visibility? And instead it was, look, the real story is who are you hiring and who else are you empowering? Guess what people are going to hear about your product at the same time.

Christina Daves: 17:30 Exactly. And that's the thing, it's, it's just thinking outside of the box, thinking a little bit beyond the box, you know, it's not the, like you said, it's not the me, me, me, you write a story about me. It's what value can you provide I sharing your story or sharing your expertise.

Ian Altman: 17:48 Yeah. And, and it's, it's the notion of, for example, if I wanted to have someone write a story about same side selling, they're not, they're probably not going to. But if I said, here's how I can use the principles, the same side selling to be less adversarial with your neighbor in a, in a contentious time. Now it might be something people say, oh, that's kind of interesting.

Christina Daves: 18:08 Right? And, and I will tell you right along those lines, uh, I had a former client who was an amazing writer but wasn't writing for Google. She wasn't writing like you were for these top magazines. And we packaged her and she's a children's behavioral therapist in New York City, packaged her writings together. She got in front of an editor of, of New York parenting magazine, got a column because she was such a great writer. And when the election took place, she was on every national media outlet. And Dan Rather even interviewed her for a separate television show all about how do you talk to your kids about the election?

Ian Altman: 18:49 Wow. See, I mean that's, that's a perfect example where if someone had looked otherwise just how do I promote myself? It's not good. But keep in mind, the example I want to make sure people get is how this is benefiting other people. So I'm just thinking of different, different clients and organizations who I know of who, for example, there's a, there's a company that, um, that deals with, um, automated teller machines and automated equipment in banks. So if they wanted an article about themselves, it's not going to work. If they said, here's if they wrote an article about here's why sometimes you wait long in line for long time at the bank and other places you don't. Now all of a sudden that's relevant because the general community says, yeah, how come I often wait in line for too long?

Christina Daves: 19:35 And a company like that could even do a spin. So if you remember when McDonald's did their rollout of the electronic machines, where you ordered when you go in instead of actually talking to a person, that's something you could even tie in your, you're not putting the machines in McDonald's, you're not. But you can talk about overall automation. So you can jump on that story

and say, Hey, it's not just restaurants, fast food restaurants, but did you know the banking industry is doing it too. Yeah. And Spin it that way.

Ian Altman: 20:09 So, so it sounds like one of the keys is trying to think from the perspective of what's the audience going to care about rather than suffering from what I like to refer to as access displacement disorder, which is where we believe the access the earth has shifted and the world revolves around us. So, and instead we want to think about, well, so if, if I'm pitching to NBC, what is in, it's a certain show on NBC, what is their audience like and what are the topics that audience is going to care about where I have something relevant to talk about.

Christina Daves: 20:45 Exactly. And that's where the homework comes in. I have a regular segment on ABC in Washington, D C on good morning, Washington. Had I pitched by segment idea to my local NBC, they would've said, what are you doing? We don't have this kind of a format. So it's how do you fit into what they're doing? And that's where the homework comes in. One of my clients was on the today show because she did her homework and paid attention and listened to what the anchors were saying. Heard what one of them said and send something into her and it got through all the, you know, the mail room and everybody else because she said, I heard Dylan drier, say x. And then she ended up on the show. 7 million viewers. That's pretty good stuff. Yeah. It doesn't suck. No,

Ian Altman: 21:34 I mean, you know, I'm trying to come up with the right technical term, but it doesn't suck. So, so what are, if people say, okay, yeah, you know what I'm bought in. I agree there is, I believe there's a way to kind of DIY this, this publicity and I can get this type of listening aside from getting the book, which obviously they should do, what are the, what are the top one or two things that people should focus on to try and get some quick wins or set themselves up for success?

Christina Daves: 22:05 So plan out your strategy. That's really important. Take those five or 10 media outlets or journalists that, that you know are in that space. You know, you fit into that, you know, check the boxes to make it easier for you. I have a formula, I call it the get PR famous formula and it's a three step approach and I'm telling you it works. You want to be newsworthy, you want to create great hooks and you want to find the right journalists. So come up with that newsworthy story idea, whether it's newsjacking or taking a trend in your industry or anything like that. You know, I'm, I'm trying to like off the top of my head, give you some other ideas. Um, there are crazy holidays that the media uses all the time, all the time. There's probably like a national CEO day talk about things like that.

Christina Daves: 22:54 Um, but so those, your newsworthy, then the great hook is the subject line. You've got to grab their attention in that subject line. I have interviewed so many journalists, some of them get a thousand emails before noon, a thousand. Wow. You got to break through that. But you can, there's all kinds of ways to do that. And I can talk about that. You look at magazine covers, those are hooks. People get paid to get you to make that impulse purchase at the grocery store. That's a hook. So see what a good hook is and then you know, you, everybody listening your business people, well don't send your your story idea. Let's say you find the fashion editor of a magazine, they're not going to forward your email for you. You've got to make sure you have the right person, you do your homework. But with those three in place you will be light years ahead of your competitors.

Ian Altman: 23:48 That's great. You know what [inaudible] and just gives people such a clear cut path to get there, which is something that you articulated so well on the book as well is this whole notion of it's not like, oh, here's this long narrative in a book. I love how you give people very concrete, discreet steps and it's almost like just here are specific steps that you can take and you don't have to in there like is you don't have to read the book cover to cover in one sitting. It's do this, then do this, then do that. And it's all just very instructive to give people the steps to actually get that success on their own.

Christina Daves: 24:27 Yeah. And, and it's different ideas too. You know, always say, think about where you're comfortable. If you had told me three years ago that I would be on television every single month, I would've never thought that was possible. I was, I couldn't even speak on a stage back then. I was scared to death. I would stage fright. So nervous. So people can evolve. Maybe right now you want to give quotes, maybe you want to guest write for a big publication. You know, like you do. It's all where you fit into it right now. And just know that that can change. And that's where the book comes in is that, you know, maybe we talked about radio co I could do radio, I was joked, I used to do podcasts in my basement cause I was so nervous. Nobody would see me and I could just guzzle water in between.

Christina Daves: 25:14 Uh, but you will evolve into things so that the book is like, Oh I could never do that. Oh I can do this. That's good. Let me just do this one thing and see what happens. Okay, then I'm going to do this thing. Because all it takes is one. One thing can change your whole business. I've seen it. I have a client who just called me the other day and he said, Christina, we can't work together anymore. And I really liked him. I said, what are you talking about? Everything's great. He goes, yeah, it's too great. He goes, everything you did for me was so great that I just got up and my biggest competitor, and he made me a partner.

Ian Altman: 25:49 Well, but that's, that's the, you know, that's the whole idea is that in the in in many cases, people complain. They say, oh, we're awesome, but we're the best kept secret. And the difference of people being the best kept secret and being famous probably just comes down to some intentional steps. Yeah. Visibility for a business. That to your point at the beginning, most people think is magical, is mysterious. And in this, in this DIY guide, you're actually making it so that it's crystal clear how people can achieve that success without hiring a PR firm. And they can do it on their own.

Christina Daves: 26:30 Absolutely. And the thing is, most of us, no matter how successful we are, we cannot sustain a PR firm for years and years and years at, you know, thousand dollars a month, \$10,000 a month and they don't guarantee results. But if you learn how to do it and you learn the strategy, you can have someone in your office do it. You, the president of the company doesn't have to be doing this, but they need to oversee the strategy to make sure that the right stories are being pitched that are beneficial to the business.

Ian Altman: 27:04 Got To love it. Hey Christina, what's the best way for people to connect with you and learn more about what you're doing?

Christina Daves: 27:10 Yeah, Christinadaves.com. Um, very easy to find me. Everything's there. I've got a PR challenge on there. Um, but you can learn all about me and what I do. Everything's there.

Ian Altman: 27:23 Excellent. Well thanks so much for sharing your wisdom. I took a ton of notes here and as always I will summarize them for our audience, but thanks so much for sharing your wisdom.

Christina Daves: 27:32 Great. Thanks so much for having me.

Ian Altman: 27:36 If you feel it's worthy, I'd be grateful if you left an honest review of this show. Let me give you a quick 32nd recap of the key information you can apply to your business to become PR famous. First, don't fear PR. They have jobs to do, and journalists and media personalities. Welcome valuable content. Second, do your homework to fit your message to their specific audience. Don't just pray and spray and then finally be newsworthy in create great hooks and headlines. Ultimately, you want to capture attention for them and their audience. Remember, this show gets us direction from you, the listener. There's a topic I should cover or a guest I should have in the program. Just drop me a note to ian@ianaltman.com have an amazing week. Add value and grow revenue in a way everybody can

embrace, especially your customer.