



Dream of Travel Writing

Freelance Business Systems: Promotion, Promotion, Promotion

Today, we are continuing our Freelance Business System series with Promotion, Promotion, Promotion. So, as we've gone through this series, we're now several, several months in, we have looked at different functions of your average business, whether accounting, or legal, or operations, and how those relate to the freelance travel writer and, particularly, to the freelance travel writer of today. So, in today's webinar, in particular, we're kind of completing a trifecta of sales, marketing, and promotion under the umbrella of communications. We're also gonna look at customer communications and how those work in large businesses, and what you can take from that for your own freelance business in the next webinar in this series.

But today, as we get into Promotion, Promotion, Promotion, I just wanna take a second to kind of re-establish because we've been at this series for so long, you know, what we're doing with this is really in the vein of taking things that people, who are solopreneurs, whether that means they have a freelance business, or they have a blog based business, some might sell products, or they have more of a service business where they do more, you know, strategic communications, consulting, whatever that is, and taking a lot of the things that I see people struggle with, that have solutions in more traditional business practices and shining a light on those.

So, you know, for instance, promotion has kind of become a pervasive issue recently is a lot of overwhelm, in terms of, "There's so many different things to do. There's so many priorities. I have these business goals. I have these clients. You know, what should I do right now? What should I focus on? How can I make all of these things happen in the hours I have in the day?"

And that's something, for instance, that we're gonna look at in our webinar on management, which is really largely about that, about setting a strategic direction for your own enterprise, or organization, or whatever it is that you wanna call yourself and your business. So, today, as we go into Promotion, Promotion, Promotion, we are gonna look, obviously, at this age old thing of what do PR people really do anyway? You know, this is something that I think, particularly, for us, as travel writers, is always a question.

You know, we perhaps interact with PR people significantly more than your average human, I would say. It's a pretty accurate assessment, in terms of PR people who need to give us things for stories, PR people who are soliciting writers to attend a trip, PR people who are planning trips or perhaps even accompanying us on a trip, PR people who are writing press releases that we use for stories, and so on and so forth. But I wanna start with kind of looking at what is the core priority of PR people? What are they really charged to do? Because I think, particularly, for us as writers, what we get involved in is a very specific subset of their work in a lot of ways.

And it's a subset that can be misleading in terms of how PR works for us, you know, in terms of our own businesses, and what we need to be focusing on there. So, we're gonna start by talking about what PR really is and what PR people do within a company. And I have some kind of examples of different tasks that they do, but we're also gonna look at a couple of different definitions. And then I've kind of distilled down something that is kind of a jazzy



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buzzword today, influence, and looking at what that really means, and how that is the purview of PR folks.

And then I wanna take a minute to recap kind of something that we've talked about in a couple of webinars, which is this division between the marketing, sales and PR function, and particularly, how some of the things that you might be currently doing, and calling marketing or calling it your marketing time, might actually come under PR. And that'll be really helpful when we get on to the end of the series, where we look at the management webinars, to have a really solid idea of what these different things are.

So, that as you're thinking now, having learned about all these different functions of your business, what priorities you wanna have, you know, kind of what you wanna set aside for yourself, in terms of time spend, and things like that. So, to really be able to look back and be like, "I see. Actually, that time that I'm on social media, maybe that's PR and what am I really doing PR of this type for anyway?" So, we'll get into that a little bit. And then we'll look at some specific takeaways, in terms of what does PR mean for you, with whatever type of business you have. If you're a writer, who is primarily freelancing for magazines, or perhaps other different companies, versus if you have a blog of your own, that you're trying to promote, and different things like that.

So, PR like I said, is something that, for travel writers, there's often a lot of conceptions about it. I don't for, you know, the sake of this webinar being a constructive place, but also, for the sake of PR people who I know who have a bunch of interesting quotes kind of bashing PR people, of which there are many floating around, but I just wanna take a second kind of look at this. Like, why is it, you know, that we have a lot of bad feelings about PR things as travel writers?

On the one hand, it's because many of us have either directly had bad experiences or, you know, heard about them from our friends or read about them in a Facebook group, right? And part of that, I've touched on this in some other webinars, particularly, the one we have about getting yourself set up on an individual or a group press trip, but part of that stems from the fact that there are PR people out there who are very junior, it's sort of the technical term, who are very fresh out of school or whatnot, and they are not as nuanced in how they apply things, perhaps they are not as experienced, perhaps they're just not gonna have a future in PR, whatever the case may be.

And that often creates these kind of negative or friction-filled experiences that people can have in PR, and that can certainly happen in any field. But as we get into the definition of PR and what it can and should look like, I hope that you'll see that PR is something also that doesn't have to have the negative term or the negative sort of cloak that we travel writers can put on it, but also not just the negative cloak of, well, PR is spin, PR is taking something that's not interesting or something, maybe, that's negative, and trying to make it look good, trying to dress it up and put lipstick on that pig. I find pigs really cute. I don't know about pig with lipstick, though. But you know, I think in the larger popular setting, there's a conception that PR people are kind of doing something in some way fishy or underhanded, or something like that, to change what people should think about it.



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There's a certain form of influence in the negative term, in where it goes into the realm of manipulation. Now, obviously, there are people out there who owe their businesses and their livelihoods to the work of great PR people. There's companies doing great things that perhaps wouldn't have been known without PR. And over the course of this webinar, I want to encourage you guys to think about how your business might be among them, how your business might be something that can benefit from the right kind of PR. And again, I talk about this, whether your business is a blog or whether you are a freelance writer looking to make a name for yourself, either in terms of covering certain types of things, or the quality of your work, or whatever. Okay?

And so, as we go through this webinar, you know, I have some quotes up here to share with you, but I wanna really remind you that there's so many things that become easier for you as a writer when you have a foothold. And sometimes that foothold comes from having a regular relationship with a particular magazine or outlet, or something like that, but often that foothold is just something that gives you confidence that you're actually doing this as a job. And it's really interesting to see how often that foothold comes in the form of recognition and often recognition from people who know you in normal life.

So, I frequently find writers who almost are kind of closeted, in terms of their freelance writing. Like, they don't really talk to people about it or if they do, they kind of talk about it in a way where it's almost like they feel like they kind of have to hide it. And part of that is maybe because they're working really hard, but they haven't gotten as many assignments as they want yet or something like that. And so, the way that you talk about it to people that you know is not, I don't wanna say PR speak, but is not in the way that somebody who was paid to represent you and talk about your business would do it, okay?

And so, often, in those cases, when you are kind of looking for something to grab on to, to tell somebody who you've met or somebody that you already know, what you do, having something, you know, whether it's a piece you've written has appeared somewhere or you have been interviewed, and that has appeared somewhere, or you have perhaps been, you know, a judge of something because of the fact that you are a writer, that you can, "Oh, well, like, you know, I do different types of freelance writing for different clients, you know, because of that, I've been able to..." and then I'm gonna tell you a cool story about this judging thing, so that it'll make sense later, but there's a lot of different things that fall into the toolkit of PR, that people would do to get the businesses they promote out there, that can create a sense for yourself of confidence, that you are really doing this thing, that you really have a business, that when you mention to other people what you do, you have something to say that you feel proud of, and that makes sense.

So, in terms of, like, these ideas that people have out there of what PR is, I wanted to start with kind of some...some of these may be more negative conceptions, but then show you what some really important people who have had businesses that have really grown, you know, in part because of PR, how they look at it. So, you know, on the one hand, there's this idea that, well, no news is good news, but it's like, there's no such thing as bad publicity, right? But there's this quote that I really like, "There's no such thing as bad publicity except



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your own obituary." So, that's kind of a funny one because the idea is, obviously, at that point, you know, the publicity is that you're no longer available for business.

But this is actually an interesting one because, at the same time, you know, how often has, for instance, the author of "The Girl in the Spider's Web," The Girl in the Hornets' Nest, I'm blanking on the exact names, but the movies with Noomi Rapace, you know, how often has somebody died and their business kind of blew up, right? So, it's interesting to kind of look at this, of this idea of, like, "There's no bad publicity except your own obituary," even that can be wrong. So, in so many ways, kind of everything that you think about, about what publicity is or could be, there's always another side to it. And I don't have a definitions page in this webinar. There's this term, news cycle.

So the news cycle, you've probably seen this word floating around more and more, and more, but the news cycle is kind of the pace at which the things that people are talking about change. So, the idea of the news cycle comes from that it used to be that newspapers went out primarily daily in the morning, sometimes there was evening papers as well, but that the news cycle was that everything would run that morning, and the next day would be a new news cycle. There'll be new things that would be news. And obviously, social media, and even just email, and all sorts of differences in how communication happens, have drastically changed the news cycle because news can travel much, much faster, whether it's news from major news outlet or just news of a more person to person transmission method.

So, this one from Richard Branson I really like, and Richard Branson, obviously, is somebody who has built a brand for himself, that really stands for a lot of things. He has a very interesting life. He runs a lot of different brands. But he also, of course, has his island that he owns in the Caribbean, where he regularly entertains other celebrities, and he gets up and goes surfing in the morning, I believe.

And he has an interesting life, right? And so, he looks at it as, "A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front-page ad." And this is something that we're gonna dig into more in this webinar, but I wanted to put that in there. Because I think we all kind of know in this age of, not just social media, but of, you know, peer reviewing or whatever is the technical term for that these days, I'm sure there's many now that it's grown, but of, like, the Yelp and, like, TripAdvisor generation, you know, there's a lot more stock in this social currency in what a relatively, you know, un-expert, uninformed, but known to the reader person, thinks about something, can often travel a lot farther than even what an expert says about something, right?

You know, if you're going somewhere, how likely are you to look at Lonely Planet for restaurant recommendations, unless you really can't find something else, for instance, right? So, the next one we've got on here is from J. D. Rockefeller, who obviously, I'm sure, unless you have never ever been to the U.S., and even in that case, you probably are still familiar with this name, he says, "Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing." And this goes back to what I was talking about, about the role of PR in our own lives as freelance writers.



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There's a lot of times when people are working really hard and doing all sorts of great stuff, but the way that they frame that narrative to other people that they need to communicate about their work with, whether that's family, or friends, or prospective people who might work with you, whatever that is, often gets a bit skewed because even though you might be doing the right thing, you might be doubting whether you're doing the right thing, and then that comes across when you communicate to people. So, we're gonna look at how to manage that in some of the upcoming slides as well.

And this is a pretty famous quote here from Warren Buffett, obviously, again, a very big business person. He says, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." Now, I almost didn't include this quote because I feel like it's one of those things that causes extreme anxiety in already anxiety-prone writers, who are constantly worried that every single thing they do might blow up in their face, if they send an editor a bad idea or if the email has a typo in it, or something like that. But again, right here, we're talking about in under the auspices of PR, and you're gonna see more about reputation management, and what that means on a couple of slides, but I think that the thing to really take away from this quote is to remember that everything that you do with your PR, unless for this moment, substitute that with the idea of the image of your brand, everything that you do that relates to the image of your brand is a continual process. It's a continual process of dips and it's a continual process of the highs as well.

I mean, we can, of course, think about people like Martha Stewart who went to jail, right? But she's still out there rocking. She's doing a show with Snoop Dogg. You know, her business, I haven't looked at the financials, but from what I can tell, it's absolutely thriving, and she's doing all sorts of different things. So, just because something has happened, that you might feel or it might seem from what's going on could perhaps have ruined your reputation, there's always more years, there's always more time to come back from that as well. And again, we'll look at how you manage that.

But this one, Peter Drucker, I'm not sure if you guys are familiar with. He's a very sort of foundational person in management circles. He says, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." And I really like the juxtaposition of this with the quote from Warren Buffett. Because I often find that when people have done something that's, you know, created a blip in their reputation, which is known more widely, it's something that they did to create that as well, right? But you can look at it, again, as he says, in both ways. So, if you wanna have a future, in which you are a respected novelist who contributes to "The Atlantic," and "Granta," and these other lovely publications, that's a future that you can create, and you can create it strategically. And a lot of that comes down to different work that you're doing and things like that as well.

But PR is an actually a very important function of it. So, this last one here, ties into storytelling. And we'll get into this as well because it's a really core function of PR. But if your stories are all about your products and services, that's not storytelling, it's a brochure. Give yourself permission to make the story bigger. So, when we look at what PR people really do, what does PR really mean? I know, it's like, oh, my God, I have another slide with a huge block of text. But I wanted to just kind of take that quote from Jay Baer into what



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we're talking about today, permission to make the story bigger. So, if you ask any good, experienced, tenured PR person, or a person who has done PR for their own company, or product, or brand successfully, they will always tell you, it's about finding the story, finding the hook, finding what is interesting to the readership.

Now, this, as freelance writers, is something that we are all, I hope, very familiar with, both the importance of it, as well as the difficulty of it and the nuances of it. But it's really interesting because I often speak with writers who are very adept or who are, you know, in the process of working on getting there with finding the stories for other things, who struggle when the topic of the story is themselves, and how to figure out that hook, and how to present that. And one just kind of note on that from somebody who I'm gonna mention, again, in a few slides, is somebody who began as a blogger, vlogger, and now is an Emmy award-winning television host, and has her show on Amazon as well. She says that the person that she promotes is Host Michaela.

It is like the version of her that is on air. So, for you as a writer, when you're writing a first-person piece, you also are separating. There's a version of you that's on that paper that's an incomplete you because you don't exist in 500 words, right? And so, as she puts it, that's a separate her. So, that's somebody that she can promote. She's comfortable promoting that person, but it's because it's not entirely her. It's a section of her. So, as we look at what PR does, if you're feeling like, "Well, I don't really know how I would ever promote myself. That doesn't even make sense," I just wanna just stick that sort of sentiment in there to kind of help you think about, well, what parts of you need to be promoted? What parts of you, either, are you comfortable promoting or do you need to get comfortable with promoting? Because if you wanna be big at X, if you wanna have a big blog, if you wanna have a big book, out in the world, if you want to write articles for big outlets, somebody's gotta promote that, right? And it's only gonna be you.

So, what facets can you become comfortable with? Can you become comfortable with yourself as an expert on a specific geographic area because you've done enough things there that you feel, like, comfortable, saying unequivocally that you're an expert on that? What can you get comfortable with promoting? What kind of divisions can you make between yourself, the business, or yourself, the blogger, yourself, the writer, whatever that is, which is a public image, and yourself, the person because they do need to be separate, right? So, what's the role of public relations teams? "Public relations," this is according to Wikipedia, "is the practice of deliberately managing the spread of information between an individual or organizations such as a business, governmental agency, or nonprofit, and the public." Okay.

So you're gonna see this come up a lot. This is the way that information passes between an organization and the public. And public, obviously, can be a big word, and it can include lots of different publics depending on what the message is or what the situation is. "Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment." So, this is different than advertising. "This differentiates it from a form of advertising as a form of marketing communications. Public relations is the idea of creating coverage for clients for free."



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So, this I found really interesting because, you know, these days, obviously, PR people tend to be working also with influencers, right, and that's not necessarily for free. And this gets into this whole line of when you're talking to somebody, yourself, as a writer who wants to go on something, you can also think about, "Am I talking to the PR person because their job is really to get things for free? Should I instead go and be talking to the marketing person because their job is to spend money on creating content?"

This is also something to keep in mind if you are on that side of the equation, in terms of looking at how to work with PR people, okay? Advertising can also be part of PR activities today. This one, like I said, I both agree and disagree with it, it kind of depends. A good example of good public relations will be generating an article featuring a client, rather than paying for the client to be advertised next to the article. So, this, I think we can kind of all understand theoretically that, you know, when we're invited on a press trip, the idea is that they want an article to come out of it, and we can see how that fits into PR.

We can see that the job of the PR person is to get coverage for their destination, and so that means having articles written about them. But at the same time, as we know, as writers, it's not a deliverable oriented quid pro quo, right? We are not explicitly paid to write an article about the place where we have stayed because of this trip.

That's the difference between influencers and writers or editorial outlets, right? And so, you can start to kind of understand, if you think about that, how PR gets tricky and how PR is difficult because it's the stance of hoping that you will get something in exchange for something without really being sure, and also hoping that you'll get something positive without really being sure. Okay. So, the next one here, this is from Forbes. "PR is the Persuasion Business. You're trying to convince an audience, inside your building or town, or outside your usual sphere of influence, to promote your idea, purchase your project, support your position or recognize your accomplishments," right? So, that gets back to what I was talking about earlier about us, as freelance writers. "PR people are storytellers. They create narratives to advance their agenda."

I really like this idea of creating narratives to advance your agenda. Now, I wanna make sure to say, though, that when it says, "create narratives" here, it doesn't mean create information, it means create sort of connecting the dots of facts that exist to make them into an interesting story that has a narrative arc, okay? "A good PR practitioner will analyze the organization, find the positive messages and translate those messages into positive stories." So, again, if you talk to PR people who are good, who are experienced, who have been around for a long time, this is where they will start.

So, like, a really bulldog type PR person, will go and sit down with the head of a company or whoever it is that they're able to talk to when they first start and say like, "You know, tell me what you really do or who do we help? How do we help them? Why are we special? What are you really doing here? Why does anybody care?" They will ask these kinds of really tough questions, and they will go around internally with an organization, and they will speak to people and find out the answers to these things because without that research, just like we as journalists are doing, it's not possible for them to do their job.



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It's not possible for them to get people to write about a company in a positive light or to speak about a company in a positive light if they can't find those things that are positive to be highlighted, right? So, this is another way of kind of thinking about, how do you do PR for yourself? Well, if you were to sit down and ask yourself those questions, what would you unearth? What would you find that you are doing, either that's unique or that's interesting to other people? It's always interesting to me because when we do our application form for our coaching program, we have a question here that says, you know, "What makes you unique, you know, compared to your competition or other writers?"

And it's always interesting for me to see what people say because, on the one hand, you know, you could say it's sort of a test on how well people can promote themselves or on how self-aware they are, and how they kind of view themselves in relation to the marketplace. But it's also really interesting to see that, in terms of how that applies to stories they come up with. Because I tend to find that people who are able to recognize kind of what's the hook or the interesting thing about something, can do it in many different places.

So, if you find that you're having trouble figuring out what's the hook about yourself, and again, we're gonna talk about different specific tactics of how you promote yourself later on, but if you feel like you're having trouble figuring out that hook, it might also be something that's affecting your writing and your pitching of it as well. So, it's also a good test if you feel like you're, you know, kind of not getting the traction that you want and pitching article ideas about other people. Like, describe to somebody that you know what you do, and see how interesting that sounds to them because it's typically sort of, you know, half dozen of one, six of the other, where it's a skill that transcends. So, that's one of the cool things about doing PR for yourself.

And like I said, we'll get into exactly what the tactics are about that, is that it can be another way for you to sharpen those skills, in addition to all the other benefits that you get from it. So, this next definition here is actually the definition from the PR association of America, PRSA. And it's, "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public." So, I was reading kind of a bit about how this definition came about.

So, essentially, you know, as we've talked about PR is kind of fraught...people have a lot of different ideas of what that is. And when this definition was trying to figure out what they were gonna publish, is their definition of what PR is. They were accepting submissions from different people, and thousands and thousands came in, and this was what went out. So I find this really important because it's, you know, really chosen by PR people who are at the top of their game and at the top of the field to represent what they really do. So, it's a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships. So, you know, you can totally think about that in terms of, okay, like, what if you are a PR person who's trying to get your destination covered?

A mutually beneficial relationship would be a writer or editor who needs something to write about, and you provide them with a great story idea that makes sense for them to write about, and then you get coverage of your destination. That makes sense. Now, I mentioned this



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example earlier, and this seems like a good time to go into it, so, I heard a really cool PR story recently, so, there's these folks that have a very, very niche blog. It is about front porches, okay? Now, the PR that they have done for themselves is just outstanding. Okay. So, this is a very, very niche blog, all right, obviously. So, they kind of have pictures of front porches. You know, they also talk about kind of maintenance, decor, different things like that, super niche, but they have found a lot of stuff to write about. And then they have really positioned themselves in this fascinating way with their niche blog. So, in New York, we have this place called Mohonk House, which is a historic hotel. It used to be kind of the grand home of a wealthy family, and they would invite their friends in the summer, and then got bigger and bigger and bigger.

And now, this place is this all-inclusive resort, but in a very chill, sort of New York mountains kind of way, where it's all-inclusive in the sense that you take all your meals there. You can do any activities, like you take a boat out for free, and all these kind of things. But it cost like 700 bucks a night for these very kind of chill, you know, like, historic rooms in this big building. And one of the things that they do for one of the American holidays over the summer is, on the back of the house, which faces onto a lake, they have this enormous porch, where usually there's rocking chairs, and lots of people gather there, you know, having tea and cookies, which are included, because it's an all-inclusive, and all this stuff, and once a year, on one of these holidays, they allow people to jump off of this second-story porch, and into the water of the lake below.

And it's quite dangerous, and so they only have it once a year with, like, a lot of supervision and paramedics around, and all these things. But they have sort of a competition, I guess, of who can do the most, you know, artistic dive off of the porch and into the lake. And so, these front porch bloggers got themselves set up as the judges of this competition. There's some other things that they've done, such as there are towns, where, for certain holidays, you know, within the town, within the people who live there, they have a competition to see, you know, who can dress up their stoop or their front porch, or whatever it is, in the most holiday fashion. And these front porch bloggers have not only gotten themselves set up to be the judges of this competition, but they even have the voting of the competition run through their website. So, they have people, just hundreds and thousands of people coming to their website, in order to participate in the voting on the different front porches in this competition.

So, they go around and they take photos of all the different front porches and they run the competition, and they announce their results, and all this stuff. So, I like this as an example. It's not strictly within travel, but they've done some interesting travel things, in terms of how they promoted it, but because of the very sideways examples of the type of PR that these folks have done with themselves. So, I'll talk in a bit how this can work, as well, for people who are straight freelance writers who don't have a blog of their own. If you have a blog, you can kind of, I hope, start to see how some different things can lend themselves here.

But I'll talk more about how this works for straight writers as well. I mean, straight writers as in journalists, rather than bloggers. So, another one we've got in here. "The aim of public relations is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders, and ultimately persuade them to maintain a positive or favorable view



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about the organization, its leadership, products, or political decisions." So, what I really like about this definition, and I'm sorry I don't remember where it came from, is that it says that the aim of public relations is to inform and ultimately persuade, because I really feel like that's something that we miss out on, that we sometimes feel like PR is, you know, I used the word manipulative earlier, but that PR is very transactional, for lack of a better word.

Whereas, something that I wanna kind of get across is this idea that PR is really about providing information to help people to make informed decisions on their own. And I hope that that sentence kind of, you know, providing information to help people make informed decisions on their own, can kind of help reshape, not just how you think about PR that you might do for yourself as a writer or working with PR people down the line, but how you think about the messaging and how you think about messaging around yourself, right?

So, PR people are going into an organization, they're digging up stories, they're looking for different things to highlight, where is there already an interesting thing that happened? What narrative can we place around that? Because as you are doing your own social media, unless, you know, promoting yourself, the stories that you've written, projects that you're working on, maybe residencies that you've landed, whatever that is, this is how you wanna think about it. It's putting information out there that helps people make a decision because if you think too much about trying to create an impression in the reader with what you're trying to write, sometimes you can sabotage yourself because it can look too overt.

And that's the kind of bad PR writing that we've all seen. So, this is one thing that I found kind of at the end, and this is why the text on the slide is so very small. I found this cool quote from somebody who was kind of the originator in the early 1900s of the whole concept of public relations. And you'll have noticed in some of the other slides that we talked about, there's a lot of things that seemed to have originated in the early 1900s, that have to do with how businesses are run. But obviously, business has been around for thousands and thousands of years. We talked about this in the accounting webinar.

So, it's really interesting how some facets of business that make things easier or more efficacious or, you know, just like better, for lack of a better word, seemed to be newer. And the fact that there's a definition for PR, that's kind of one of the earliest that comes from the 1900s is particularly interesting because it's clearly something that has happened for ages, right? You know, newspapers have been writing about things or, you know, the predecessor of newspapers, which would have been bards going around from town to town, or just people talking amongst themselves about their impressions of a certain thing or a certain business, this has all been happening for a really long time. But this definition from Ivy Lee, I think, shows what the shift is.

So he said, "A management function, PR is a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organization, followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance." And I think what this kind of shows what the shift here is that there was a change to the idea that you can manage this idea that is created in the mind of the public, to a certain extent, but that that begins with knowing where your public, whatever is the public that you wanna have receive



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your information, knowing where they're at, to begin with. So, let's say, for instance, that you're a writer, and you would like to have a book... I spoke to somebody about this the other day, you know, not to use another blogging example, but she is a blogger, who has a very, very large blog.

But the things on her blog, on their own, don't necessarily lend themselves very obviously, to a book. They're not very voicey. They're very much written for SEO. And so, for her to position herself to have a book, I mean, she needs to start with the audience. What is the public, in this case, which would be literary agents, what attitudes do the public have about her? That's where she needs to start, right? So, perhaps they have an attitude that, you know, bloggers are fly by night or that what bloggers write is not really great storytelling, especially when it comes to food, and it doesn't lend itself well to cookbooks because the people who are used to reading their blog are using things for free, and why would they pay for books, and dah, dah, dah. So, the message that she needs to create, needs to take those attitudes of her public in mind, if she wants to successfully, you know, campaign or pitch, or whatever you wanna call it, to get a literary agent to be interested in her project.

Okay. And so, this is the kind of thing where we talked about this earlier in the "You Plus Marketing Equals Money" webinar, that a lot of people skip when they embark, whether it's on a campaign of marketing, or public relations or whatnot, is to begin by tabulating those public attitudes, which also stems from knowing what public it is that you're talking about. So, the Tools of the PR Trade, which we're all quite familiar with, more or less, break into this great list that I found on "Forbes." They have it in a couple of different articles.

They might have actually borrowed it from the PR association, but they didn't attribute it. So, writing press releases, we'll talk about that a little bit. Speech writing, writing pitches to send them to journalists, you know, creating special events, conducting market research, expanding business contacts with networking, writing or blogging, crisis, public relations strategies, and social media promotions and responses to negative opinions online. Now, I know a lot of these things here don't necessarily fall into the category of things that you think that you might be doing. So, speech writing, obviously, would be one, that you probably wouldn't think about how that would go into your own sort of toolbox in promoting your freelance business.

But obviously, you know, speaking at conferences, is a really great way to get more recognition, get more sort of name brand appeal for yourself as a writer. And that's just something that, you know, I've done a lot of over the years, and I know a lot of other people who do a lot of it as well. I'm kind of backing off from it myself, just from the time commitment. But this is something that can be really transformational for people I've seen, in terms of both feeling for themselves like they have some sort of establishment, and also sort of having some on paper, credibility.

And the cool thing about speaking, is that, again, as long as you're really nailing your pitch, in terms of what they're looking for, what you can provide, how it's gonna benefit the audience and all of that, it doesn't really matter what background you have before, as long as you can provide something valuable to the reader for a lot of conferences out there that are



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for, you know, whether it's freelance writers, or bloggers or whatever that is. So, that can be one tool of the PR trade, which can come very quickly and easily for a lot of us freelance writers that I think is often overlooked, in part, because a lot of public appearance type PR is something that a lot of folks aren't super excited about. One of the other things that wasn't on this list here from "Forbes" that's very much a tool of the PR trade is sort of placing people in broadcast appearances.

So, a PR person that I know really well, one of her main jobs at TripAdvisor used to be that... TripAdvisor has them, Lonely Planet has them, really everybody has them, but there are certain people on staff at these big companies, or sometimes not even on staff, they're kind of people who are freelancers in this capacity, are responsible for going on the radio, whenever something interesting is happening in the world, and commenting on it as a representative of TripAdvisor, likewise, with going on television, right? So, we all think about these talking heads that are out there, you know, just commenting, just giving their opinion on something that's happening, but doing it on behalf of a brand. So, this is something that I've actually seen a lot of freelancers do very interestingly. So, there's a couple of folks that I either know or I've heard some case studies of recently, who have books out on various aspects of travel, who are just all about this sort of broadcast circuit.

So, even Dev and Dave, who are big travel bloggers did this originally, I believe, Oneika Raymond, who also is now kind of known as a very big travel blogger and does a lot of PR for herself as well did this. There's another guy, Russell, I'm blanking on his last name, he's in Canada, I believe, and he kind of writes about traveling on a budget and things like that. But you can pitch yourself to the local radio or television station, to do segments on all sorts of things involving travel. So, let's say, for instance, that you are based in the Hudson Valley, as I know a lot of folks are, and a lot of people travel up there, right? So, you can pitch yourself to "Taxi TV," you can pitch yourself to all sorts of stations in New York, to do a monthly segment on, you know, where to go for a weekend in the Hudson Valley, that you can kind of develop either as you talking to the screen, or it can be something where you don't need to be seen.

And you've just gone around and shot some different imagery of some different places that people can go to, and string that together with a voiceover. Now, I know this is the kind of thing that makes a lot of people sort of cringe and hide, but getting those TV spots... I can tell you, the people that I've seen that have done this, it's amazing how big their careers as writers, like, purely as writers, have been able to become, by virtue of them making these TV appearances. It's one of those things that kind of never gets old, in terms of kind of creating some star power in people's eyes. So, one of the other things mentioned on here that I'll get to, you know, a case in a little bit is also creating and designing special events. This kind of can seem like a weird thing for a writer, especially, like, if you don't have a book out yet. But I got an invitation from somebody the other day. It was so weird.

I don't know how they got my email. I think I had actually maybe written to offer them a free trial of the magazine database when we started out three years ago or something like that. And this person wrote to invite me to this evening that they were having in New York, where they had gone on a trip and very classic. Like, they were gonna show, like, a slideshow. They



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were gonna show images from their trip and talk about their trip. And it was just an evening that they had put together. And especially, if you don't live somewhere where event space is so crazy, and apartments are so small as New York, this is a really easy thing to put together.

So, you know, in your community, where you live, you can invite friends to invite friends of their friends, and have an evening where you talk about some interesting place that you went to. So, like, let's say you went to Alaska, that's kind of a very talked about destination these days. You could put together you know, an evening of, you know, a writers' insights on a road trip through blah, blah, blah, Alaska, and invite people, and invite if any other people have come from Alaska, and they'd like to talk about their experience as well, to open that up. And I've seen these kind of events just go really well, in terms of both offering an opportunity for people to speak and highlight themselves, but also from the other PR perspective of just that networking and relationship building.

And any time you can be the host of something, you're always gonna get more sort of kudos, more cred, than if you go to something organized by something else. There's always just kind of the networking oomph of being a host, I have to tell you, is always definitely a thing. So, if you don't live in a big city where it would be really hard to do such a thing and you're comfortable having people over, or you know someone else that has, like, a yard or a great space, like, in their house, where you can host this, look at doing something like this.

Events are a very cool and easy, and I find rewarding, type of PR to do, in terms of bringing people together, helping them have a great time, and getting some great, positive blowback on you for that. So, that's a little bit of the Tools of the PR Trade. But I just wanted to also take a second and say, you would be shocked what PR people get paid related to what they deliver. Okay? So, for a PR person who would be on retainer for like \$1,000 a month or less, for them to maybe get one placement every 3 months for their client, would seem normal. Okay?

So, I have a friend who has a new company that's kind of in the tech space, it's kind of, not exactly like Airbnb, but it's related to housing and online markets, and things like that. And he was telling me, he worked so hard to find a PR person, who did not cost an arm and a leg, he's paying \$3,500 a month. And as a result, he's gotten two or three media placements, maybe four or five, like, in a very splashy launch month, from this PR person. Think about that. Think about that, for us as writers, how much we get paid for a piece versus how much these PR people are getting paid for the amount that they are placing people.

So, that might have just inspired you to start doing some PR work, I don't know. But what I wanna get across here is that the people who do this, like salespeople, pay very highly for what they do, even if it seems like they're not delivering a lot because of its importance. All right? And it's kind of sad if you think about how much writers get paid in relation to PR people who are doing these things, but let's leave that aside for now. So, if we really kind of dive down... I know I talked earlier about that PRSA, the PR association definition and how it's about relationships, right? But if we really dig down into it, PR is the delicate art of influencing people, whether that's, you know, a writer of a magazine, whatever, to influence other people.



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So, there's this whole idea, you know, of creating a positive impression. The idea of creating a positive impression is that that positive impression is passed on to other people. So, PR people, you know, wanna be like a positive virus. They wanna get out there and infect people to infect other people and infect other people, but change all of those with some positive words, right? So, what is influence? Okay. So, if we really dig down into this, there is, of course, a negative definition of influence that we can get into, which is on here as B, this is from Merriam Webster, "Corrupt influence without authority for personal gain."

So, that's when we see PR start to go awry, right? But the basic act of influence is causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways, or the act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command, right? So, this is really when we get into what PR people are doing. They're trying to make it look elegant and like nothing has happened, but you just magically have this positive impression of something. And that's why storytelling is such a big part of it in passing information and allowing people to make decision for themselves, right? So influence is a verb. It can mean to affect or alter by indirect or intangible means. For instance, she attempted to influence his decision, I was greatly influenced by my parents, or to have an effect on the condition or development of something.

Now, that goes back to that quote that I had earlier from Peter Drucker, right? That, you know, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." And this is what I really want us to think about, in terms of the PR that you can do for yourself and also the PR that you might already, without realizing it, be doing for your company, right?

So, there was that Warren Buffett, again, with this idea of, "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it." And that's that whole idea of there's all these different things that you are doing all the time, that are factoring into your public image for yourself, as a writer, as a brand, as a blog, as an author, whatever it is, that you define yourself as, right? And there's a number of things that you are already doing that contribute to that.

So, for instance, anytime you attend the conference, even if you're not speaking, you are doing networking with your peers and potentially people who might hire you, and all sorts of other things, that are influencing and creating a public perception of what you are as your personal brand. If you notice, PR people, tend to have the, like their makeup, very sad, and you know, their hair is right done, and they have great outfits. Why? Because these intangible things, like appearance, influence perception of brand, right? So, everything that you are currently doing, that is not explicitly a marketing activity, that you are doing to create an impression of your brand, is PR.

So, when people tell me that they wanna spend a ton of time on their website and do all sorts of stuff, and I say, "Well, is that really getting you closer to what you wanna do?" If they are not already ranking on SEO or if they're not gonna rank on SEO in any sort of short time frame, and someone is sitting there dithering about what their website is gonna look like, it really is PR. It's really perception work, okay? It's really branding, okay? Now, let's just take a second to look, again, at what is the division between PR, marketing and sales because I've given you a lot of kind of looks at what PR people do, and some examples, and some sort of



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small case studies, but I wanna just kind of take a second to recap some slides that we looked at in some of the other webinars here.

So, when we looked at marketing and sales, marketing is the stuff that comes before someone is officially a lead. And a lead means someone who is qualified as in you know, for a fact, that they are prepared to spend money on this thing, and it's a function of convincing them, right? Sales then is the art of taking a lead, somebody who is interested and has the money to spend on your thing and turning that into an actual transaction. Now, we looked in the webinar about "You Plus Marketing Equals Money," at this same slide here, about earned versus owned versus paid media. And I told you that we were gonna talk about earned media this week because earned media is really the purview of PR people.

So, the difference between earned, owned, and paid is that paid is advertising, and these days that comes typically under the auspices of the marketing people. They have "media buyers" who are specialized in purchasing different ads. And then owned media is all of the things that you are writing and putting out there, whether it's blogs, social media, anything like that, that you're writing. That's owned media. It's something on your own platform you have complete control over. Whereas earned media is anytime people talk about you in a way that you have not paid them to do because then that would be under paid media. Okay? So, if we think about earned media for ourselves as freelance writers, what is that earned media? It's not always necessarily going to be media in the sense of being online, it can also be word of mouth. It can be your editors talking to other editors in their office about you. It can also be editors talking to other editors at networking events about you. It can even be, you know, that you are connected to somebody on LinkedIn, and that allows you to be found in search by somebody else, right?

That's kind of a sideways example of social media. But if you think about it, just the social media mentioned reviews, right, how many of us use that, I'm blanking on the name of it right now, but the section in LinkedIn where people can write like a referral or a reference about you, how many of us use that appropriately? How many of us harness, as freelance writers, the ability for other people to speak in a public setting well about us in a way where other people can see that, and then either refer us to or hire us themselves for work? Okay?

Now, in terms of traditional media, I talked about radio and being on broadcast TV, and different things like that, that you can do to position yourself as an expert, as a writer. In terms of print, you can also be writing, for instance, in magazines for writers, or magazines for tourism boards, different things like that, as a columnist, or as some other sort of person writing in an expert capacity on the industry. That's a way where, even though it's not earned, as in, like, you've actually written it yourself, it's earned because it's not on your own platform, and that's positioning yourself as an expert. So, let's dig a little bit more into kind of what the functions of PR for freelance bloggers, content creators, whatever, can look like.

So, I think they really dive into kind of these two things. So, one is visibility, sort of being out there, being somewhere where you can be seen, right? That quote that we looked at where, like, you know, "Next to doing a good thing, the best thing is, is talking about it or



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having somebody talk about it for you." And then the other thing is establishing expertise. So, we talked about broadcast, I just mentioned this idea of columns and industry outlets.

Obviously, this idea of broadcast, you can also take that on to YouTube and make your own videos. But that's less in this category of earned media, where you're appearing somewhere, you're appearing on someone else's platform and network, to reach those people and to affect that public than owned media, where if you're creating videos on YouTube, for instance, you know, talking about an area that you know well, that's content that, well, it is on YouTube, and it does have that discoverability angle as any social media outlet would, but you have created it yourself. So, it's produced by you, and it doesn't have that sort of social star, that plus sign, that sheen of having been approved by somebody else in the same way that earned media would.

So, in terms of visibility, I know sometimes, not sometimes, but with some regularity, I have people asking me about writing for free. And my position on that is always, does the writing for free on this platform get you enough juice, get you enough whatever it is that you want out of it that's worth your time? And I think that when people talk about writing for free, they often think about it as something, in terms of, almost like an internship. Like, you are doing something for free to gain experience that you can then leverage into a higher position in this industry as being a freelance writer. But I invite you instead to think about places that you might be considering writing for free as PR for yourself, and to think about how that might change your approach to doing them, whether with regularity or without regularity, depending on where you are. Now, in terms of visibility, in terms of community involvement, I talked about some ways, you know, that the front porch bloggers had done that really interestingly.

There's also some ways, of course, that you can do that in the writing community, whether that's speaking at conferences, also, even volunteering at conferences, can be an interesting way to do that as well. But there's also there's the community of people who are in your industry and then there's the physical community that you operate in, right? So I spoke about this a bit earlier, in terms of how you can use PR to kind of help yourself with those tricky conversations that you might have with people that you already know, who don't quite understand what it is exactly that you do, right? And one of the ways that I've seen people really effectively use very small scale PR, to start to step up to bigger things, is in these hyper-local settings.

So, let's say that you are from a small town somewhere, and you have written an article that appeared in some magazine or maybe you took a trip somewhere interesting, and then you wrote three articles that appeared in different places, maybe not all big places, you can pitch your very, very local tiny newspaper... The one where I grew up is called the "Town-Crier." Like, I'm amazed that they even put this thing out in my tiny, tiny town. But you can pitch to your very, very local newspaper, as a PR person would, but on your behalf and say, "Hey, I wanted to let you know, like, I grew up in this area. And I actually went on and became a travel writer, and I've just been on this really unique trip to this area. And I had pieces published about it in these different places. Would you be interested in doing a story on me becoming a travel writer in this trip that I took, and all that stuff?" That is an excellent



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point...place, that, s, to get started with getting PR for yourself as a writer. The kind of hook of, you know, somebody who's from a place and has gone on to do X, Y, Z, often, can work really well from the very small hyper-local publications.

So, let's say though, that the place that you're from is kind of large, like, maybe you're from Brooklyn, that might not work quite as well. But there's still often these neighborhood publications, even in larger places, that you can tap into. Other things that can happen in communities are also libraries. Libraries, I am always intrigued to see how writers work with libraries to put on very cool events. Most libraries are very, very open. Often, like, you don't have to book the space, like, there's no fee, there's just kind of like a reservation that you have to do in advance for you to do any number of events there. So, you know, see the earlier part of the webinar today, when I was talking about different events that you can do, in terms of hosting them in your house or someone else's house related to a trip.

You can do things like that related to a trip. You can have a round table of talking about, you know, an interesting destination that you've been to that's in the news, and invite people to come for an evening, you know, of conversation and insights about that. There's all sorts of things that you can do partnering with the local library. And then, being in the library, having that network gives you all sorts of other benefits, right, who knows who the librarians know, in terms of other authors that you can be connected to, who have been there either regularly in passing or from that town. Libraries also tend to have magazines that they stock. There can be things that the librarians clue you into that might be good outlets for you that you never would have known if not for that connection. Okay? So, I just wanna take a second to talk about this case study of somebody who I mentioned earlier. Michaela, who was a blogger, vlogger, and now has an Emmy award-winning PBS show that's also aired on Amazon.

So, she has done really a lot for herself in terms of PR. She's done a number of these tactics that I shared with you today, whether it's that, you know, person from the hometown story. But she's also, over time, really built up kind of a base of journalists that she reaches out to whenever she does something interesting. So, I've spoken with her a lot before about this and I've seen her do talks on this, but what she did was, you know, when she started her YouTube channel related to her blog, she had a party, just because she started a YouTube channel, right? And so, basically, she was like, "Well, you know, having a YouTube channel kind of in and of itself isn't necessarily that newsworthy, so if I wanna have people cover this, I need to make it into something."

So, she created a party, and her website is about dancing, it's about dancing all over the world. And so, of course, the party needs to have music and dancing. So, she had music, she had dancing. She worked with, you know, a tourism board or a food provider to provide food that was kind of in line with some of the videos that she was gonna be putting up on her YouTube channel. And she had an exclusive sort of preview of some of the videos that she was gonna put up. So, this is one of those instances of creating news, right? If there's something going on, like starting a YouTube channel, which maybe isn't like the coolest, sexiest thing that should have, like, a newspaper article written about it, what do you do? Figure out how to add some other things on top to make it so that it is newsworthy, whether



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that's an event or some other features you can build on or something like that. And then she invited some journalists that she knew to the party.

She invited some friends that took photos, to take photos, and then after-party as well. She was able to use those photos. She was able to say, X, Y, and, Z people were here, and that was something else that she could pitch out, as well. And so, something that she's done, and I think is also really interesting that we can draw on as writers, is that when she goes somewhere to do a segment about it, a show about it, she's going to a destination, and she also reaches out to people in that destination. So this is something, I think as writers, that we don't necessarily think about unless you've been on a tour, where you've confronted this, is that I have often been on trips, where there are local journalists there to cover the fact that we writers are there. So, for instance, I was at Traverse Conference in Rotterdam a couple of years ago, where I was just sitting in this, like, coffee tasting, sort of barista training tour type event that we were on.

And there was this journalist who was just kind of quietly hanging out, asking people for quotes. So, if you are taking an individual trip somewhere, for instance, let's say you are gonna do your real trip, and you're gonna go to, you know, 12 different countries in 12 days, send little pips to the local papers and say, you know, "Hi, I'm a journalist, I'm doing this cool thing. You know, would you like to interview me while you're in town or while I'm in town, rather?" So, there's all sorts of interesting things that you can do around this, and a lot of it just comes back to being creative. And, you know, I did some blog examples earlier, so I don't wanna do too many more blog examples now, but what I do wanna do is take a second to say, I just mentioned, you know, writing to another journalist, and I think we can kind of imagine how that might unfold. But let's say, for instance, you're doing something interesting, you are doing, you know, a very cool trip that you've created.

You know, I know people who have taken a book that they self-published, and taking themselves on a tour, where they're gonna do a stop in every single one of the 50 U.S. states and every Canadian province, or they are bicycling the eastern coast of Africa or something like that. So, let's say you have something interesting that you're doing, either as a writer or, you know, on your blog. It can be something new, that you're launching, like, I was talking about Michaela with her YouTube channel, something like that, you can send out a press release about it. And I just wanna take a second to kind of look at press releases because I think we're all accustomed to seeing them, but maybe we're accustomed to seeing bad ones, and we don't really like them.

So, I wanna talk about what should really be in there, just for a second, before I let you go, so that you have a sense of how to put those together. And again, if you get adept at this, this is always something that you can offer as a service to others as well. But the header is, as you would think about with any sort of headline, you wanna use good headline techniques that should be interesting, but it should also be very clear about what it is exactly that you're promoting in this press release. The subheader is the opportunity to give more information. I'm gonna show you two examples of this in a minute. And then you wanna start in a very sort of inverted pyramid, traditional journalist fashion with the who, what, where, when, how, and why. That needs to be your first paragraph. And then you elaborate. So, I like to think



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about press releases often as being a very standard sort of news brief style with some expansive quotes. Okay. So when you elaborate, you're typically elaborating on a couple of interesting details from the who, what, where, when, how, and why. Now, Michaela gave me an interesting tip about this quote the other day.

So, you wanna include quotes. This is very important because when you send out a press release, it can often be pulled verbatim, by different news outlets for use. And it's important with the quotes, A, to include kind of an interesting quote, but also to have the best quote that you can get. So, let's say you are doing this thing that I totally just made up, which is that you're cycling down the eastern coast of Africa, I don't know somebody who's done this, this is very made up. And what kind of quote would you include?

You'll probably wanna have a quote from yourself, right, of course, because you're the person doing it. But you might also reach out to maybe a guide book author who's written a Lonely Planet guide book on Africa to talk about, you know, what an interesting and crazy thing this is that you're doing. You might reach out to somebody from the tourism board to get this quote. And again, think about it, as you're reaching out to people to get the quote for this press release, that in and of itself, is doing promotion for the fact that you're doing this trip. So, it's a nice, little cyclical thing there. Then you're gonna have the highlights, and the highlights tend to be bullet points that are very easy to steal. So you would think about it in terms of the bullet points that might be on a trip itinerary. They should be short, but sort of impactful, in terms of being interesting, maybe having some journalistic detail. And then the highlights is another thing that... Oh, sorry, I was just talking about the highlights.

The wrap-up information is gonna be very service-oriented. It's gonna have the dates. It's gonna have a website where more information can be found and things like that. You also wanna have available when you send a press release images that can be used, whether that's just an image of you. In this case, it could be an image of you on your bike. You know, you could have asked the tourism board if there's some images of the destinations that you're going to that can be included with your press release.

And then have the contact information and then the abouts. The abouts are when you say, you know, for instance, Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, and then there's this little blurb about the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism. And then below that, it might be, you know, the Razzle and Dazzle Hotel, which is opening, and that's what the press releases is about. And there'll be a blurb about the Razzle and Dazzle Hotel. So, the abouts are these very sort of prescribed paragraphs that have sort of overall description of the things being discussed. So, if it's just about you, as a writer, you'll have one about you. You might see if you can also get one about the places that you're visiting. In that case, you'll need to coordinate with them and make sure that you aren't writing the about just on your own, that the about is something that's been approved by the other people that have been included.

So, here's an example of kind of what a press release looks like. You'll see that it usually opens with the city name and the date. And then it's got a very sort of concise sentence talking about what is going on here. Okay. And so, this is the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Now, the next one here is both elaborating and a quote, all in one. They've also here



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included some statistics to show why this is important. And you'll see here, we get into those bullet points that I was talking about. And there's several.

So, I mentioned here how the bullet points can be the highlights. They've got here some that are... There's three groups, and then they also talk about key insights. Okay? And the idea with these bullet points is that you are giving people not only just more information, but you're also giving them things that they might just find that are interesting to develop into stories on their own. So, another example that I found here... Gosh, this one is really small on the screen for you guys, I apologize. I hope it'll come out better in the PDF of the slides that you get in the webinar libraries.

But this kind of goes through sentence by sentence, what you wanna have in here. And you'll notice, in this case, they've written, "This is your first paragraph, it should talk about this, and not exceed 25 words. This is a standalone paragraph. You know, within this paragraph, we should look at this." So, unlike this one, where you're actually seeing what a live press release looks like on the page, this is more kind of walking through what each segment should go to. And so, if you're interested in writing a press release for something that you're doing, like I said, this information will be in the slides and you can grab it there.

So, that's what I've got for you guys today. I hope I've opened up some ideas for you, as we look to do in all of these Freelance Business Systems webinars, about some different ways that you can do promotion for your own freelance business, your blog, your books, whatever you've got going on, that you might not have considered before. In the next webinar in this series next week, we're going to look at how to approach communications with your clients, your customers in a more systematized way as a large company would.

So, thank you all so much for joining us today, and I look forward to seeing you on the next webinar.