

Metigy podcast



Standing out and keeping resilient in the PR industry with Shane Allison, Public Address

Daren (00:04):

Resilience. The secret sauce of what makes a small business survive. One of the main things a small business owner can do when it comes to PR, a.k.a. public relations, is to remain resilient. Because on average, a journalist receives 200 images a day from small business owners and PR agencies. So how do you stand out and how do you keep resilient in a highly competitive market like this today? Find out the answer to that question and more on this episode of Forward Thinking.

Daren (00:38):

Hey everyone, I'm Daren Lake, the audio content manager here at Metigy. Welcome to Forward Thinking, a podcast by Metigy. In this series, we speak with inspirational business owners, brands and marketing experts to learn from their experiences on the front line and uncover what it takes to build a world-class business. On this episode, we have a great friend of Metigy and Kiwi New Zealand resident now turned Australian, Shane Allison.

Daren (01:05):

Shane is the CEO and founder of Public Address. They are a media relationships management platform that helps PR professionals develop stronger relationships with journalists and secure more coverage. Being a part of the PR industry for almost a decade, Shane's seen the pros and cons for his clients and media. He's also celebrated a few wins, getting awards like the PRovoke Media's Innovator 25 Asia-Pacific class of 2020, winning the 2018 PR professional of the year and the inaugural Mumbrella neXt Award for PR talent. With this, he comes in to drop a wealth of knowledge that you can absorb.

Daren (01:41):

Some things you'll learn in this episode, why PR is a great long-term investment, how to turn around bad PR, ways you can reach out to journalists and stay top of their mind, how to be more confident and tough in your industry, methods to deal with negative comments and so much more. Let's get into the episode with Shane and Metigy's head of content, Brendan Hill.

Brendan (02:03):

Shane, welcome to the show.

Shane (02:05):

Thanks for having me on Brendan.

Brendan (02:07):

You've worked with over 100 different clients in PR land. What are some of the main pain points that you see happening over and over again?

Shane (02:15):

I think the main pain points that people look to public relations to solve is they're looking to build new markets, products, services for their brand or their company. PR is most effective when you're helping a brand become known in a market, and it's least effective when you're sitting there and you're looking to PR to instantly drive conversion and results, like sales.

Shane (02:44):

If you are trying to drive sales for your brand, buy advertising. Go and buy a LinkedIn ad or some Google AdWords. You will get direct conversion through from an impression through to a sale. PR is much less effective at actually driving that conversion, but incredibly effective at making people think of your brand when they're making a purchase.

Brendan (03:12):

Can you give us any stories around that? Any good examples from any clients?

Shane (03:18):

I think what really rings true for me is working with clients in the startup space. Clients in the startup space, when they come to PR, they are generally unknown. They are launching a new product. They might be launching a new category and disrupting an entire industry.

Shane (03:39):

They'll come to you as a PR professional and the opportunity there for you to transform their brand is incredible, because you are literally lifting them off the ground. Those are the most rewarding and exciting clients. I'm going to contradict what I said earlier about not being able to drive sales, but also some of the most exciting clients are when you are able to create such a huge impact, because of the work that you've been doing with a client over two, three, four years.

Shane (04:11):

That by the time you actually get to that penultimate campaign, where you're in hundreds of media outlets, you've got social, you've got integrated, you've got a full suite of communications tools at your fingertips, and you're hitting all of those channels, where you can actually see a measurable result for the brand. Quite often, it will just be hit on a website, change in social followers and engagement.

Shane (04:40):

But also quite often, when you've been working with a brand or client for a while, you might see some dollar signs attributed to that campaign as well. And that's where being able to build a trusted relationship with a PR agency or a company who knows your brand, they know what you're doing, and they're helping you build a profile over many years, where you can actually start to see tangible business results.

Shane (05:10):

So the one thing that I would say to small businesses is that you need to, first of all, look to PR to help you become known in a market, and possibly break into a new market. And that PR is a long-term investment. You're not going to spend \$6,000 on a campaign and all of a sudden you've got a \$100,000 conversion and your ROI on that is 15 times. That just doesn't happen. PR is a long game. It's about building relationships with the media. It's about building a profile with the content that you produce. It's about building connections with followers, not about instant, quick hit. If you want that, spend some AdWords.

Brendan (05:50):

It must be difficult to convince these SMBs and startups to take the long game approach. How do you convince them that PR is the way to go?

Shane (06:01):

I think it is by telling stories of the brands that have come before them. I think some of the... And also working with them to define what success looks like. Quite a lot of the time, a small or medium sized business or even a large business will come to you and they'll go, "Oh, I just want to be known." Okay, well, that's great. You want to be known. We all want to be known. That's an innate human trait is a need to be recognized and loved and acknowledged.

Shane (06:36):

The thing that I say to clients like that is, "Well, what is the result that you're looking for from being known and who do you need that result from?" I had a startup client who came to me and said, "Shane, I'm raising money in six months. I need every investor out there to know who I am, what I'm doing, and that I'm a good investment prospect." I'm like, "Great. That's a very clear brief. I know your audience. I know the outcome. Let's start working with you to craft the narrative that will get known in that space."

Shane (07:09):

There is nothing more wasteful than spending a dollar of a client's money on a campaign with no clear objective beyond, "I want to be famous." I say to clients like that, if you want to be famous, I know a gun store down the road and we'll give your CEO a gun and he can go and start shooting someone in the street, and then your brand will be famous for all the wrong reasons, but we'll have hit your objective. And that might seem a bit crass these days, but it's one of those tried and true PR truisms, I suppose, that there is no such thing as bad PR, unless it's really bad PR.

Brendan (07:50):

Really bad.

Shane (07:52):

It drives me crazy when people are like, "There's no such thing as bad PR." I'm like, there is very, very, very bad PR. Look at the banking Royal Commission, that is bad PR.

Brendan (08:03):

How do they turn around bad PR? What are some of the ways you can do that?

Shane (08:07):

It's interesting. Turning around bad PR is probably what we're known for. I think spin doctors is something which is quite often used to describe the PR profession. Spin doctors couldn't be further from the truth. PR people are out there, 99% of them are out there to help convey what has actually happened and the truth of what has happened. Not to try and spin or doctor or adulterate a message before it gets out. We're communicators first and foremost.

Shane (08:40):

PR professionals actually spend a lot of time especially in situations where there has been bad PR, whether it's on social, whether it's in earned media/what normal people probably call the newspaper. And the communicator's response is normally to find out exactly what has happened, and then try and share as an unadulterated message about that as possible, with the community.

Shane (09:10):

Because at the end of the day, people just want to know what's happened. If you tell people what's happened and you demonstrate that you're taking clear action to resolve whatever transgression has occurred, then people will forgive you. If you duck, weasel your way around it, throw up multiple people to talk about it, Dreamworld, classic example, really poorly managed.

Shane (09:32):

They threw up the junior person in the reporting line. And then they threw up the CEO a couple of days later. And she was like, "Oh, we're working really hard to reopen the park." Why are you working hard to reopen the park? Four people have died. Do you not acknowledge the gravity of the situation?

Shane (09:50):

It's interesting, because in that one, the firm who was advising Dreamworld actually ended up going to the Australian, and having to tell their side of the story because they were worried about their reputation being damaged, because of what had been happening.

Brendan (10:06):

Wow. I guess PR, it is such a powerful tool as we've already discussed today. A lot of small, medium businesses, a lot of startups, limited budgets in the early days. Have you got any stories of ways that any of these clients have started on small budgets and had big impacts with PR?

Shane (10:28):

I think this comes back to knowing what you want PR to achieve, and then allocating your budget towards that outcome. I always recommend that the outcome is to build brand and reputation in the market, so that people understand who your company is and what it's known for.

Shane (10:49):

I think probably the most effective way to approach that is to look at it in terms of life stage. At a very early stage, you don't have money to hire a communications professional full time.

Brendan (11:00):

Yep.

Shane (11:01):

So rely on an agency for help and support. When you get to that slightly bigger stage, you're starting to hire someone in house. They can start to take a bit of that slack where agency left off. So you probably don't need an agency at that point. Until you get all the way through to when you're a fairly established company, and you're looking to agency to amplify the existing activities of your core team.

Shane (11:24):

In terms of actually getting outcomes from PR, the most valuable thing that you can put into PR is your time as a small business owner. As a small business owner, you are most commonly the brand, you're the reputation. You should be looking for speaking engagements. That's something which people will often pay a PR agency \$2,000, \$3,000 as part of a retainer to do.

Shane (11:47):

But it's really not that hard to go and find out where you should be speaking as the relevant retail conference. If you're trying to sell fashion into a larger brand, go and get known at retail conferences. Pitch yourself in. There's nothing more at an early stage, whether it's someone organizing an event, whether it's someone hosting a podcast, whether it's someone at the Financial Review. There's nothing they enjoy better than hearing from someone who's telling their own story and has a really good grasp on it.

Shane (12:18):

So one of the things which I used to encourage my startup clients to do is, even when they had us on a retainer and they could afford to do that, is at least once a week, I need you to put two hours aside and I need you to write a piece of writing, a thought leadership post you might call it, for LinkedIn, about a topical issue which is happening in the market this week. That's really relevant to you, really relevant to your audience. Just sit down and write.

Shane (12:48):

That is an incredibly good habit to build just from improving your writing skills, but for a small business owner, that LinkedIn post, again, great way to build audience. And even if LinkedIn as a channel isn't relevant to you and your brand, it's a great way to continue to shape and refine your thoughts, and to make sure you've got an opinion about where your industry is going.

Shane (13:10):

Because when it comes to an activity that's going to be shared really well on social, when it comes to a piece which a journalist is going to want to talk to you about, it's not necessarily going to be an announcement or an achievement which really gets you coverage, especially early on. It's going to be your opinions, and opinions matter more than ever. And writing a simple LinkedIn piece every week is a great way to make sure that you're keeping those opinions and perspectives really sharp and polished and ready to go, so that when your PR agency or when a journalist is just out looking for someone to talk about an issue, they can come to you and you're ready to go. You've got your messaging ready, prepared and ready to go.

Brendan (13:52):

And speaking of journalists, obviously they get hit with lots of requests every day. What are a few ways that we can reach out to journalists and get top of mind?

Shane (14:06):

Journalists are hit with more content than ever before. The average journalist gets about 200 pictures a day from small business owners, from PR agencies, from loonies out in the shit and the [inaudible 00:14:22]. And the most high profile journalists who produce a lot of content will get 700 pictures.

Brendan (14:30):

700.

Shane (14:30):

700 pictures a day.

Brendan (14:32):

Wow.

Shane (14:33):

That's something which the PR industry needs to stop doing, just because they will only open about 25% of those pictures, if they do that. And that's something that Public Address, my company is actually working to do is to reduce the volume of pictures being sent to journalists, by giving them more appropriate content.

Shane (14:53):

Because at the end of the day, all a journalist wants is appropriate content which is going to be relevant to their readers and get their readers engaged, or listeners or viewers. And so the thing which I'd say to small business owners is to shape your message, make sure that you've got a strong, compelling opinion, make sure that you've got something interesting to say. Run that past a few friends, go, "Hey, if you saw a headline like this, would you read it in the paper?"

Shane (15:21):

Then you can do things like actually approach the journalist. Most of them will have a email address online and say, "Hey, this is me. This is my story. This is what I'm doing. Would you be interested in going out for a coffee? We can have a chat about the industry trends, what's happening."

Shane (15:36):

99% of small business owners, people, anyone won't actually email a journalist and do that. But it can be an incredibly powerful and rewarding way to build relationships. Because what we tell every client is that relationships with journalists matter for spokespeople. They need to have really great relationships with the media. The media to know that they can pick them up and have a chat with them, even if it's not to be quoted in the newspaper or to be interviewed. Just to call up and ask, "Hey, I saw that company X did Y. Why is this happening and what does this mean for the industry?"

Shane (16:15):

Because you're seeing an increasing generalization of the media. So journalists 10 years ago, you had a retail reporter at the Financial Review. You had a retail reporter who covered fast moving consumer goods. You had a retail reporter who covered beverages. Now you've got one retail reporter who's covering a huge range of sectors.

Shane (16:35):

So she is having to be across a huge amount of different trends and insights and what's going on in the industry. And so for her, it makes her job a lot harder and she needs a lot more trusted sources who know what they're talking about, and who are happy to take a

backseat on a story, but just help her understand, her or him, help her or him understand what the story means and what's going on in the background.

Brendan (17:04):

So you mentioned it is important obviously to build a platform, reach out to journalists, produce these authority pieces on our different social platforms. Can you tell us a story about any of the clients that you've worked with, that have taken this advice and done these steps, a bit of a before and after? Where has it gotten them to?

Shane (17:26):

I think probably the client where this stands out the most for me... Sorry. I'm just trying to think of a...

Brendan (17:40):

We don't have to name names.

Shane (17:43):

I was just trying to... Most of [inaudible 00:17:50]. Actually, no, I've got a good startup. Cool. All right. The question was I think the most interesting story? Yeah. The most interesting story of a brand that has been able to achieve amazing results is a gentleman named Nicolas Chu from Sinorbis. Sinorbis builds this amazing platform which helps brands and businesses in Australia and around the world actually, build websites which are relevant and appropriate for the Chinese market.

Shane (18:32):

China has a very closed ecosystem of web and app development. You need to build very specific platforms to reach into those markets and host them locally. There's a whole bunch of local knowledge. He's managed to distill this down into a simple platform which manages all that for you, for a subscription.

Shane (18:53):

The thing which he did, and which he did very well is he came to us early on and he said, "This is what I want to do. I want to launch my platform. It's really important that these audiences know that my platform exists. And it's really important that these audiences know this is about my platform." And so he had a very clear understanding of what he needed to do.

Shane (19:14):

The first phase, that was actually educate. He needed to educate people that there was a difference to the Chinese market. He's out there talking about the walled garden of China. He's talking about the differences between Chinese social media like WeChat and Western social media like Facebook.

Shane (19:33):

So he's spending a lot of time out there and making himself available to journalists, to commentators, to other people, especially on events as well. We're pitching in these announcements. So he's building this understanding and awareness of the differences. This is before he even had a product.

Brendan (19:52):

Wow.

Shane (19:53):

When he had a product, he was out there talking about the product and how that would achieve this. So he's been able to grow and scale that business. He's raised a fairly significant amount of money to help continue to build that platform. He's done a really good job of building his profile and using his profile to build his brand's profile.

Shane (20:13):

Because it might seem selfish and it does seem selfish to a lot of small business owners who I talk to as a consultant is they don't want to be famous for themselves. They want their brand to be known. But ultimately people will connect with you and your brand. You need to be elevating your profile at the same time as elevating your brand's profile. You can't do one or the other. You need to be doing both together and you need to swallow that, "Oh, I don't want to be a tall poppy. I don't want to hero myself." You need to be out there heroing yourself, telling people that you know what you're talking about, that you know what you're doing, and you're building this amazing company that is going to do X, Y and Z and be really confident about that."

Brendan (20:59):

I guess how do we do that? Obviously in the United States, they're a lot more prevalent in that area. Here in Australia, as you said, we have something called tall poppy syndrome. We're a bit more modest. What advice do you give to these Australian businesses to I guess instill that inevitability of success in their startup?

Shane (21:18):

I think for startups and small businesses, it is about backing yourself the same way you would to a client, to the media. And making yourself available. Treat the media like a client. If a client calls and says, "I want you to pop round next week and have a chat about your product or service," or even if you were running a small business like a corner store, if someone came to you asking you to come and speak about your business at an event, you'd probably take them up on that.

Shane (21:58):

The same comes with PR and external channels. You need to be ready to back yourself, to go out and speak about your business and have real conviction to do so, because it's...

Brendan (22:10):

I guess the United States, they're a lot better at selling themselves than we are here in Australia. We're a bit more modest. There's been a lot of articles in the last couple years about tall poppy syndrome. What advice do you give to clients to get over that?

Shane (22:30):

I think a lot of people see America and the American culture of being very confident about your business and backing yourself, as brash and arrogant. And like you say, a tall poppy in the Australian market, there's always going to be people out there who don't agree that you're doing the right thing, or they just want to cut you down. You read the comments section of any industry trade publication in Australia, and it's full of just seething anger at anyone who puts themselves out there.

Brendan (23:01):

It's crazy.

Shane (23:02):

It's crazy. And you just need to build a bit of a thick skin. One of the clients that I've worked with, who's a huge employer in Australia, I think they've got about 8,000 staff across the country. One of the things that we used to do with their spokespeople internally, whenever there was a media opportunity is we'd sit them down beforehand, and we'd just go, "Samantha, you're going to be in the media tomorrow. Part of that is going to be that there's going to be some internal backlash and there might be some external backlash. We're here to support you. We're here to help you and flick any of those requests, flick any of that through to us and we will deal with it."

Shane (23:45):

Obviously a small business owner isn't going to have a five person communications team to field those requests off to. But I think the same principle applies. If you go out there and think that it's going to be sunshine and roses, heading into the media and making an opinion and shaping a perspective and starting a debate about an issue, it's not. Other people are going to share different views than what you have on this issue.

Shane (24:11):

So what you need to do is to go out with the full knowledge that there might be some negative feedback. And if that negative feedback comes, you're okay because you are so confident in your opinion, and you're just got not going to let that get under your skin.

Shane (24:26):

I'd say to a small business owner who is looking to get out into the media, is look around you for that support mechanism. Make sure that support mechanism is there before you go out and speak to the media. Make sure that you've let your spouse, or you've let one of your employees know that this is going to come out. I might need some support, post it coming out, because someone might jump on the comments section and say something really bloody nasty.

Shane (24:53):

But just remember that it's going to be the people commenting who are going to get under your skin, not the journalist. A journalist is only ever there to tell the story. If you are sharing a great, really positive story, there's going to be a positive article. If you're running a good ship and you're doing a good job, that is going to generate good PR.

Shane (25:17):

So don't worry about being transparent and open and honest with a journalist. It's more the community which can sometimes turn a bit nasty.

Brendan (25:25):

And what are some sort of methods that you suggest to deal with the negative comments? Because it's definitely a barrier for a lot of people to get into content creation in the first place.

Shane (25:39):

I think with negative comments, you've got to separate them into two buckets. I think the first one are the ones which you ignore and those are just the comments. I don't recommend deleting comments from an article or a post because sometimes that can fire back even more than the damage the initial comment would have caused because trolls are trolls. But you do need to be safe sometimes in, go to someone, your accountant or someone who doesn't really have a great deal of emotional attachment to things and go, "Hey, look, if you read this article and then you read this comment, would you change your opinion about the article?"

Shane (26:26):

And if that objective third party's like, "Look, actually that person looks crazy, you're fine," then just park it, leave it, ignore it. It is going to burn, but just forget about it and move on. And over time, you won't be as bothered by it.

Shane (26:43):

I think the second one, every negative comment that is justified is an opportunity to change someone's mind. I think one of the things which business owners often complain about is, "Oh, I didn't know that there was that feedback until they left or they stopped buying my

product or they stopped turning up in my stores." Every piece of negative feedback is truly an opportunity to correct that negative feedback, to take that on board, to change what you're doing.

Shane (27:15):

I do recommend engaging, because the worst thing that can happen is that it looks like you're just ignoring, you've put this post out about a new product, and then you're ignoring all the feedback underneath it. Take that feedback on board. And if you are wrong, apologize. You've made a mistake. Take it back.

Shane (27:36):

The one thing which especially these days, the one things which consumers will not forgive is a lack of action. They're looking for you to take authentic action on every issue which comes your way. And that can be challenging, but that's why you just have to be up front. And if you've done something wrong, acknowledge it, admit it, apologize and move on.

Brendan (28:00):

I remember Bill Gates always says your number one source of learning will come from your most unhappy customers. So, it's definitely a really valuable resource to have.

Shane (28:10):

Totally. And it's hard to find unhappy customers. Unhappy customers are the hardest to find, because they disappear off your mailing list. They unsubscribe, well, half of the time they won't even unsubscribe, they'll just stop opening green emails. Before you know it a year has passed. They've stopped opening your emails, and they just aren't engaging with you anymore.

Shane (28:28):

And that's where if that feedback is coming to you live on a social channel, it's real, it's immediate. You've got an opportunity to change it around.

Brendan (28:36):

Super valuable. And I guess PR's changing all the time. What's got you most fired up around PR this year?

Shane (28:44):

What's got me... Look, there's probably a long laundry list of things which get me fired up about public relations, because it is something I'm very passionate about and it's an amazing industry. We do an incredible amount of good for the world.

Shane (29:00):

I think what has gotten me really fired up recently is that there's been some association between PR and fake news. I had a researcher approach me the other day and they were looking to do a research project on the intersection between fake news and PR. I was like, "PR does not deal in fake news. We're not spin doctors." We are professionals who if we carry a lie to a journalist, that journalist is going to cross us off their list and never talk to us again. PR professionals are the most, 99.999% of them are honest, out there to do a really good job and to tell the truth.

Shane (29:46):

I think the thing that, on the flip side, the thing that is getting me most excited about PR is the evolution of the industry. My company, Public Address, we focus on earned media. So that's newspaper, print, television, where you have to convince a journalist to write a story about you. And that's an incredibly important space for public relations professionals, it still accounts for about 50% of the profession.

Shane (30:12):

The other 50% of the profession is the broader integrated communications mix. That's where things like social, digital, website, SEO, content, all of that comes together in a way which can drive action and engage audiences, which earned media relations couldn't. So the broadening of PR to this really integrated machine, which is helping build brands and reputations across the world is quite amazing. I think that's probably the most exciting thing, which everyone's interested to see how all of those channels can truly work together.

Shane (30:53):

I give the example quite often of, I had a campaign which I ran with a client, and the one thing that I wanted out of the campaign was a hero piece of media coverage, which would then drive social and digital engagement. All of those channels were working together, and then post the social and digital engagement, there was web content and copy around the product and service offering, which the earned media article was aiming to drive demand for.

Shane (31:24):

And so that earned media article didn't mention the product, didn't mention the service, it just talked about the problem. And then as they went along the funnel, they were able to progress from understanding that there was a need for the product through traditional PR, through to understanding more about the solution that was there, through to purchase.

Shane (31:44):

But again, that's a brand which I've been working with for several years. We've given them the authority in the marketplace to talk about that problem. That's a long-term investment. They didn't just turn up one day and go, "Oh, we want you to sprinkle some magic fairy dust and make us famous all around the world."

Brendan (32:03):

And talking about your latest project, Public Address, can you tell us a bit more about how that came about and what the end goal is for that?

Shane (32:12):

Definitely. I think like many other people who start their own business, I've been working in this industry for seven or eight years by the time I started Public Address. And every time I went to a new job, I was like, in this new job, I'm going to discover that this new agency which I'm joining has the digital tools which enable them to do media relations. They've got a platform, so that they can manage media relations.

Shane (32:41):

And media relations is what people will most commonly associate with PR. It is, I think I said before, trying to earn earned media. So pitching to a journalist and saying, "Hey, I thought you might be interested in having a chat to person X about subject Y." I kept on going around trying to find these digital platforms and I couldn't find them. I think the startup phrase is that I scratched my own itch and started Public Address.

Shane (33:09):

Public Address is a highly customized customer relationship management system, which is built for PR professionals. So you can start a campaign, distribute all of these pictures to journalists, and then journalists can write a story more efficiently and effectively by using all of the content that you've provided as part of that email pitch.

Brendan (33:28):

Wow.

Shane (33:29):

So it's quite transformative for the PR profession who haven't had a tool which works with them. I think that's what we're seeing more broadly is a shift from SaaS products and Dropbox, which is, they've nailed storage. Why are we going to start a new cloud storage company? Through to micro SaaS, companies like Metigy, companies like Public Address, which are solving a... I think Metigy's problem is bigger, small, medium size businesses, helping them automate marketing.

Shane (34:02):

But Public Address, we are looking just at PR agencies in that very micro vertical. I call that micro SaaS. I'm not sure whether I've called it that or someone else's called it that. But micro SaaS is looking at that very vertical niche, building a product which really works for them and going even deeper into that.

Shane (34:22):

So the product that we are aiming to build is going to be an AI-driven pitching machine. You're going to be able to put a media release or a story or some content up there. We'll analyze that, give you some recommendations on who you should be pitching to, when you should be pitching to them and why you should be pitching to them.

Brendan (34:41):

Wow.

Shane (34:42):

And you press go. So it's still going to be something where a PR professional is going to be required to help shape that story. Because the most important thing to a journalist is a story. You can use as many artificial intelligence tools as you want to, but you can't beat a good story, which a human being has helped shape create.

Shane (35:05):

But hopefully the use of tools like this will bring down the cost of PR, democratize PR and make PR more accessible to everyone across the world.

Brendan (35:13):

Amazing. And Public Address, where can we find out more about that?

Shane (35:17):

Our website, publicaddress.com.au, and listen to the talk track podcast on iTunes and anywhere you find your podcasts. If you are a PR agency owner, that will light you up with the latest news and insight and analysis on the world of PR.

Brendan (35:36):

Thanks so much for your time so far, Shane. A couple of quick questions before we go that we love to ask each guest on the podcast. So, first one, what was the last purchase of \$100 or less that has made a significant impact in your business?

Shane (35:55):

The last purchase of \$100 or less was a case of wine.

Brendan (36:00):

Interesting.

Shane (36:01):

Well, a case of wine I can tell you has many benefits for a business. You can drink it, you can use it as a paperweight. No. What the case of wine was used for was the Sydney Public Relations Meetup group. That's the meetup group which I started to connect and create a community around PR in Sydney.

Shane (36:23):

It's incredible, the power of an event. I think that as a small business owner myself and a startup founder, that event has been incredibly useful as a form of public relations to get my brand known and to get Public Address known in the community. By investing in that, we have built an audience and people know what Public... they don't necessarily know what Public Address is, but they know that it exists. And so it means that they're excited to hear from us when we actually contact them directly. That's really what PR can do for your business.

Brendan (37:00):

Amazing. Amazing. And if there's one book that has helped you with your business, what would that book be?

Shane (37:07):

I would go for a book called Good Strategy/Bad Strategy. And that is a book by Donald Rumsfeld, I think. It just goes in, and the key takeaway, this might save you buying the book, although I do recommend buying it, because it's an amazing book. Is that there's good strategy, which is strategy which is founded upon the idea that there's something happening in a marketplace in the world around you, which your business can capitalize on to be successful.

Shane (37:38):

Bad strategy is where there's no external environment taken into account in setting your strategy. So bad strategy is to increase profit by 20%. How are you going to do that? What gives you the right to increase profit by 20%?

Shane (37:52):

A good strategy is to capitalize upon this unique IP which we have and an increase in demand from the marketplace for a particular type of product and service to lift profit by 20%.

Brendan (38:06):

Got you.

Shane (38:07):

And so that's a really good book which will arm you with a lot of the tools and thinking about strategy and about planning. It's written by bloke who was a former, I believe he spent a lot of time in the military in helping shape military strategy, but also a lot of time helping business owners.

Brendan (38:33):

Donald Rumsfeld, was it?

Shane (38:34):

Donald Rumsfeld.

Brendan (38:35):

I think it was in the Vice movie. Was that Donald Rumsfeld?

Shane (38:41):

Maybe I'm thinking of the secretary of state here, not the... I might have to ask you to put something in the show notes to correct that one.

Brendan (38:54):

All the resources that we've talked about today-

Shane (38:56):

Sorry. No, it's Richard Rumelt. Richard Rumelt is the-

Brendan (38:59):

Richard Rumelt.

Shane (39:01):

Dive into his book and you'll be much richer for it, or just find one of the really good summaries which are available online as well.

Brendan (39:11):

Perfect. And all the things that we've mentioned today, all the resources, they'll be in the show notes that you can find at metigy.com/podcast. And the final question today, Shane, just to wrap things up, it's a bit of a creative thinking question. It's a bit different.

Brendan (39:28):

You're on the first flight to Mars with Elon Musk and the first settler aboard the SpaceX Starship rocket. What business you start when you land on Mars and how are you going to promote it to the new martians using PR?

Shane (39:44):

I think what I would do is start a transportation business, a logistics business. Because you look at the founding of Mars and it's analogous to the founding of America. It's a group of settlers to a new land, building new communities. And what connects communities? Logistics. So whether it's a railway, whether it's laying fiber on Mars, whether it's starting off with a small pack of runners who just help people move stuff between the different houses in the first settlement, I think I would start a logistics and transportation business.

Shane (40:24):

The thing that I'd do to promote that is actually by providing a really excellent service. Because I think people get caught up in PR and going, "Oh, we need to PR this, we need to spend a lot of money on this." There's no point in spending money on something if you don't have a great service and great customer service to start with. I think people look to PR to fix problems, whereas PR can't fix a broader business problem.

Shane (40:51):

And if you're getting the basics right, your PR will completely do itself, whether it's through word of mouth and that word of mouth, them reaching a journalist or people speaking about it online, it's actually getting the basics right, which count more than anything.

Brendan (41:06):

Nice answer. Mars' first [inaudible 00:41:10]. Great answer. So Mars' first transportation system. Shane, really appreciate the time that you've given today and the value that you've dropped at the Metigy audience. Is there anything you'd like to say before we wrap up or anything you would like people to do?

Shane (41:26):

I think you just need to remember, I think the most important thing for a small business or a startup founder to remember is that there's a lot of things that will be relevant and exciting to you, which won't necessarily be exciting to people outside of your immediate network. And that's a mistake that a lot of people make when they're trying to do PR is to go out and talk about this new widget that they've added to their site.

Shane (41:59):

So don't go out and start trying to promote the new widget, go out and start talking about your story with journalists, with online communities, with social channels. Go and start talking about your story. And then when you occasionally drop a new announcement about

a widget or a new feature that you've added to that audience, through whatever channel you're using, they'll be really interested and people will be engaged because of that.

Brendan (42:28):

Awesome. Again, thanks for all the fantastic advice and knowledge today, Shane. It's been fun. And you can view all the show notes, which will feature all the resources and books that we've mentioned today at metigy.com/podcast. Thanks again, Shane.

Shane (42:44):

Thanks so much, Brendan. Great to be on.

Daren (42:48):

From Metigy, you've just listened to Forward Thinking. Again, I'm Daren and Metigy hopes we helped you find more insights and tips into your business. To find out more about Metigy and get a listener exclusive three month free trial, visit us at metigy.com/podcast. And while you're there, go and check out some more episodes.

Daren (43:08):

If you like what you heard, please share a link to another business owner or marketer who you think could get something from this. Also to help us out, it would be great if you left a five star review on your favorite podcast app. Last, never missed another episode by following or subscribing to us on your favorite podcast player. See you on the next episode.