

Roman Maslennikov, Igor Szucs

A vibrant red background with a radial pattern of lines emanating from the center. In the center is a large, yellow, jagged explosion shape. Inside this shape, the words "EXPLOSIVE" and "PR" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with thick black outlines. Three yellow stars with black outlines are positioned around the explosion: one at the top left, one at the top right, and one at the bottom center. The entire graphic is set against the red background.

EXPLOSIVE PR

Secrets of Outrageous
PR-Stunts from Russia with
Love for Positive News

Igor Szucs

**Explosive PR. Secrets
of Outrageous PR-
Stunts from Russia with
Love for Positive News**

«Издательские решения»

Szucs I.

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Explosive PR Book Helps Businesses To Attain Clients Using Mass Media. Shocking Secrets of Outrageous PR Stunts to Get Clients Roman Maslennikov, Russian PR guru, entrepreneur and philosopher, has 15 years' work experience and is offering you the freshest, newest, most outrageous PR stunts. Igor Szucs, Business trend analyst, Semantic field producer. An internationally respected expert on future trends, long-range planning and creating the preferred future.

ISBN 978-5-44-901254-8

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Explosive PR Secrets of Outrageous PR-Stunts from Russia with Love for Positive News

**Igor Szucs
Roman Maslennikov**

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Roman Maslennikov, Igor Szucs

A stylized graphic featuring a large yellow starburst shape with a black outline and a pattern of black dots. The words "EXPLOSIVE" and "PR" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with black outlines, stacked vertically within the starburst. The background is a solid red color with a pattern of black dots and radiating black lines, creating a sense of explosion or impact.

EXPLOSIVE PR

Secrets of Outrageous
PR-Stunts from Russia with
Love for Positive News

This looks interesting and energetic.

Douglas Rushkoff, “Media Virus”

Book’s Hashtags

#PR #spindoctors #communications_directors #PRAides #propagandists #MalcolmTucker
#TheThickof It #IntheLoop #Kasper #Borgen #TobyZiegler #TheWestWing #Scandal
#crisis_management #Olivia_Pope #AbsolutePower #public_relations #propaganda
#Alternative_facts #Big_lie #Doublespeak #Euphemistic #misspeaking #Euromyth #Fake_news
#Half_truth #Ideological_framing #Internet_manipulation #Media_manipulation #Post_truth
#Propaganda #Scientific_fabrication #Yellow_journalism #manipulation #Misinformation
#disinformation #business #entrepreneurship #balls #cool #news_tornado #Wag_the_Dog
#atomic_news #buzz #pr_stunt #Stampede_PR #media_virus #PR_hook

Contents

Preface

This book could be written by my Russian friends (including Kremlin-based spin doctors), PR people from IT companies and start-ups. Occasionally, I see messages in my Facebook feed: “I could tell you so many things, but I’ll never do it, not even in memoirs.”

I’d be delighted to read such stories with you and with law enforcement officers, but my friends would never write a book like that and certainly not because of their respect for the law. In fact, there is no PR and lobbying regulation in Russia. This is just the PR ethic: if the client says “no” you should please him/her, no matter what.

I take high risks publishing this book, telling how things are done, and how explosive PR campaigns are concocted.

Want to know why it is risky to publish or even to read this book?

To begin with, I did not ask the permission of all my clients about whether I could publish their cases. I feel the moral right to do this without their permission. For instance, the budgets of some PR campaigns were so low (based on mutual agreement) it did not seem possible to do them only for the sake of money or pleasure (which is equally important). But if I enjoy the process of telling about this experience and thereby attract more clients to well-paid projects, it can be justified. First, I wanted to use the phrase “serious projects,” but then it dawned on me that my projects are more like laughing gas, so “well-paid” sounds better.

Regarding one project, the client said to me, “Please do not expose this was a PR stunt.” I ignored this request. Well, frankly, there’s nothing special to scheme against anybody. I’ll never write about really dangerous PR cases since my self-preservation instinct is sharp.

Secondly, a common opinion is that it’s difficult to repeat something known to all. Many entrepreneurs and business consultants used to tell me: “Why expose these tricks? How are you going to make a nickel? You unveil loaded dice.” My rebuttal comes down to my two convictions: let competition and the level of PR campaigns rise as a result of strenuous effort and PR people overreaching themselves. I earned my first degree in journalism, and this explains a lot. You cannot hide an owl in a sack – this is what people normally say about the likes of me.

In the final analysis, the outcome is similar to that of John Godfrey, a friend of Ian Fleming (author of James Bond novels). In prewar years, he published *The Trout Memo*¹, where he described 51 ways to mislead the enemy, and then brilliantly backed Ewen Montegu.

¹ The Trout Memo, written in 1939, is a document comparing the deception of an enemy in wartime with fly fishing. Issued under the name of Admiral John Godfrey, Britain’s director of naval intelligence, according to the historian Ben Macintyre, it bore the hallmarks of having been written by Godfrey’s assistant, Ian Fleming. The memo reads, in particular: “The Trout Fisher casts patiently all day. He frequently changes his venue and his lures. If he has frightened a fish he may ‘give the water a rest for half-an-hour,’ but his main endeavor, visually attract fish by something he sends out from his boat, is incessant.” The memo goes on to describe numerous ways the enemy, like a trout, may be fooled or lured in. One idea from the memo was broadly similar to Operation Mincemeat, a World War II plan to convince the Germans the Allies would attack Greece rather than Italy in 1943,

That story is described in *Operation Mincemeat*. They did in real life what was described in the memo, despite it being thoroughly studied by enemies. Nevertheless, they succeeded.



Rear Admiral John Godfrey

Page 2. *Issued in lieu of N° 09650 lost.* Page 3. Navy Form 8, 1911

Surname **MARTIN**

Other Names **WILLIAM**

Rank (at time of issue) **CAPTAIN, R.M.
(ACTING MAJOR)**

Ship (at time of issue) **H Q
COMBINED OPERATIONS**

Place of Birth **CARDIFF**

Year of Birth **1907**

Issued by *[Signature]*

At **ADMIRALTY**

Date **2nd February 1943.**

**NAVAL
IDENTITY CARD No. 148228**

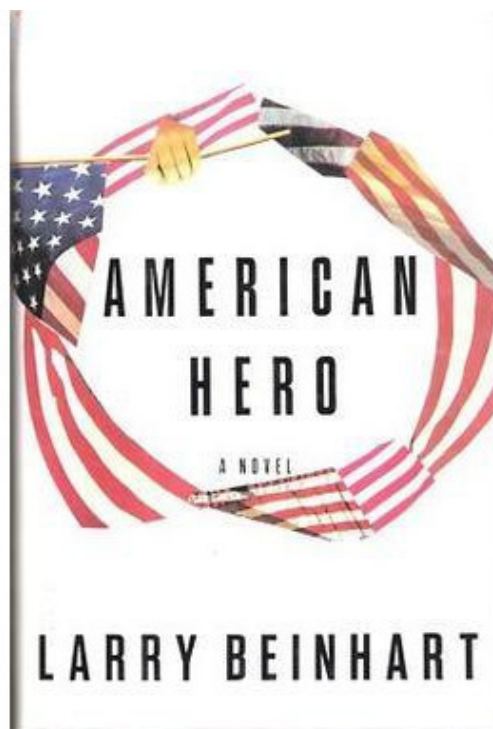
[Portrait Photo]

Signature of Bearer *W. Martin*

Visible distinguishing marks **NIL.**

The operation's result: a passport for the man who never lived

Or take the US government which started more than one war after the release of *Wag the Dog* in 1997, which was the screening of Larry Beinhart's *American Hero* (1993).



Not all wars were launched to smother up a sex scandal, but some provocations definitely took place.

For instance, it's not clear if there was a real chemical attack in Syria before Trump smashed the Syrian forces with tomahawks. Maybe that attack was provoked or staged or could be seen only in a video and photos. I am not 100% sure, but smoke screens are always used to trigger a war machine.

This book is about business, not war.

Let me share several cases with you. If you are interested to know how we reached these results, continue reading this book.

Crazy News. Made in Russia

What are other ways to describe our news? Crazy PR? Shock PR? Spin Doctoring? Grass Roots Lobbying? Close indeed, and yet they do not hit the mark. On one occasion, my PR specialization was translated as “stampede”. Yet I’d prefer the phrase “explosive PR”. Hopefully, I’ve invented something new. This is what creative director of the Leo Burnett advertising agency, Jay Conrad Levinson, once did with the phrase “Guerrilla marketing”.

Now, let’s move to cases. All of them are planned by my explosive PR-campaigns.

Raccoons Ransack an IT shop

We trained raccoons and used an alleged candid camera to film them moving our client's boxes over the office with Internet boosters. We placed our client's logo in the frame: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnuE9IhQYjk>

After that, we sent an animal tamer to the shop while broadcasting the news that raccoons had ransacked the shop, spoiled the products, and it was a real nightmare. The animal tamer learned about our interpretation of events from the news and seemed to be a bit concerned, but that's about all.

Meanwhile, the news went viral, first on national and then on foreign networks:

<https://www.rt.com/news/254993-raccoons-destroy-office-moscow/>

<http://360tv.ru/news/dressirovannye-enoty-isportili-internetoborudovanie-v-magazine-yota-20465/>

<http://ren.tv/novosti/2015-04-29/enoty-ustroili-debosh-v-stolichnom-magazine-video>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/watch-three-badly-behaved-raccoons-ransack-an-office-in-russia-10218013.html>

It was particularly exciting to read about the “damage” done by our animal companions, estimated in GBP.

As performers of that promo action, we were content with sparking a public outcry in Moscow, but we sent shock waves over the world. The client thought this effort was insufficient, however, and we had to stage one more promo event to fully satisfy him, which brought me to an even more exciting experience I'll soon tell you about.

Incidentally, our team was inspired to create the viral video in a fish shop of Vladivostok airport, where a cat ate delicatessen worth 60,000 rubles (about \$2,000 in those days): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqdvk-x2HZg>

You may think we mistreated the raccoons by demonizing them. I agree, but for the sake of justice, I must add we also decriminalized them in media. In another promo action two years later, a raccoon from the same company became the animal that saved a clothing boutique from plunder: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XszPhXTFO0>

And then we allowed raccoons from another company to admire a woman's tits, but that is a different story.

Trial Over the “Russian Google”

I personally dislike the news in Russia, with all those car accidents, murders, crashes, and man-caused disasters hitting the headlines. Who needs this depressing stuff? Even Professor Preobrazhensky from *The Heart of a Dog* after the eponymous novel of Mikhail Bulgakov made a point about the pernicious impact of Soviet newspapers upon digestion. “And God keep you from reading Soviet newspapers before lunch!”

Someone told me it’s a bit different in the US where you hear more positive news.

So, my attorney and I thought of something: the main culprit is the Yandex search engine, most popular in Russia, where the main page always shows the top five news by default. I expressed my discontent in the lawsuit where I claimed I was “growing bald because of bad news,” having attached to it the opinion of a trichologist where he confirmed that stress indeed causes hair loss. It was up to the press to fill in the blanks and connect the dots.

As a result, we had the following publications:

<http://mashable.com/2016/03/18/russia-bad-news-lawsuit/#.EKwMdSbuPqm>

<https://www.joe.co.uk/news/moscow-man-is-trying-to-sue-russias-google-for-publishing-so-much-bad-news-he-became-bald-47814>

<http://www.sulromanzo.it/blog/diffondi-troppe-notizie-negative-e-allora-ti-faccio-causa>

and a lot more.

The guys from Yandex must have found the phrase “Russia’s Google” as their description particularly hilarious.





Eventually, I got an amazing spin in the international arena and respective new clients to boot.

The PR-secret of Cat Woman and Professional Bed Warmer-girl

My friend told me an anecdote about the Russian poet Sergey Yesenin who ordered the maid's services with his colleague Marienhof in soggy St. Petersburg. Her main service was warming the beds for poets and then leaving.

Four days later, she quit the job because she was flabbergasted that she was never harassed and she hoped this would be the case.

This was a cute anecdote, and I decided to repeat it in modern-day Russia with my client – the landing web page LPgenerator.ru. We came up with the she-is-generator.ru site, found a “heroine” who would be a “cat woman” (or “bed warmer”), and launched this hoax in media: <https://life.ru/964200>

How many leads (potential queries) do you think she received on the first day? (the right answer: more than 200).

How many clients actually used her services? (the right answer: more than 0).

How much money do you think Viktoria Ivachyova made out of that hoax? (the right answer: more than 100,000 rubles or about \$2,000).

These were fees paid to the young entrepreneur by media, foreign outlets prevailing (Chinese and German TV channels).

The result was over 50 publications, of which 15% were foreign press releases:

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/meet-worlds-first-professional-bed-9748489?ICID=FB_mirror_main

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/2779994/worlds-first-bed-warmer-will-slip-between-your-sheets-in-her-pjs-and-let-you-watch-for-65-per-night-but-its-strictly-no-to-sex/>

<http://10ways.com/profit/alternative-jobs/woman-earns-1350-per-month-warming-beds-with-her-body-heat>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/professional-bed-warmer-charges-65-night-bizarre-new-entrepreneurial-idea-1604865>

<https://v.qq.com/x/page/o03710lkwq.html>

<http://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/world/asian-countries/meet-the-professional-who-warms-beds-for-a-price/articleshow/56980815.cms>

<http://www.nai2.com/dailymail/8617.html>

<http://maharashtratimes.indiatimes.com/lifestyle-news/sex-news/viktoria-ivachyova-believed-to-be-the-worlds-first-professional-human-bed-warmer/articleshow/56981621.cms>

<http://www.odditycentral.com/news/the-human-bed-warmer-russian-woman-offers-bed-warming-services-for-single-men.html>

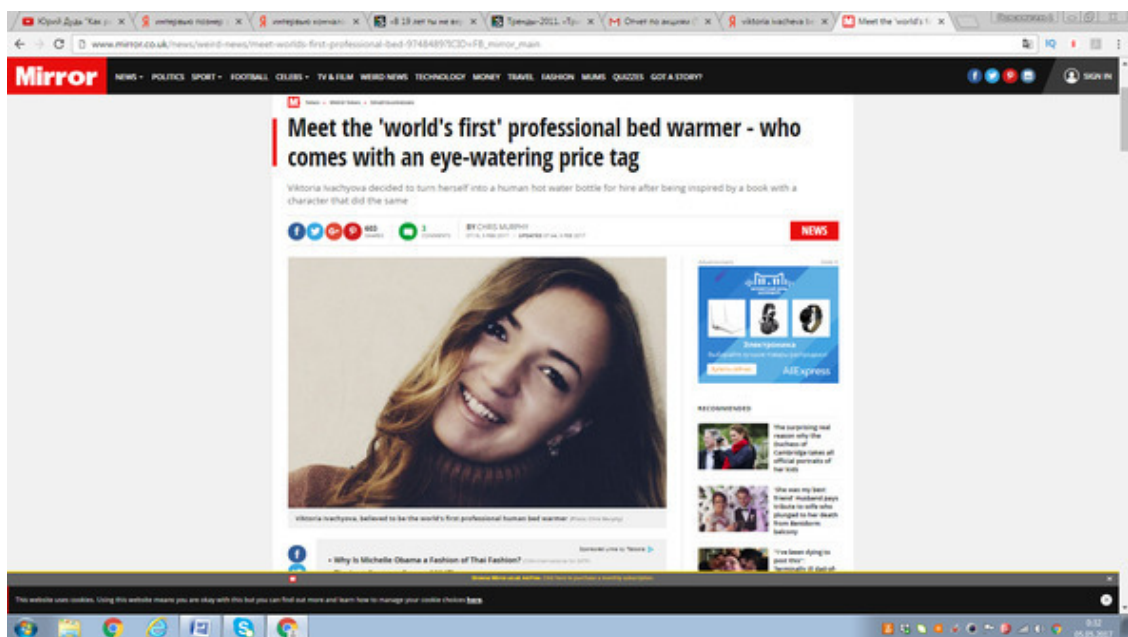
<http://www.bhaskar.com/news/KZHK-meet-professional-bed-warmer-news-hindi-5521933-PHO.html>

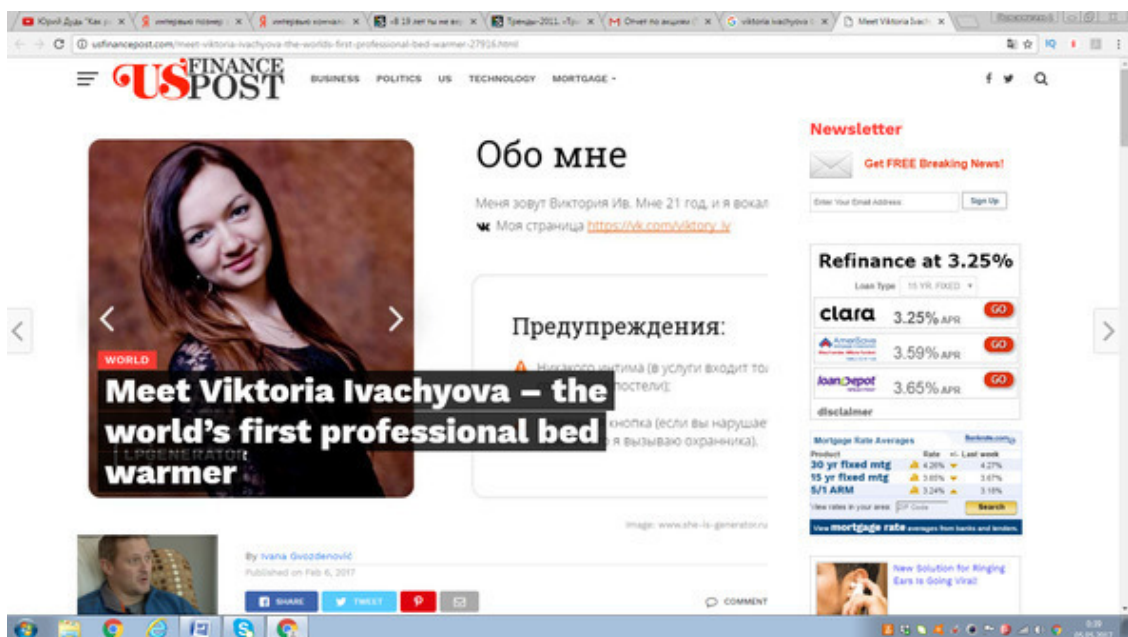
<http://www.emirates247.com/offbeat/this-is-life/woman-becomes-world-s-first-professional-bed-warmer-2017-02-06-1.647720>

<http://indianexpress.com/article/trending/bizarre/human-bed-warmer-russian-woman-has-a-unique-job-making-beds-cosy-for-hotel-guests-but-its-not-profane-4519747/>

<http://usfinancepost.com/meet-Viktoria-ivachyova-the-worlds-first-professional-bed-warmer-27916.html>

And others which you may google using the “Viktoria Ivachyova bed warmer” query.









It remains a mystery why the client was not happy with that effort.

The same can't be said about Viktoria!

Contact Zoo Versus Video Studio. How Raccoon Helped Small Business Became World-famous?



And the latest episode: I helped my colleagues seed a story about a contact zoo being at law with a video studio. The point is that in the process of filming a video ad, another raccoon allegedly stripped a bra off the starlet and fell into a shock, refusing food and further engagement. This exasperated the zoo manager who decided to sue the studio.

After I sent a press release, I first had a call from Russia 1 TV channel, the Call Center program, which was later rewarded for “finding” a cool storyline. This call was followed by two others. A day later, we had an international fallout:

https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosebuchanan/he-just-wants-to-forage-in-trash-let-him-live?utm_term=.awK3zw3L8#.rl0BLlBM8

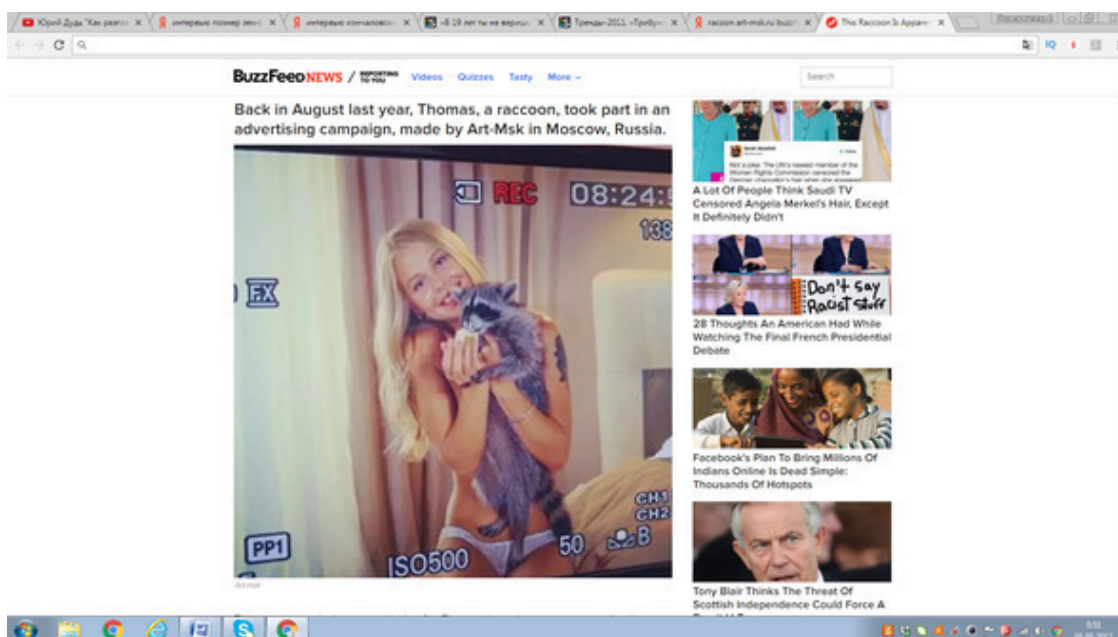
“Russian zoo sues advertising firm for ‘traumatizing’ rented raccoon in erotic photo shoot.”
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/16/russian-zoo-sues-advertising-firm-traumatising-rented-raccoon/>

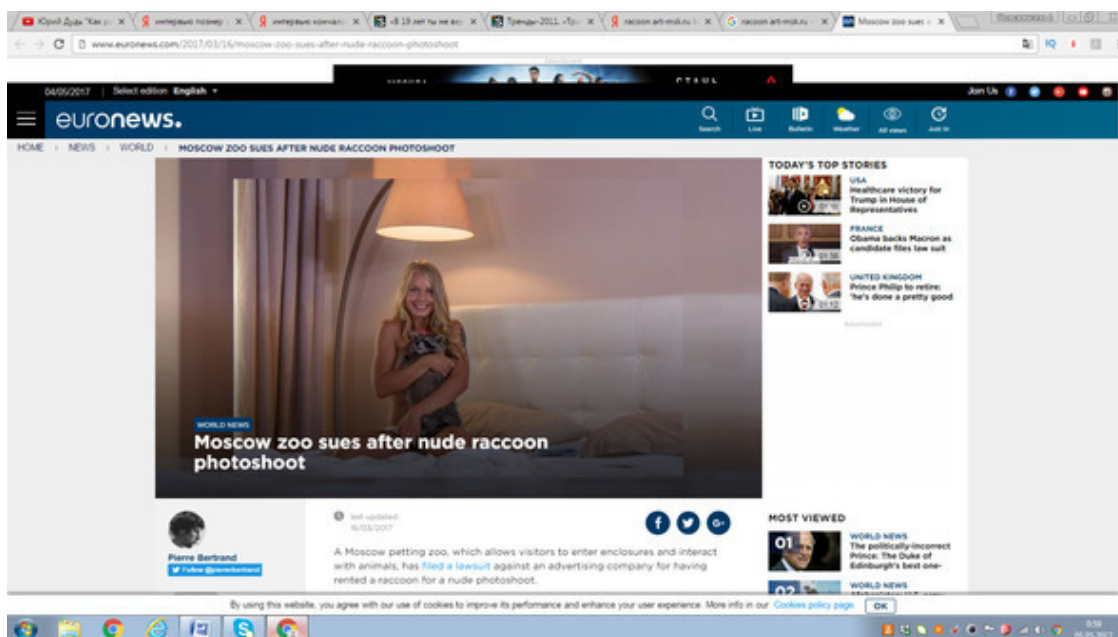
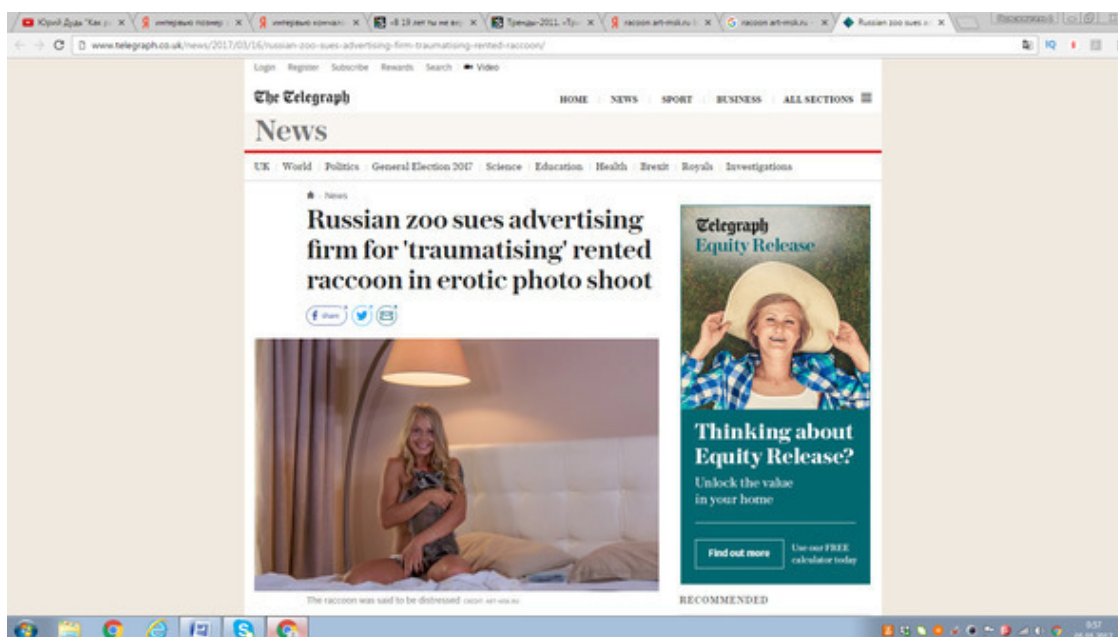
“This Raccoon Is Extremely Uncomfortable with Being Featured in A Naked Video Ad”
<http://collegecandy.com/2017/03/17/thomas-raccoon-naked-ad-art-msk-animals-arent-toys-zoo-details/>

“Traumatized Russian Raccoon in Erotic Video Scandal”!
<http://www.iflscience.com/plants-and-animals/traumatized-russian-raccoon-in-erotic-video-scandal/>

“Russian zoo sues ad agency for using raccoon in ‘erotic’ shoot.”
<https://www.rt.com/viral/381057-raccoon-scandal-video-shoot/>

<http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/16/moscow-zoo-sues-after-nude-raccoon-photoshoot>

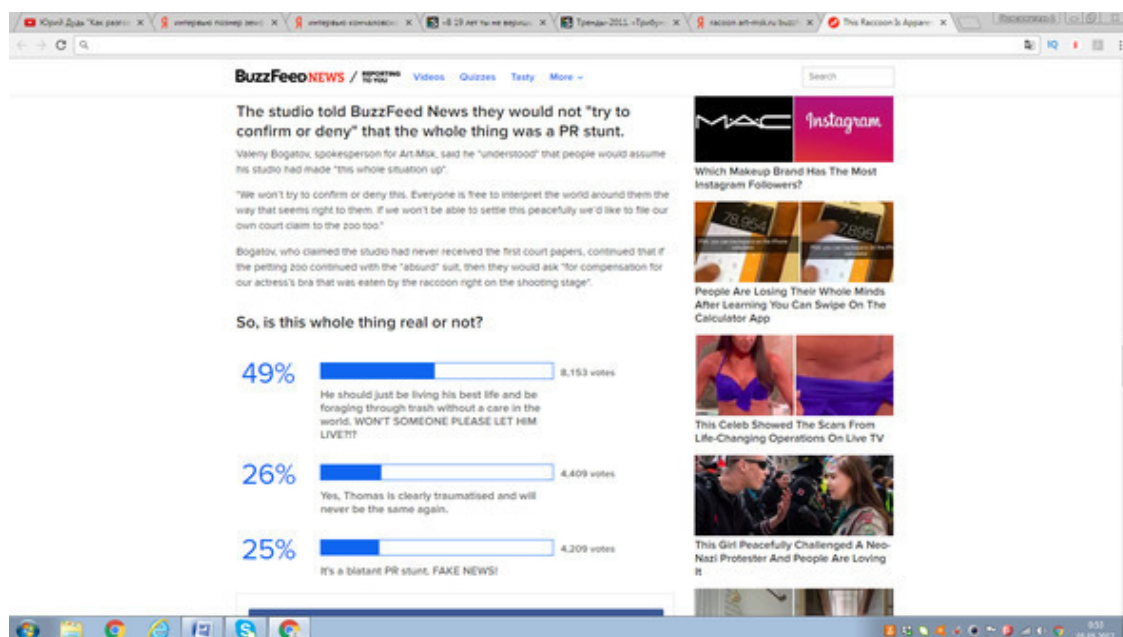




My friends from the art-msk.ru video studio visited by 100 users a day, on average, recorded a sharp surge: they had 1,000 visits first, then 6,000, then 15,000, and then their meters stopped counting, baffled by mounting figures.

This was not the end of the story, though. The video studio filed a counter lawsuit against the zoo because their “profligate” raccoon mangled the actress’ lingerie. That news was not such an astounding success, even though it featured in about 10 national periodicals.

It did not even occur to the readership of BuzzFeed this was just a PR stunt:



Google using the “raccoon art-msk.ru” request

How did my friends from the video studio and their friends from the contact zoo benefit from that action, besides promoting their web sites and global publicity? Plenty of fun and, hopefully, new clients, though this was not their top priority, I believe. All for the sake of the case and victory! I like the happy eyes of clients who look as if they just experienced an orgasm, while these were “just” publications.

Who’s So Cocky There?

Let’s meet each other!

Philosopher-Sociologist-Journalist-PR man

My name is Roman Maslennikov, I am director of the PR agency Prostor PR & Consulting². I have degrees in sociology and philosophy, but my primary vocation is journalism – I made some income as a journalist while at school when I wrote an article about the night spots in my home city, Tver. The editorial office long refused to accept the article, claiming it was advertising. I told them: “If this were advertising, I’d praise all the bars, clubs, and restaurants or bash them, showing their pros and cons.” I essentially promoted the night lifestyle without being aware of it. They paid me 50 rubles (\$5 in 1998) for the article.

I'm a Boredom Fighter. Are You?

I've been engaged in PR since 2002 (organization of parties in night clubs and DJ booking). Since 2004, I've promoted one small translation agency in Moscow. We are still collaborating, and now this company is among the top-5 leaders of its industry. Since 2006, I've been running my own PR agency. For six years, I was doing what I call "classic PR", organizing press conferences, press tours, and getting limelight for my clients in leading business periodicals like *Forbes*, *Dengi*, *Vedomosti* and others. One day, I realized I was bored and thought of leaving PR for good. But then a client came my way, who wanted something special, something off the charts, some non-trivial PR campaign.

I did not know what I was being drawn into, but I agreed to give it a try.

Normally, my clients are startups in different fields of business. The first client of this sort was a representative office of the investment firm Botanoo in Russia. They traded in carbon credits. I still don't fully understand what carbon credits are, but we attracted a long line of people to their doors in central Moscow.



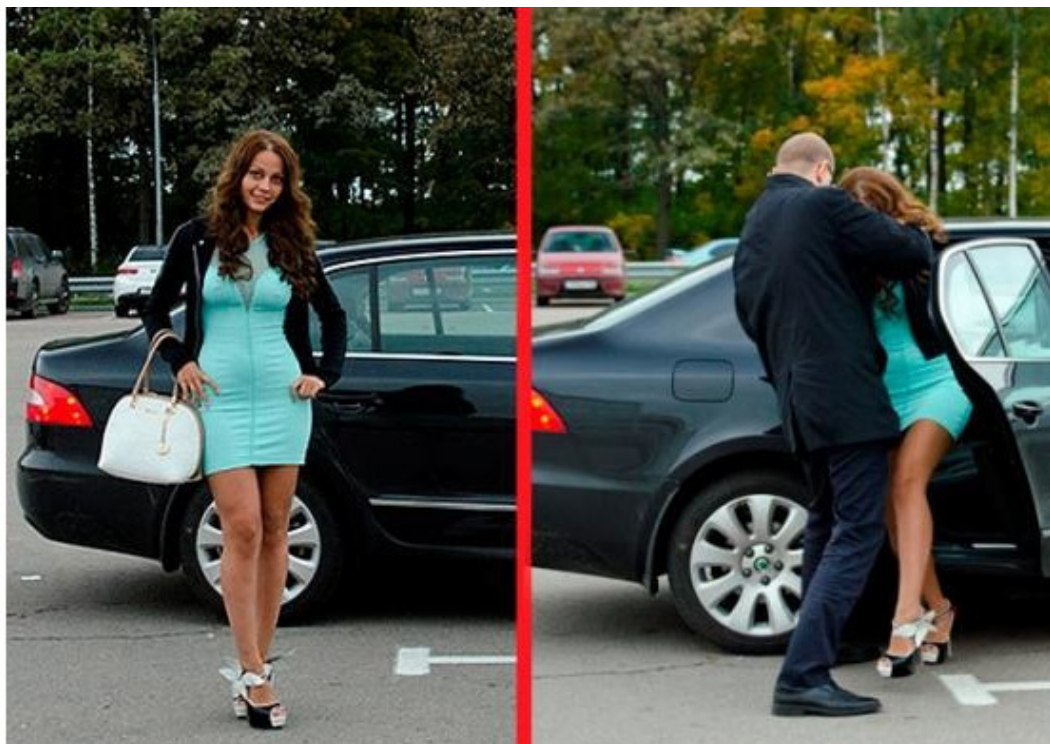
Then I was ordered a sensational opening by Moscow's most expensive bath house in Moscow, Tazik Club. We came up with a crash of five limos, with their logo painted on all of the sideboards.

Despite a major holiday, plane crash, and saturated political agenda, our news ranked sixth in the top-10 daily news, according to the YandexNews search engine².

² <https://news.yandex.ru/>



Then we “kidnapped” a model who wanted to win renown.



Three days later she was a recognizable personality.

When our fourth resounding promo event was a success, I realized I had groped for an efficient technology.

We did an excellent job promoting a new coupon site for two days, selling indulgences at a discount. The stunt lasted until doomsday by the Maya calendar³.



Their web site traffic rose from 1,000 to 10,000 visits and remained at that level for a week.

The PR success of my clients convinced me to give up on “classic PR campaigns” in favor of “explosive PR”. I had an amazing revelation: – you didn’t only spend money on PR (advertising or marketing) but also earned it via PR.

³ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr89>

“We Do Not Lie: We Are Daydreaming”

Our sizzle reel was uploaded on YouTube, which was freely made by a TV channel. The reel is an exposure of our promo event in a fur shop. We deliberately arranged a striptease of a hapless salesgirl who allegedly misunderstood the terms of the promo event and stripped naked to the waist for the customer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJ1ybIkPQrs>

I played the role of that customer. In those days, I could be in the public eye without arousing suspicions. Now I am not involved in promo events unless I promote myself, because now people may say we know this is a PR man, so something must be wrong here.

The story ended with a showy phrase: **“Our fantasy becomes your reality.”**

True: we do not lie, we are daydreaming.

How A News Hook Became a New Business and Caused a Stir in Moscow

And here’s how our newsworthy information not only become real news but also launched new lines of business.

From our perspective, everything began with the successful promo event “Raccoons Ransack an Internet Booster Shop” – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV5JjzyvROE>

There were plenty of releases on Ren-TV, Russia Today, Podmoskovye 360, and even in The Independent. Here is the reference: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/watch-three-badly-behaved-raccoons-ransack-an-office-in-russia-10218013.html>

As per the contract terms, however, the client expected three TV releases while there was only one. Because of that, I nearly split with my business partner who was adamant that the action had been completed. But a bargain is a bargain, so I decided to press it home.

The client continually turned down our cool moves. Just follow the link to gage some of them: <https://goo.gl/LWz9WS>

For instance: “Launching a rumor that an Internet booster manufacturer has won a grant from Pornhub to develop the Internet in the Moscow region for greater exposure of local residents to porn. This was on the premise that XXX-sites have a large audience only in the inner city, whereas in the suburbs people do not visit such sites because of the slow Internet. Or “Russian porn celeb Elena Berkova will star in a commercial of the Internet booster manufacturer.”

Here is the plot: “Taking too long to download? Getting nervous and breaking your computer? Hook up and don’t fret.” Or “A nude man is running across the Red Square and trying to climb the Mausoleum to set up a booster. The whack is taken to a loony bin, and the client says, “We bear no relation to this incident: it’s the scheming of our rivals.” Or “An Internet rickshaw: a man with an aerial wire is pursuing a businessman over the Moscow region so as not to lose location.”

Occasionally, it came to funny PR inventions infringing upon the TV broadcasting act. We cut in a TV spot already on the air, but the client got the hang, and we saw a new generation fake was invented – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvlpCTCd2-E>

That's Why Explosive PR Is More Than Just Traditional Public Relations

Eventually, we groped for the right trick and came up with a press release identifying some places in the Moscow Region that needed fast Internet more than others: clinics, daycares, playgrounds, boarding schools, bathrooms, and cemeteries. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck12M1O63NA>

Now about the Internet at the cemetery. That hook blew the minds of journalists. Everyone wanted to shoot that process in the midst of graves and crosses.

Yet the state enterprise Ritual was hard on us, demanding a multitude of accreditation documents, testing, etc.

That idea did not pay off. We made an arrangement to shoot a video at the animal cemetery in Khimki, but the TV channels did not care. The cemetery Internet had some coverage in newspapers; the company even had calls from real funeral brokers who wanted to hook up, with four annual subscriptions signed. They just did not want any publicity.

This story had a sequel. Ritual announced a tender for the Internet installation at three Moscow cemeteries. When the news hit the Yandex top, questions hailed down on Yota System, and I was personally thanked by journalists for “pushing through a useful initiative.” I replied that “I was simply doing my work” and was not privy to the comments, although actually, I was, as you can see.

Now about the Internet in bathrooms; this was another cranky idea! While looking for a shooting site, I called several Moscow companies to know all ends and outs of this market and made an arrangement with a Moscow toilet chain. When shootings were over – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=th_oE3FWBiU – directors were already negotiating the SIM card delivery. Again, a lucrative business arose from a newsbreak.

Oleg Matveychev makes a point in his *Ears that Wag the Ass* that advertising only squanders your money while PR can help you earn it. Finally, I had succeeded.

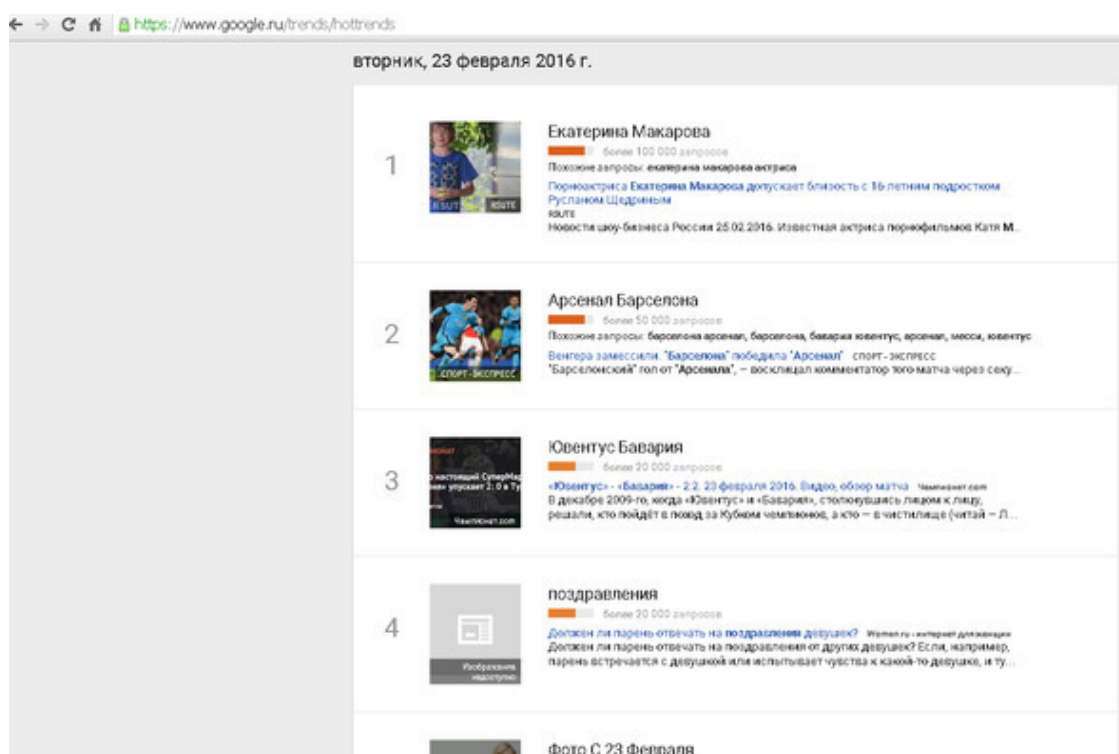
What is Explosive PR?

Explosive PR is not the trivial “blatant PR stunt”, though that is what it is. Explosive PR just sounds better, doesn’t it?

Explosive PR takes place every time 30 to 100 or more free features about your company are released within 1-2-3 days.

I don’t know how it works abroad, but in Russia, business people often wonder how PR can boost their sales. I’ll explain everything statistically, although figures are boring. I tackled explosive PR to avoid extensive explanations and reports. Everything is seen with the naked eye. For instance, our news is in the TOP-10 YandexNews. What other coverage evidence do you need? This is the best KPI to be dreamed of in PR: hitting the TOP-5 news of the main information and news source – the search engine used by more than 70% of Runet users.

Our other news topped the Google: Trends of the Day – “A schoolboy wins a night with a porn star in the CS: GO game”



What other explanations and reports are needed to defend the maxim that PR affects sales, albeit indirectly?

Similar claims are made on explosive PR as well, but how on earth can you measure its impact on sales? I came up with a metaphor. Just imagine coming to a premiere or a Super Bowl game, or the NHL finals, or a popular stage production of a Broadway musical.

You needn’t imagine yourself a businessman because this is what you are, so you watch a game or a stage production, the brilliant play of the actors, and have fun.

Can you see how this might affect your sales? There will be some effect, but you are at a loss for precise estimation. The sure positive effect is feeling fine, experiencing a catharsis, and having deep moral satisfaction.

Now imagine being in the center of that game, the main star who scored a decisive goal or a winning touchdown. What do you feel?

Extreme, a surge of adrenaline, your heart leaping for joy. It's a rush and a kick for you. In the same token, explosive PR is about the INNER STATE.

Apart from a higher conversion rate, the number of brand queries, coverage, etc., the main benefit of explosive PR is the new inner state.

And this is real buzz or bliss-out worth experiencing at least once in a lifetime.

And like my friend and Nietzsche wannabe Anthony “The Inquisitor” Kirsanov would put it, whatever does not kill us can be tried once again!

Theoretical Framework of Explosive PR

Explosive PR did not originate out of nowhere. However, this is how it is now perceived by my numerous rivals. The number of explosive PR agencies keeps growing. Yet, there are only five real professionals in this trade: Anton Vuima, Oleg Voronin, Maksim Perlin, Misha Chernyshev, and Oleg Matveychev⁴, the guru of all gurus.

Explosive PR has a host of friends: newsjacking, guerilla marketing, viral video, flash mob, pranks, art actionism, cats, sexvertising, experience-marketing, shockvertising, mem-marketing, memjacking, ambush-marketing, hashtag jacking, and marketing shticks.

Works of fiction and cinematography, rather than related areas, that motivated me to tackle explosive PR. Here is the best theoretical framework for those who want to be fearless of explosive PR:

- *Wag the Dog* movie – a screen adaptation of Larry Beinhart's *American Hero*,
- The *Black Mirror* series,
- The *Absolute Power* mini-series,
- Christopher Buckley's *Little Green Men*,
- *Ears That Wag the Ass*, a book by Russian authors who are currently employed as Kremlin spin doctors

The authors of the above-listed works present PR as it should be: salient, creative, and stunning, but it is nothing like that. In agencies and corporations, PR comes down to press release mailing, press tours, and conferences. I was bored doing these kinds of things for 10 years, so I decided to return the original sense to PR: foolhardiness, recklessness, and flamboyancy. If these are present, PR is destined to be efficient.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Matveychev

“PR Needs More Balls!”

When I heard Fred Cook’s⁵ coined phrase “PR needs more balls”⁶, I knew I wasn’t the only one concerned with PR desalination.

“My outlook on the future of PR is simply that PR needs more balls and **I translate balls to mean courage**. As PR people, we are known for swimming in our swim lanes and playing nice in the sandbox,” he said. “But this is our opportunity to not play so nice in the sandbox.

We’re looking at whether the term PR is still the right term.

It needs a broader definition to include everything we do, and we have to do a lot to change minds and show what we’re capable of”⁷.

In this book I’ll tell you how:

- ideas launch new businesses,
- I come up with ideas,
- the info explosion or splash is achieved,
- you “seed” news,
- explosive promo actions are conducted,

I’ll also share cases from my portfolio.

⁵ CEO of Golin, a global PR firm. Author of *Improvise – Unorthodox Career Advice from an Unlikely CEO and Director of the USC Center for Public Relations*. <http://www.unlikelyceo.com/>

⁶ About three-quarters of respondents said PR would become even more complex in the next five years and subsequently, **only a quarter said this would make their jobs more fun**. <http://www.prweek.com/article/1417320/fred-cook-pr-needs-balls>

⁷ Public speech at the Institute of Public Relations Research Symposium in New York.

Why I Wrote This Book And For Whom?

I console myself that I'm not the only madman in this world. I would like to meet other spin doctors like me. Why? So we can do something exciting together and know there is more positive, interesting, and hilarious news around us. The news is horrid – at least in this country.

Interesting invented news makes people smile, makes things fun, and allows us to marvel at the things around us.

And if business objectives are addressed against this background, like entering a new market or launching new products or mobile apps, then this is a win-win approach.

You're welcome to enter the world of Explosive PR if you are:

- a spin doctor or marketing analyst prone to inventing news and willing to do something special in Russia for yourself or your clients,
- a startup entrepreneur interested in rising to fame,
- an experienced business person eager to jolt the market and recharge your batteries,
- a PR conference organizer eager to meet an interesting speaker and cases from Russia

Find my contacts at the end of this book.

Let's plunge into the fascinating world of explosive PR and I'll share everything I know.

Even if you use my technology independently, without my involvement, or refine it, I'll be happy!

Make PR Great Again!

Ten Ways to Come Up With a Creative Idea For an Explosive Promo Event

*I love the creative process. I do what I do out of pure enjoyment. Hopefully, nobody does it better. There's a beauty to making a great deal. It's my canvas. And I like painting it.*⁸

Donald Trump

I'm a painter. Media is my canvas and ideas are my paints. Some works were done for a mass audience and some only for connoisseurs. To produce better work, you should continue painting, being creative, and implementing ideas.

A good idea means a more than halfway successful explosive PR campaign.

News must evoke the desire to print and reprint it, press a “like” button near it, and repost it. I'll explain in this article how to make this type of news.

1. “Dictionary Divination.” This method was invented by a well-known PR man from St. Petersburg, Anton Vuima, the author of *Black PR*.

Here's the gist of his method. You keep the business you're promoting in your mind. You take a dictionary of the Russian language, open it to any page, and point your finger at a random word. Whatever it is, your task is to align it with your client and invent a promo action. The case study where a watch worth 200,000 euro was drowned in the Neva is described by Anton in the following video at the end of the third minute.⁹

How does this work? I don't know, but it does. This is possibly the psyche or help from Heaven, I can't tell you for sure. But it works like it worked for the detective from *Twin Peaks*. Do you remember him guessing suspects, setting up bottles, and flinging stones at them? When his guess was correct, a stone would break the glass. He didn't know how it worked, but it did. Does it really matter how? Just use it.

2. Thinking in Paradoxes. Coming up with paradoxes means inventing centaurs, that is aligning two seemingly and fundamentally incompatible things – like a man with the body of a horse. As the saying goes, “When a dog bites a man, it's not news, but when a man bites a dog – that's a sensation.” Or a man went hunting with his dog and was attacked by... a dog. You'll be laughing, but that was real news somewhere in Europe.

Think of someone for whom you'll never be able to provide your services, or of the product you would not sell to anybody under no circumstances.

What client would make you laugh at his/her oddity? When you have the answers to these questions or remember something from your real life and smile, you are on the right path.

⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr46>

⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr61>

One example: we were boosting a coupon web site. What cannot be sold at a discount? We were racking our brain and then came up with the answer: indulgences! That was how we came out with the action: “Selling indulgences at a discount: the bid is valid till Doomsday.” The outcome: 10 TV reports and a 10-fold increase in the website traffic during the week. “... till Doomsday” – that deadline was not picked accidentally but in full compliance with point 3: Agenda.

3. Agenda (How Newsjacking Works for You and Your Business). Your task is hooking events of the day to your business using the following algorithm: look up the sources (YandexNews, Twitter Trends, Mediametrics top news, the main page of LiveJournal), choose what is relevant for your business, and then dovetail. If you come up with a centaur, great!

Case study. We promoted a translation agency at the Student Games in Kazan. The idea was for a youthful translator to declare her love in 68 languages... but for whom? The action was ready, it remained to find a heartthrob. We looked through news the day before and saw that an athlete from Uganda had been administered to the hospital with malaria. That was our hero! If the news were about a female athlete, our action would have a lesbian skew. Well, someone was lucky enough to get limelight on Channel 1 after a report in *Life*¹⁰, in addition to a multitude of publications on the Internet.

4. TIPS-Thinking (“TRIZ”). I am not a TIPS-savvy person. I just visited one workshop and read the books of Altshuller, Anatoly Grin, and Sergey Faer. This was more than enough for me to understand: “The more you know about the problem specification, the clearer its solution is.”

When you properly formulate the problem, you already find more than a half of solution. One day, a large retail chain suffered from info bullying: a certain unidentified citizen complained to the media that he poisoned himself with a food product that should not have stayed on the shelf. He preferred anonymity and introduced himself on behalf of an organization that did not confirm his membership. Yet his photos and persona were chewed over by many leading media outlets. How to get rid of the blemish? We considered several responses, but then it dawned on us that since the blow was anonymous, so should the counterblow. In the upshot, a repentance letter was sent where the same person confessed he had concocted the whole thing for the sake of “cheap fame.” Several hours later, the news hit the top YandexNews.¹⁰

I learned one more thing at the TIPS workshop. **Unless you know how to deal with competition, do the opposite.** It is by following this advice of Sergey Faer that a girl won the Mayoral election in a Turkish city.

Or here is another story. One of the Russian cities was shattered by social unrest. Later, public meetings were banned, but the problem remained. Then dolls and toys were out at the meeting.

¹⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr62>



@ ivan krupchik

There was a meeting without any gathering of people, with just picket signs in view. One could draw inspiration from looking at this lovely outrage.¹¹

TIPS is a very useful, multifaceted methodology for creativity with huge potential of addressing various issues – from household and social to public and industrial – hidden inside¹². Made in Russia by Genrikh S. Altshuller.

5. Chinese Whispers and Slips of the Tongue. On one occasion, I consulted video producer Den Pe regarding the promo event “a nude girl at the steering wheel”. Because of poor liaison, we had the following conversation:

- Den, what’s your opinion about the action “nude girl at the steering wheel of a car-sharing service?”
- Who’s at the steering wheel... of what?
- Nude girl! Car-sharing!
- Nude traffic cop?
- What kind of nude traffic cop? I am talking about a nude girl, car-sharing. Isn’t it cool?
- No, a nude traffic cop is cooler.
- And how can I do it??
- Think for yourself.

And I thought of something. The promo event cracked TOP-5 Yandex news for Moscow.

6. “Thanks, Stand-up!” Gag-men and stand-up comedians tighten up their jokes, bringing trivial facts to absolute paradox. This is exactly what we need! Comedians also like applying unusual circumstances to usual goods (A supermarket cashier has such an overbearing voice that everyone would take a bag).

Gag-men often invent non-existent goods (detachable arm with a manicured finger, sandy ass, feet in champagne, or Bentley’s steering wheel – goods for those who would like to upload good photos in Instagram). In case of explosive PR, such goods are invented not to sell, but to hit the headlines (indulgences at a discount, a coupon for life with a millionaire, and more).

¹¹ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr64>

¹² Not one of international companies has ever mentioned TIPS in their official press releases. Notwithstanding, TIPS proponents were found in Ford and Daimler-Chrysler, Johnson & Johnson, Boeing, NASA, Hewlett Packard, Motorola, General Electric, Xerox, IBM, LG, Samsung, Procter and Gamble, Expedia and Kodak. www.altshuller.ru

So just type the name of your product or sphere of business in YouTube and then use such words as humor, stand-up, comedy, and you'll have some good ideas. Just don't forget to thank a standup comedian!

7. Associations. I described this method in my *Boosting a Super Company* long ago and have been applying it successfully since 2006. I was then promoting a simultaneous translation bureau. Looking for associations, such as what else could be simultaneous or synchronized, I hit upon synchronized swimming.

As a result, Olympic champions in synchronized swimming became the honored clients of the translation agency Synchronist.¹³

8. Maslennikov's Matrix Help You Create More Than 200 Crazy Ideas. This method is about dividing a sheet of paper into two columns. You write interesting objects in one – celeb, politician, transvestite, porn star, strip dancer, etc., while in another column you describe some shocking actions: burnt, killed, raped, brawled, stepped in a cake, etc. Then, randomly match words from the first and second columns, fitting your business into the scheme.

After sorting out 10—20 various combos, one will strike you and journalists to the marrow.

¹³ <http://tinyurl.com/shock-pr65>

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