

# PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR FEMALE FOUNDERS

SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING  
AND OWNING YOUR NARRATIVE



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To my fellow female founder,

The landscape of entrepreneurship is changing. Women are starting businesses at record rates, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the table. However, despite their growing presence, female founders still face unique challenges, particularly when it comes to public relations (PR).

This e-book is designed to empower female founders with the knowledge and tools needed to craft a powerful PR strategy. We'll delve into the specific challenges faced by women in business, explore effective PR tactics, and provide actionable steps to build brand awareness, secure media coverage, and establish yourself as a thought leader in your industry.

While this guide is not intended to be exhaustive, it does encapsulate my 10+ years of work in the public relations space, over the last 2-3 years of which our agency Haute in Texas has begun to specialize in female founders. Our clients range from women launching biotech startups, to oil and gas executives turned venture capitalists, to hair salon owners and authors.

Whether a female founder is running a multi-million dollar startup or a mom-and-pop local business, we've found that their challenges are often similar, and what makes them great at what they do also has commonalities across the board.

It is because of their excellence in their field that we get to do what we do. We step in to help them share their stories, elevate their brands to a greater level of public awareness, and drive their target audience directly to their doorstep.

If you've got an itch to start your own business as a woman, from one female founder to another, my advice is: do it. Start the thing. Launch the product. Shout it from the rooftops. Women, and particularly young girls, need to see each other going after our passions unapologetically. You might fail, or you might soar to heights you could never have imagined. Either way, I'm proud of you for daring to try!

Cheering you on always,  
Aquila Mendez-Valdez  
Founder/CEO, Haute in Texas

# Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Before we delve into the positives of being a female founder seeking thought leader status, it's important to first acknowledge the roadblocks we may encounter. These obstacles may be what motivates us, but they certainly shouldn't be what holds us back. If we can take a moment to look our detractors in the eye, we stand a better chance of defeating those naysayers one by one.

- **Funding Gap:** Women-led businesses receive a significantly smaller portion of venture capital funding compared to their male counterparts. This lack of financial resources can hinder PR efforts.
- **Unconscious Bias:** Stereotypes about female leadership can make it harder for women to gain credibility and media attention.
- **Lack of Visibility:** Women are often underrepresented in industry conferences, panels, and publications. This can limit their exposure and influence.





# The Power of PR for Female Founders

So how does PR play into the marketing mix for a female founder? Why is it plausibly even more important for a female founder over her male counterparts? There are a number of reasons why it's a powerful tool to keep in your tool belt, but here are just a few:

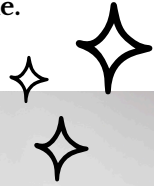
- **Level the Playing Field:** Strategic PR creates a platform to showcase your expertise, achievements, and the value proposition of your company.
- **Build Brand Credibility:** Positive media coverage establishes you as a thought leader and builds trust with potential customers, investors, and partners.
- **Attract Top Talent:** A strong brand reputation attracts high-caliber employees who want to work for a company with a clear vision and mission.



# Crafting Your PR Strategy

Now that you're convinced PR is a worthy endeavor, how do you get started? Whether you're hiring an agency to do the heavy lifting for you or planning to try your hand at media pitching first, it's important to lay a proper foundation with a strategy that makes sense for your brand. Start with answering these questions to get you on the path to success:

- **Define Your Objectives:** What do you hope to achieve with your PR efforts? Is it to increase brand awareness, attract new customers, raise capital, or establish yourself as an industry expert?
- **Know Your Audience:** Identify the key demographics you want to reach with your message. Tailor your PR strategy and messaging to resonate with their specific needs and interests.
- **Developing Your Brand Story:** What makes your company unique? What problem are you solving? We always like to ask in what ways are you the best? The only? The first? The biggest? Craft a compelling narrative that showcases your values, mission, and the impact you want to make.



# Building Media Relations

As we all know, all the strategy in the world doesn't matter unless we follow it up with execution. Surprisingly this is where many female founders get stuck when launching a PR campaign. They can dream up all the publications they want to be featured in, even write all the op-eds and think pieces they've been wanting to get off their chest, but then they hesitate to pull the trigger and drop it into a reporter's inbox. Oftentimes this is where an agency is the most vital, to toot your horn so you don't have to, but if your budget requires the DIY method there are a few ways to overcome your fears and get to pitching!

- **Identify Relevant Media Outlets:** Research publications, websites, and podcasts that cater to your target audience. Look for journalists who are covering stories relevant to your industry and expertise. Add them on LinkedIn or follow them on Twitter to start building a genuine relationship.
- **Crafting a Winning Pitch:** Develop a concise and newsworthy pitch that highlights the value you offer to readers. Focus on the impact and benefits your company provides, not just its features. You also want to tie it back to the reporter's specific beat or connect it to a story they recently wrote. Sometimes just offering up your areas of expertise rather than a specific story idea can help them keep you in mind for future opportunities.
- **Media Training:** Prepare for media interviews by practicing your talking points and anticipating potential questions. Hone your communication skills to deliver your message clearly and confidently. A good PR pro can also walk you through a mock interview to make sure you've covered all your bases!



# Leveraging Social Media for PR Success

So you've landed that big TV segment or newspaper article... now what? Ironically most of our clients today are more excited to leverage their media coverage for their online presence, far more than the PR coverage itself! After all, what's social media for if not a platform for one's humble brags? In all seriousness though, a multi-channel approach is essential to make sure anyone who comes looking for you after your moment in the spotlight finds a cohesive and well-executed social media account.

- **Develop a Consistent Social Media Presence:** Choose the platforms most relevant to your target audience and brand. Create engaging content that educates, entertains, and inspires your followers.
- **Build Relationships with Influencers:** Identify industry influencers whose audience aligns with yours. Collaborate on content creation, social media campaigns, or joint events to expand your reach and brand awareness.
- **Utilize Paid Social Media Advertising:** Strategic paid advertising campaigns on social media can help you target specific demographics and amplify your message to a wider audience. Consider boosting your posts about your PR coverage to give the appearance an even longer runway.





# Building Thought Leadership

Beyond traditional PR from a media perspective, thought leadership has since grown to encompass many more outlets for you to share your expertise. As we often tell our small business clients, sometimes it's not about the Tier 1 publications to a national audience who will never visit your mom-and-pop shop. A local podcast with a terrific niche following in your city might actually drive more customers through your door!

- **Contribute Guest Articles:** Publish thought leadership articles in industry publications and online communities. Share your expertise on relevant topics to establish yourself as a credible voice.
- **Speak at Industry Events:** Participate in conferences, panels, and workshops to share your insights and network with potential partners, investors, and customers.
- **Write a Book or E-book:** Publishing a book allows you to share your story, expertise, and company vision in detail, further solidifying your position as a leader in your field. Case and point: the e-book you're reading right now!





# Measuring PR Success

Excuse me, you might be wondering? I just wanted to add the cool “As Seen In” section on my website, I didn’t think I’d actually have to pay attention to data as part of my PR campaign. While you don’t have to do anything of the sort if vanity features are your primary goal, if you truly want to evaluate what’s working and what’s not in your PR strategy, measurement is critical. And I promise it’s not as painful as it sounds!

- **Track Key Metrics:** Monitor website traffic, social media engagement, media mentions, domain authority, backlinks and brand sentiment to gauge the effectiveness of your PR efforts.
- **Adapt and Refine Your Strategy:** Analyze your data regularly and adjust your PR approach based on what's working and what needs improvement.



# Additional Considerations and Resources for Female Founders

Now you're ready to venture into the Wild Wild West that is PR in the 21st century, but not until we equip you with a few more words of inspiration and tools for that aforementioned tool belt. Above all else, remember: what would an average white man feel entirely qualified to do? Go do that and more!

- **Embrace Your Unique Voice:** Don't feel pressured to conform to traditional business stereotypes. Your authenticity and unique perspective are valuable assets.
- **Find Your People:** Connect with other female founders and entrepreneurs. Building a network of support can provide valuable knowledge, inspiration, and resources.
- **Celebrate Your Achievements:** This might be the most important. Add that media mention to your website. Put it all over your LinkedIn. A journalist chose to speak to YOU for a reason. You deserve to celebrate!

## Resources:

- Spinsucks.com - Gini Dietrich is a mentor, friend, and all around genius when it comes to these topics. Follow her blog immediately!
- Private Slack Community for female founders - Click [here](#) to join. It's free, and we provide tips and tricks for PR and Marketing, with a healthy dose of "YOU GOT THIS!" along the way.
- Follow us @hauteintexas everywhere on social or on the hitpr.com blog - Shameless plug, but we'd be remiss not to mention that we'd love to connect with you further!



## About Aquila Mendez-Valdez

Aquila is the Founder and CEO of Haute in Texas, an award-winning PR and Marketing agency which has grown from scratch into a multiple six-figures business. She's been asked to speak and present to audiences across the US, Europe and Asia, and has been featured in Forbes, The Telegraph UK, Digiday, and PR on the Go, in addition to numerous TV appearances, publications, and podcasts. Her blog collaborations and client roster feature some of the world's biggest brands, including Vogue, Prada, Lincoln, Neiman Marcus, Kendra Scott, Orangetheory, and many, many more. She graduated with honors playing Division I volleyball at Western Kentucky University and obtained her Master's from Gonzaga University. She serves on various boards for a wide variety of non-profits, and in 2022 launched Haute in Network Agencies, a franchise model to help other women own their own agencies. In 2023 she was named a San Antonio Biz Journal 40 Under 40 honoree and launched the agency's first satellite location with Haute in Austin. Aquila and her college sweetheart, Orlando, have two girls and currently reside in San Antonio, Texas.

## About Haute in Texas

Led by Founder & CEO Aquila Mendez-Valdez, the HITsters (as one client dubbed us) at Haute in Texas are a mix of busy moms, up and coming talent, and fiercely loyal Texans. Our team offers every client we work with a fully customized approach to PR and Marketing with exceptional client communications. We love strong cups of coffee and weak dad jokes. If you're bringing either to a meeting, consider us in. For more information, please visit [hitpr.com](http://hitpr.com)

