

7-MINUTE

SCALING  **SECRETS**

EPISODE 9

**TOP MISCONCEPTIONS BUSINESSES
HAVE ABOUT PUBLIC RELATIONS**



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Alvin Poh 0:08

Hey everyone, welcome to another exciting episode of 7-Minute Scaling Secrets, where we interview entrepreneurs and learn a secret on how they scale up their businesses. Today we have a special guest, Christel Goh, who runs a PR company in Singapore that works with startups and venture backed companies. Christel, why don't you tell us a little bit more about yourself.

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Christel Goh 0:53

Hello, Alvin. Hi, I'm Christel. So I'm founder of Grow PR. Like you mentioned, we work with venture backed companies, we work with Angel backed companies in Singapore. And what we really like to do is if you can see the screen, it says Building Small Giants. So we enjoy working with younger brands a lot. Because we get to see the impact of our work, right, we get to see them reach audiences that they would not usually reach out to through like other kind of marketing channels. So maybe I could share a little bit of ourselves with you.

Alvin Poh 1:23

Yeah. yeah, please.

Christel Goh 1:24

Okay. So I've been in PR for the past decade. By and how I got into building Grow PR was that, I was working in PR agencies, I was working in communications roles in house. And along the way, actually, I got a little bit more. I started a social enterprise creating games for seniors. Along the way, I got approached by a lot of small business owners, because they saw like, the publicity that we created for the project. And then they started asking me whether I could do PR for them. I was freelancing moonlighting for a bit, and decided to then build Grow PR as a business with a team. Yeah.

Alvin Poh 2:07

Well, you very organically became like the PR expert that you are today. What this, you know, is this expertise built from like all these PR networks that you've, you know, amassed over the years is that one of the ways that you became so good with PR?

Christel Goh 2:25

I think this is also because it is my bread and butter, right? It's what I was trained to do. It is essentially the only thing that I knew when I graduated to do the work and all that. So realizing that this could be a skill that could potentially support small companies was what changed the game. Previously, when I was working as an employee, I did a lot of PR for like bigger companies. But when we could, when I can see the impact that it creates for small companies, and it really gives me a lot of excitement.

Alvin Poh 3:03

I think it's one of the main points of running businesses, right? I think too many people focus on the fact that it's all about profits. It's really also about the passion and the purpose that drives us. And for yours, your example is definitely like your passion and purpose that you kind of organically, or can I even say like fell into and then became something that you absolutely loved. And the impact that it created as a result is also something that I guess, fulfills that purpose that we were looking for awesome.

PR is great. And you know, as an entrepreneur myself, as a business owner, I'm always looking at ways to grow my business. And when I look at it, there are three main components of a business, right? There's sales, there's marketing, and then there's fulfillment. Under marketing, you know, you have everything from like Facebook advertisements, to I know SEO to digital, all forms of digital marketing, and I will even put PR under that. And that's under marketing, right? But like when you look at a whole range of marketing options, how do you tell if like a business is no suitable for PR or not?

Christel Goh 4:16

So there are a lot of factors that come into play. And for us, it's very important to be able to qualify whether a business is ready for PR before we take on any project because we want to make sure that we can deliver the work right. So firstly, there are a couple of industries that we can't touch, and we avoid right because the editors want to feature businesses in a certain way. And if it doesn't fall into that category, then it's going to be very difficult for these businesses. So there are certain categories that don't work out. But let's say if you know you are running like a business in technology, you are creating like something that is FnB related or like fashion, healthcare.

Then, usually we would look at a couple of areas. A lot of times we work with startups that are quite early stage, right? So we want to make sure first that you know, they have actual customers, they have that early traction, and have that infrastructure setup like their website, they have like a couple of marketing things going on, you have to make sure all those things are in place. And that's where they need an extra push which is PR to help them reach out to certain audiences that they wouldn't be able to. That's where we think that okay, it's the right fit. And a lot of times founders come to ask, when they want to create awareness for their business, build credibility and take their business to the next level. Yeah.

Alvin Poh 5:45

So here's my question, what happens when a business is like very traditional or very, like ordinary like, you know, I used to think that my business was very ordinary too, right? Would an ordinary business be suitable for PR then? How do I as a business owner find those stories within myself or my business? Is that something that, you know, I can tell whether my business is suitable for PR or not?

Christel Goh 6:08

Yeah, actually, I wouldn't think that your story is ordinary. Yeah. Because I mean, when you

spoke to me, right, like, immediately, I knew that was kind of exciting already. Even though your purpose of PR was just to publish a book, right? But you have an incredible backstory of how like, you raise like, so much money. Oh sorry. You start your business for like a bit amount of money at a very young age. So if a business happens to be in a very traditional industry, then we look at this person who we are able to profile. For example, I have a client that runs an SEO agency search engine optimization, which is like super boring, right.

But he used to be an ex gangster, and like he changed his life and stuff like that. So that is an example of a crazy story that we are able to prop up. Other things are like, let's say, they could be in very traditional service based industries, but they are trying to do things differently. So for example, they may be incorporating technology in their business. Or like, for example, we are currently speaking with this guy who runs like a printing company. And they transformed the business a lot to one that is now going into digital cards, digital business cards. Yeah. So those are some examples.

Alvin Poh 7:29

Oh, I love that. So it's not just about the business that you're in is really about like all these other things, right? Who is running a business and the story behind that founder is, it's probably going to be something exciting to talk about as well. I think that's one of the problems that business founders and owners face. Like, our story is very normal to us, literally, because that is the story that we lived all our life, right? And it takes like someone else to look at us look at what we went through and go like, holy crap, that's not normal.

That's different. That's inspiring. That's something that people can learn from or want to hear about. And I didn't realize that until I met you too, right, and then found out more about what PR meant, and what kind of lens we need to have as business owners to look at PR. Cool. Tell me a little bit more I know, but I think the audience is going to be somebody that benefits from this. Tell me a bit more about the misconceptions that you hear or that you know, business owners have regarding PR.

Christel Goh 8:34

So when we before we take on clients, right, we are very, very careful like I shared with you. Because of these reasons, like there are certain industries that we can't touch, or we need to make sure that our business is truly ready, you know, what are the angles that we can communicate, and stuff like that, so that the media picks it up. So we are very careful about that. The misconception, a lot of the times the misconception is that business owners think that PR is almost exactly the same as marketing.

So they think that PR people are able to spin anything out of nothing. And then that is going to make news. And a lot of times some business owners they do think that what they have is incredibly news breaking. But a lot of times when they tell us, we hear these things on a daily basis, right? So we know it's gonna make news or not. Yeah, right. Yeah.

Alvin Poh 9:33

So I guess that's also part of the expertise that you bring to the table and I love the fact that you mentioned your qualification process is really important and something that you absolutely abide to, because that means that when a when a client needs PR or things that you need PR and they approach you, it doesn't mean that they are naturally just going to be able to pay a bill and and get things done, right? You have to be able to see something be able to support them, be able to, you know, see that no results can be obtained before you even say yes to accepting their credit card.

Christel Goh 10:08

It's very different from like putting out a brochure or covering up like social media content, but any business is able to do that. But not every business is able to do PR or like get good results that you're hoping to achieve from here.

Alvin Poh 10:21

Right.

Christel Goh 10:22

So this is challenging.

Alvin Poh 10:23

So, from what you're saying PR isn't for everyone then.

Christel Goh 10:27

Yeah, yeah.

Alvin Poh 10:28

And what are some industries that shouldn't look at PR?

Christel Goh 10:32

Okay. So we get a lot of these on a daily basis. And a lot of these come from like self-employed industries. So for example, property agents, insurance agents, and things like pseudo science kind of companies, or like finance, making money, like online trading companies that teach you how to treat their staff. So a lot of times these industries are ones that we wouldn't really take on for a couple of reasons, right?

Firstly, they are very saturated, like there's so many insurance agents, property agents out there. And unless they're doing something really different, like they are wearing like a spider man suit to sell insurance every single day, then okay, maybe we can do something about it. But like most of the time, no. Another thing is that oh, and I think is that it falls into sort of a category that the media may not want to cover.

Alvin Poh 11:30

Oh, so these are the regulations that prevent coverage, right, on certain industries. I know, vice is also something that probably wouldn't be in the mass media.

Christel Goh 11:42

So there was this company that came to us, and they were doing gambling and they will drink crypto. So it was everything combined that the media is like not gonna cover, so we have to just tell that yeah, actually not gonna work out.

Alvin Poh 11:57

Okay. Yeah, I guess those are regulatory issues. What if an insurance agent is somebody that has an incredible story then like somebody that as an individual has, like, such incredibly, like different stories that somebody that is, you know, worthy of going to the press then?

Christel Goh 12:17

Yeah, it's possible. So like, for example, if this insurance agent, he sells insurance by day, and then by night, he actually has a store, or he like sells like, Mala? Or something like that, or like something totally different, then it's possible for us to tell his story a little bit. Yeah. Or like if you know, this person actually has gone through certain challenges in his life to get to where he is now where she is now? Yeah. That is something we can take.

Alvin Poh 12:50

Yeah, I think that goes back to what we were talking about, like even for regular business owners, figuring out the story that they have for themselves, I think that's, that's something that immediately sets the business apart. Like, I used to always think that it was all about the business and never about our stories as humans. But more and more, I realized that as part of running a business, if we can actually understand the personal brand that we bring to the table that really shapes everything.

And if it cascades down, not just to your customers or to the press, but to your teams as well. Because who you are shapes the value, shapes the personality, shapes the company culture that you have in your company. So yeah, absolutely loving this, resonating with this. Cool. Is there anything else that you'd like to share with like business owners who might potentially think about, you know, using PR as a strategy.

Christel Goh 13:48

Maybe a couple of things. So usually, we would encourage that business owners to come to us to make sure that there are a couple of things in place first. Like, you know, they have like a sound model. They know that, you know, the business is running like steam in a stable kind of manner. And you're not really trying to rely on PR, just for sales. Right? So I mean, those are some of the things to make sure that you know, if they are branding is off to get it right, first, their website and all that is in place.

And then we can talk about what are the objectives and outcomes for PR? So to be very clear, are they hoping to reach out to more investors, customers, or maybe partners to resell their products, right? So to be clear about that. And then to also sort of have in mind what exactly they want to communicate. So this is a process that we will walk through with them as well. What are some of the angles that we can take? And sometimes when we go through this

process, and we realize maybe they're not ready for PR right now.

Alvin Poh 14:51

Oh, wow. Okay. And then they go off, get everything sorted, and come back again and whenever they're ready.

Christel Goh 14:57

Yeah.

Alvin Poh 14:58

Cool! Awesome! Love this process. It's very customer centric. It's very, it's not very hard sales. It's all about, like getting the results for the clients that you serve. And you know that's something that resonates a lot with me. Cool. All right, Christel, thanks for sharing all the information. I'm sure the audience wants to know more about what you do, how to reach out to you, and whether or not their business is somebody that or something that, you know, your business can potentially help and support. So what's the best way for the audience to reach out to you?

Christel Goh 15:29

Okay, so, like, businesses that are looking for PR, they can reach out to us at our website. They can visit and make an inquiry from there. We are growpublicrelations.com so G R O W P U B L I C R E L A T I O N S .COM. Okay, so growpublicrelations.com. Also alternatively, if they are looking at PR, but are not willing to commit to like an extra expensive retainer fee, or like a package, not so sure about it, they can also join our boot camp. So we have started conducting DIY PR boot camps where people can learn a little bit more about how to develop their angles, flesh out their angles.

So founders can actually think about their PR angles along the way as they are running their business, so they can be a bit more conscious and mindful of what they need to get the best PR out there. We also would guide founders as to how they can reach out to the media or their own or like marketing leaders, how they can do that, build connections with media contacts. And lastly, how to prepare for media interviews, what they're doing right, what they're doing wrong. Yeah, so this is a boot camp that's happening on the 28th 29th July. So it's for marketing as well.

Alvin Poh 16:49

Sweet! So if I have like a marketing person or PR person, I can basically have them join this boot camp as well.

Christel Goh 16:55

Yeah.

Alvin Poh 16:56

Awesome. Cool. Yeah. So people if you're interested, go check it out, growpublicrelations.com. Reach out to Christel, reach out to her team and I'm sure that they will be able to help you with

your PR needs. Thank you so much for being on this show Christel. Really appreciate your time and I hope the audience also learned something from you. I definitely did. To everyone else who's listening, we appreciate you guys. If you like this episode, please like, comment, share, subscribe, review this podcast so that more episodes can be put out for you. I look forward to seeing you in the next one. Please take care and be safe.