

The Reactive PR Cheat Sheet

“Jump on a Trend Before It Gets Cold—and Before Your Competitor Does”

Reactive PR is the fine art of butting into conversations you were never invited to—with style. When a story breaks or a trend hits, this cheat sheet helps you figure out what to say, how to say it, and when to shut up.

Print it. Tape it to the wall. Whisper it to your marketing team like it's prophecy.

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Step 1: Spot a Trend Before It Rots

Use tools like:

- Google Trends
- Twitter/X trending topics
- Reddit threads (r/marketing, r/news, r/popculture)
- HARO or Qwoted alerts
- Awareness of anything happening outside your Slack bubble

Rule of Thumb: If it's on morning TV, you're already late.

Step 2: Gut Check—Can We Say Something Useful or Are We Just Thirsty?

Ask yourself:

- Do we have expertise or just opinions?
- Will our take add value or just annoy everyone?
- Are we being timely or tragically opportunistic?
- Is this brand-safe, or will Legal scream?

If it fails this check: delete draft, walk away, hydrate.

Step 3: Choose Your Weapon

Depending on the story and your angle, deploy one of the following:

Tactic	What It Is	When to Use It
Expert Commentary Pitch	Send a quote or POV to journalists covering the story	You've got actual insight, not vibes
Social Media Reaction Post	Timely tweet, post, or thread	You can be clever, quick, and not problematic
Blog or LinkedIn Hot Take	Medium-depth response with branded POV	You need more than 280 characters
Newsjack Press Release	Formal-ish response with SEO goals	You're a drama queen with a backlink goal
Proactive Outreach to Niche Outlets	Targeted pitch with custom angle	It's niche but aligned with your audience

Step 4: Drop the Quote and Bounce

Don't overthink. Keep your quote:

- Short (2–3 sentences)
- Bold (no “we believe” fluff)
- Buzzword-light (this is not a TED Talk)

- Actually quotable

Bad: “Our company is always innovating in uncertain times.”

Good: “If brands don’t get real on TikTok this year, they’ll be ignored like email footers.”

Step 5: Measure or It Didn’t Happen

Track:

- Media mentions
 - Backlinks earned
 - Social engagement
 - Website traffic spikes
 - Number of coworkers who finally said, “Hey that was actually smart”
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Bonus Pro Tips

- Keep a “reactive PR calendar” for holidays, awareness days, and annual news cycles (looking at you, Apple Keynote).
 - Have pre-approved quotes on standby so you’re not waiting on Chad from Legal.
 - If you’re not first, be funniest. Or weirdest. Or loudest. But be something.
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