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Q & A

Gain free publicity by sharing your expertise

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Dear Karen: Our family business sells earthquake-preparedness devices. How can we get media exposure?

Answer: Position yourself as a disaster preparedness expert, said Michael Olguin, president of Formula, a public relations firm in San Diego. "Pitch yourself as a third-party expert that electronic and print media can call on during annual drills and preparedness events and after there's a quake

anywhere in the world," Olguin said.

Create a blog, conduct surveys and write about preparedness efforts — as long as you know your stuff.

"Do not go out and pitch your product by itself," Olguin said. Your product will get publicity by virtue of interviews that you do about larger topics.

Website software that's worth a try

Dear Karen: I created my

business website with software that is now outdated. Does WordPress software work for business websites?

Answer: Though WordPress started out as a blogging system, it now has many features that are suitable for running small-business websites, said Abhijeet Chavan, chief technology officer at Urban Insight Inc., a Los Angeles Internet consulting firm. You can extend WordPress by adding "plug-in" features.

"If your business website requirements are more com-

plex, consider Drupal. Like WordPress, it is free, runs on the same platform and can be extended by choosing from several thousand free modules," Chavan said.

You can try both systems and see whether one works for you.

Also consider that your website is the public face of your business. Hiring a consultant to plan and build it may be a worthwhile investment.

Small-business questions?
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