

# Don't buy your own PR

In the age of self-publishing and social media, it's easy to put out information about your brand or yourself out there. It's easy to gain "followers." The lack of filters makes it easy to connect directly with people. But that doesn't mean that what you are saying is true. Keep that in mind. Just because you put in on your blog and somebody shared it on Twitter DOES NOT MAKE IT FACTUAL OR TRUE OR EVEN RIGHT. It just means that someone liked what you have to say.

In fact, just yesterday the disheveled leader of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmanidejad, claimed to the United Nations General Assembly that the U.S. was behind the 9-11 attacks and that most of the world believes that. To a rational person, this is hogwash, and yet there are nutcases out there who agree with this maniac. **Let me emphasize again: having followers does not make you right or true.**

Many people and companies are falling prey to the lure of large numbers. They believe that because they have large numbers of followers, they are "all that." They may be, but they should question it. Just today, I read a blog post by a book author, talking about herself and her concentration. It was purported to be about happiness, but it really was all about her. Another popular blog shared this morning what the blog author does as a morning routine, as if this is what we all need to do. What is happening is that because it was easy to get ideas out there, and to get positive publicity for such ideas, these people believe that everyone cares and everyone agrees with them. But that is just not accurate.

I am not saying that you should not self-publicize or promote yourself or your brand. **I am just saying you should not fall prey to the numbers game. Just because you have supporters does not mean everyone supports you** (go over to the Washington Post and read what happened to Mayor Adrian Fenty if you want

a real-life example of buying your own PR at the expense of a reality check).

If I can paraphrase a famous line: publicity corrupts, absolute publicity corrupts absolutely.

(And for some comic relief, read Christopher Elliott's interview with Delta's head of customer service, who thinks Delta has the best customer service. Clearly, she hasn't flown Delta.)

