

Becoming A Media Superstar

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Perspective is a huge part of the public relations/marketing industry and for small business owners it is even more important to realize the role of public relations in the day-to-day operation of a business. The typical PR professional is forced to see things from the perspective of clients, upper management, the public, suppliers, stakeholders and anyone else that may cross their path. However, one of the trickiest relationships for many in the world of PR is with the local media. With that in mind, it is increasingly important as a company owner or a member of upper-management that you gain first-hand insight into the world of media relations. This knowledge can prove to be vital and business altering.

The following is a list of the top five dos and don'ts for dealing with the media as offered by a former editor and reporter.

5) Don't ask to preview an article before it goes to print.

This may seem like a harmless request to the outside world, but this is a huge no-no in the world of media. Asking to preview an entire article before it is published is considered by most to be an insult. Asking for a preview means that you do not believe the reporter is capable of understanding the facts of the story or that they believe the reporter is dishonest and is intending to print fallacies. Whether the intentions are good, this is the quickest way to get on a reporter's bad side.

4) Do learn the difference between advertising and news.

Sending a press release to a news organization about a new product is the quickest route to the trashcan. A new product is not newsworthy. Giving away 100 free samples of a new product to benefit disadvantaged children or abused women is much more worthy of coverage. Send too many press releases that are more closely suited to advertising and a company's "news" releases may eventually go straight from the inbox to junk mail.

3) Don't allow the PR staff to be the sole spokesperson.

Whether in press releases or interviews, reporters hate having to wade through paragraph after paragraph of unusable quotes. The PR professional is not the CEO or the expert; they are the facilitator. As the owner of a small business or as upper management, your voice needs to be heard. Take a stand and be your own spokesperson. You are the expert. People want to hear information straight from the horse's mouth, not information regurgitated through the PR staff.

2) Do know the publication.

In addition to knowing an audience, business professionals have to know the publication to which they are pitching a story idea. Which reporters cover which beats? What stories have the publication been interested in lately? How often does the publication print? What are normal weekly deadlines? These are questions you should know the answers to before calling to pitch a story. Call without doing any homework and your company is likely to get buried coverage if anything at all. If a professional calls knowing who they are talking to and what they are talking about, it may be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

1) Don't lie.

It sounds simple, but it is the most vital insight into the world of media relations. Never ever lie to a publication. Don't lie in order to get coverage. Don't lie to cover up information. Don't lie to sugar coat a situation. Don't lie, period. In 99 percent of situations, a reporter already knows the truth; they are just calling to give the company an opportunity to offer information in their own words. The other 1 percent of the time, a reporter (if he or she is diligent) is going to check the facts on any information shared by the organization anyway.

With these tips in mind, go out and be media-friendly. Business professionals should not be afraid of or intimidated by the media. Everyone on both sides is working together toward a common goal. These tips should help it be a smoother ride.



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