
How To Get The Media To Notice Your Business

by PAM LONTOS

Why do some company leaders appear in numerous magazines and trade journals and on a variety of television and radio shows while others who run a similar business can barely get a producer or editor to take notice? The answer lies in the person's ability to cultivate future interview opportunities. Those business leaders who seem to appear everywhere know how to offer the most value to their media contacts.

You can get reporters and producers to remember you for future stories by positioning yourself as a valuable information source. The next time you talk with any member of the media, remember to use the following rapport-building techniques.

Show Benefits

Tell the reporter what unique perspective you can add to his or her story and why the audience will be interested in what you

have to say. This is not the time to focus on your career highlights, your company's products or services or your company's reputation; instead, focus on the audience and explain how you will help them.

Find Future Stories

Ask the editor or producer what stories he or she is planning to cover in the coming months. Listen carefully and figure out how your company's message or

mission somehow relates to those story ideas. If you find a fit, explain how you will be beneficial to what he or she is investigating. Offer some facts, statistics or company anecdotes to make your point.

Be Helpful

Continually finding new story angles and investigating breaking news is a tough job. Ask the interviewer what you can do to make his or her job easier. Can you offer some research material your company has recently compiled? Can you explain a complicated topic to the audience in easy-to-understand language? Be an eager, accessible source of information so the interviewer will want to work with you on future stories.

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Keep Your Facts Up-To-Date

Reporters don't want to talk about last week's topics; they want to know what is new and breaking today. They want to be on the cutting edge of what is happening, and they want your help to get them there. That's why you must openly and willingly talk about what is happening in your industry — both the good and the bad trends. Additionally, continually update any facts or sources you cite to make sure they are accurate and reliable. Using statistics from the 1980s when more current ones are available will make you appear unprofessional and unknowledgeable.

Be Unique and To-The-point

Always present your topic of expertise in a new light — one that may be close to someone else's, yet catches the reporter or producer's interest. Avoid lengthy e-mails, letters or phone conversations. Between deadlines and interviews, media personnel have little time to spare. If the reporter or producer can't grasp your unique perspective in the first few sentences, their audience won't be able to either, and they won't use your information.

Don't Be Pushy

If the reporter or producer tells you that your information is not right for their audience, thank them for their time, ask if you may contact them in the future and move on. Don't try to push your information to a source that is not interested. If you appear to be too aggressive or too pushy, the media will not want to work with you, even if you could contribute something to a future story. Instead, they will contact a business leader who is more polite and accommodating to their needs.

Speak With Integrity

How you speak to a reporter or producer has just as much effect on his or her opinion of you as what you say. In order to appear reliable, credible and an excellent source of information, avoid speaking with industry jargon or out-of-date phrases. Speak as if you were explaining something for the first time. Also, offer current, first-hand accounts as examples to back up your statements so the reporter or producer knows you have real-life experience that others can learn from.

When you gear your approach to how you and your company can



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help the media rather than always asking how they can help promote your business, you gain lifelong contacts who will turn to you for the information they need. Before you know it, your company name will be continually in front of your clients, you will become the foremost expert in your field and your profits will soar. □

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