

CONTACTING MEDIA

by: Ardis Bazyn

All businesses and organizations celebrate anniversaries and/or have special events. When you have a special event, how do you get it publicized? You may create simple flyers and hand them to regular customers, friends, and those you meet at networking events. A press release might catch the interest of an editor or reporter at a local newspaper, radio station, or TV station. In the following paragraphs, I'll pass on some tips I've learned about contacting the media for those special times.

Mail, faxes, emails, and personal phone calls can all be used to contact media outlets. Personal contact with reporters and editors is a great way to build relationships, but it requires following a few basic rules. You should not call a reporter or editor to simply tell them you're going to send them a media kit, news release, fax, or e-mail. They receive hundreds of these communications daily, so your call about one won't be welcomed by a busy reporter or editor. Daily newspapers are always busiest in the morning, so do not call before noon in order to make personal contact with an editor or reporter.

You should know exactly what you want to say ahead of time. Read it over until you feel comfortable with your script. You should tell the receptionist who you are, what the purpose of the call is, and ask them to transfer you to the best person. You must expect to wait until the receptionist tracks down the perfect contact in the media outlet.

You must remain pleasant but persistent. You may be directed to voice mail, so plan to leave a brief, but complete message. If you don't receive any reply after leaving two or three messages, accept that the editor or reporter isn't interested in following up on your call, and don't harass them.

It's important to keep a record of the calls that you've made, including the media outlet, individual you've contacted, and the date and time of your contact. Write down the reason for your call, including its purpose and content. These notes will prevent you from duplicating your work and will assist you when you receive a follow up call or other contact. Don't take unanswered messages personally.

Faxing is an efficient way to submit a single news release to selected media outlets. News releases can only be sent to appropriate media outlets. Spamming is illegal. For this reason, you must carefully consider the wisdom of sending a news release via fax to anyone. If you do fax a news release to an appropriate news outlet, keep the release to a single page of double-spaced type with no text boxes, illustrations, or other graphics that may tie up the fax machine and use excessive toner.

Although many editors and reporters accept contacts through e-mail, it's another possibly negative form of contact. The same rules against spamming apply to e-mail. Many media outlets will not accept or open e-mail attachments, because of dangerous computer viruses. You should not email numerous media outlets as part of your general media

efforts. If you do decide to send news releases via email, send the text of your news release directly in the e-mail message itself.

Use a descriptive subject line, so the recipient immediately understands the reason for your message. Do not send any content that could be perceived as advertising. If requested to stop sending messages to an email address, Make sure you take that address off your contact list.

You can call producers or journalists for TV or radio programs or interviews. However TV is very difficult unless you are involved in a very newsworthy event. If you do get a call-back about a possible interview or show on TV or radio, you must make sure to follow-up on the appointment. Do not change your mind, because the journalist immediately finalizes the placement on their end. The media business is built on trust, so you should never do anything to jeopardize that trust.

Prepare Talking Points in advance For the Pre-Interview with The Journalist. You want to appear knowledgeable about your area of expertise and the issues in discussion. Practice the message you want to convey so you can avoid stumbling.

Other possible ways to get pr are online. Many newspapers, TV stations, and local public officials have websites in which you can submit articles and events for a community calendar. If you wish to create a press event, you can circulate the time and date through these online sources as well as print media. You can look for local online media by checking to see if your local stations or newspapers have a website. You can also do an online search for online publications that may publish online articles of interest to their readers.

Sharing your message through media is not difficult once you decide to make the effort. It does take time to write a good press release or article and choose the perfect media to use. However, the more sources you contact, the easier it gets. It's a valuable learning experience.

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- Read other helpful tips to promote your business in my third book: *BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers or Motivate Employees?*

Order print copies from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or Borders as well as from my website. Currently, other formats are available from my website only.

TIPS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

By Ardis Bazyn

Do you feel nervous about making a presentation for a strange audience? How do you feel speaking with a Senator, Congressman, or local Representative? How do you handle interviews? Some people tell me they even find simple networking to be intimidating. I wrote the following tips to make your next interview, presentation, or networking event easier.

1. Practice speaking slowly. Most people talk faster when they are nervous.
2. When you know you will have to speak, plan ahead. Write a script or just make some notes. You will be less nervous and unlikely to make mistakes or forget important information.
3. Practice as often as time permits. Just running the key points through your mind while dressing or showering helps. Read through your talk before bedtime. Your subconscious will absorb it.
4. Record yourself making your presentation. It may help you notice undesirable habits...uhs and ands. Listen for mistakes.
5. Listen to yourself as you talk to friends, clients, and family. Get into the habit of noticing when you make statements that are unclear. Most of us can improve our communication to others.
6. When planning what to say, think about the points you wish to make as well as a personal story. Stories help create an emotional response.
7. Visualize yourself doing well. Imagine you are confident, know the right information, and feel great.
8. Eat a light meal ahead of time. An empty stomach or having too much to eat ahead of a presentation can be a distraction.
9. Have a glass or bottle of water near you. A dry mouth is common when you're nervous.
10. Take a few deep breaths before you start speaking to help you relax.
11. Smile at the audience before you start. They will smile back and help you feel relaxed.
12. Good eye contact with the audience helps them relate to you.
13. Focus on what you want the audience to learn rather than on what they think of you.

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UPDATES

My books are available for purchase on my website: www.bazyncommunications.com in several formats (print, audio cd or cassette, and brf format for notetakers). You can receive a discounted print copy of my third book by ordering it on my publisher's website: www.xlibris.com. BUILDING BLOCKS TO SUCCESS: Does the Image of Your Business Attract Customers and Motivate Employees?

Go to the author page and look for Ardis Bazyn or go to the book page and look for "Building Blocks to Success".

Coaching plans are available at a discounted fee if you indicate you read this newsletter. Contact me for more details.

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