

The Growing Power of Journalism

Yes, you read that correctly. Despite all the tales of the death of journalism due to the advent of the digital age, it just isn't so. Agreed, old school print, television and radio journalism has taken a hit, but for those journalists who have embraced the changes—and opportunities—that digital communication offers, the field is exciting and diverse.

Today, every traditional outlet (newspapers, television, and radio stations) has an online presence that is reaching new audiences in new ways. Now, seekers can check the publication's website for updates, request that stories about specific topics come right directly to email, follow breaking news and favorite journalists via their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

Once just a bit of ink on newsprint about things that happened yesterday, print journalism has expanded geometrically and through digital outlets has become dynamic and real-time.

Television and radio have likewise expanded to embrace digital outlets. If the reader is old enough, the thought that you could interact with a television or radio journalist *as they broadcast* was unimaginable. Today, it's commonplace.

Today's Journalism and Your Company's Public Relations

With the right PR professional, the reach of your PR campaign is broader than ever. Where once a press release was sent to local media outlets for print or broadcast consideration, today that same release may appear in any one—or several— of the following formats: standard article or news story, video clip, audio file, featured on the outlet's website with links to your company or organization, Facebook mention or on a Twitter feed, again, with those valuable links.

Multi-faceted and reaching more types of information consumers, journalists are still critical to strong Public Relations.

Not all journalists have embraced the breadth of digital offerings out there. When working with a journalist, it's important that your PR person assess their willingness and familiarity with the new tools available.

One thing never, ever changes in business. Strong personal relationships that involve clear communication, and yes, real "face time" are the bedrock of getting things done the way you want them to be. A string of email exchanges can often be handled and expanded upon by a meeting over coffee or at least a voice conversation.

The rapport you establish by investing time in your media contacts will serve you well when it comes to getting your Press Release out there in all the formats you wish.

Building a Strong Media Relationship

Here are some tips for making the most of your promotional contacts with journalists. First, know what you're asking for. This sounds like a given, but journalists often complain that they receive requests and

press releases that are vague and undeveloped. Your press release or other communications with the media should clearly set out what you want to see in print or on television about your company, event, position, or issue.

Approach the appropriate journalist. It's offensive for a journalist to receive a request for promotion of a product launch when their "beat" is strictly sports. It tells them that you haven't done your homework, not to mention that you've wasted your precious time sending information to someone that cannot assist you. Don't waste anyone's time. It's disrespectful, reflects badly, and closes a door that you may need one day.

Today's journalists are increasingly about community. They work hard to develop a persona that crosses all media. They have their own Facebook and Twitter followers. Know the specialties of the journalists you seek to connect with, and send them information that is within their field of interest. This ensures that your requests will be reviewed seriously.

Lastly, remember that a competent PR connection is of benefit to the journalist. With ever increasing time pressures, journalists are always on the lookout for good stories that fit their niche and are easy to tell. By being thorough in your pitch, you give a journalist what they need to tell your story well.