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**5 Steps to Making the Media Your Friend**

**By Lois Carter Fay, APR**

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The reporter is not your enemy, and he can easily be turned into your new best friend, just by following these simple steps.

1. Read the publication and know what it covers.

Whether you want to get on the front page of the business section in your newspaper or you hope to be the next star featured on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, it's important for you to get to know the media and what types of stories it covers. Certainly a business-to-business company isn't going to be featured on the cover of Rolling Stone. Why? Because that magazine covers the music and entertainment industry, not companies that sell widgets to other companies.

Don't waste your time with publications that don't cover your industry. There are several resources available to help you determine which media cover your industry or geographic location. Many can be found in your local library. Most are available either for an annual or a monthly fee. Some of these are Bacon's Media Directories ([www.bacons.com](http://www.bacons.com)); Standard Rate and Data Service ([www.srds.com](http://www.srds.com)); Gebbie Press All-in-One Media Directory ([www.gebbie.com](http://www.gebbie.com)); and Writer's Market ([www.writersmarket.com](http://www.writersmarket.com)). Your local chamber of commerce or Public Relations Society of America may also have a local or statewide media directory available for purchase.

Once you have made a list of the publications you think your company should be in, begin to find out more about them. You need to know the publication or broadcast station's "personality" to be able to successfully pitch a story to them. How do you do that? You read a minimum of six issues of the print publication, cover to cover, or you listen to a month's worth of the targeted television or radio program to get to know its focus and the trends it is following. You also obtain a media kit and review the demographics the kit provides.

Don't send news releases that are not pertinent to the publication's readership. Send only well-written, short releases with information that is obviously news about your company. Evaluate whether the "news" is really "advertising" before you write that release. Don't waste the reporter's time; he is busy.

## 5 Steps to Making the Media Your Friend

You will surely irritate him, and that will not be to your benefit!

2. Find out which reporters cover your industry.

Your research above will help you to determine which reporter, editor, or program director you should begin to get to know. Pay attention to which reporters are writing or speaking about your industry and start creating a database.

If contact information isn't included in the articles you are reading, look on the publication's website. It will often tell you which reporter you should contact and how you can do that.

3. Visit the reporters and get to know them.

Now that you know whom you should contact, begin to develop a relationship with them. Telephone those you would like to know and set up a time to meet. Because the media are often on deadline, it's best to introduce yourself and then ask, "Is this a good time to talk?"

When you do meet with the reporter, briefly tell him about yourself and the company you represent and then ask how you can help him. You are not there to pitch a story about your company. You are there to find out about the reporter and his needs. (Of course, you will come to the meeting prepared with a couple of ideas and a media kit, just in case the reporter asks you for this!)

Find out what's the best time to call, what information he would like to see about your company, and let him know that he can call you if he needs information on your company, industry or on a subject you are an expert.

Then, go back to your office, send him a brief thank-you note (mail or e-mail) and again offer your assistance. If he mentioned sources or ideas he needs, be sure to gather that information and provide it to him as soon as you can.

Update your database with all of the information you found out, including personal information. Does he have children? How many? Names? Does he cover other topics besides your industry? Which ones? Do you know anything about this? Can you be helpful to him? How long has he been at the publication? Whenever you find out more details about him, put it in your database. Then review it before you talk to him the next time.

4. Be truthful, open and honest.

The truth is always the best option. Never lie to a reporter; he will eventually find out and you will never earn back his faith. Be as open as you can in answering questions, and never say, "No comment." "No comment" to a reporter means you are trying to hide something. It would be better to say, "I don't know about that, but I can tell you..." and then discuss a positive aspect of the story. If you can have three or four talking points about your company, you'll be able to keep better control of the story. Just deftly bring the subject back to what you prefer to discuss.

## 5 Steps to Making the Media Your Friend

### 5. Be responsive and helpful.

When a reporter contacts you, he is usually under a strict time constraint. He may call you at 3:00 p.m. and have a 5:00 p.m. deadline. If you aren't available, or do not return the call promptly, you will miss out on the opportunity to be included in a story. The reporter will find another source to quote, and he may never call you again. Writers aren't much different than you and me—they will take the easy way out and call one or two available, reliable sources instead of expanding their network. You want to be that source.

If you see articles or find information that might interest the reporter, be sure to pass them on to him. He will begin to value the relationship and consider you a great source. This will help when you do pitch a story to him. And remember, make the reporter's job easier.

Always provide other sources if you can for any story you pitch. If you can hand the complete story to the reporter and he doesn't have to spend several frustrating hours finding additional sources, he will be very grateful.

Need More Help?

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### **Do You Have A Press Package?**

**By Sue and Chuck DeFiore**

How do you make a friend of the media? A press package can go a long way in helping you deal with the media. It allows you to have everything you need handy.

Many individuals in the media will ask you to send your press package to them, so it is very important to be sure to make one up and to keep it up to date.

What does a press package contain? Your biography Your picture Information on Your Company Press Releases Any articles written about you

Note: If you are a frequent speaker, you also want to have an updated itinerary in your press package of where you will be speaking.

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Interested in having your own successful, home based creative real estate investing business? Chuck and Sue have been helping folks start successful home based businesses for over 17 years, and we can help you too! To see how, visit

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Do You Have A Press Package?

Be Your Own Best Friend

Do You Really Need a Friend Quiz To Tell If Someone Is Your Friend?

Make the Media Your Friend

How To Use A Tell A Friend Script To Drive Traffic Today?

The Classified List

Press Release E-Manual

Web Audio Plus Software

Instant Unzip Software

Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual



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