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What Your Press Release Has in Common with Hurricane Katrina

By Susan Harrow

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Hurricanes happen. While you can't predict them, you can prepare in advance for the inevitable. While you can't always plan your press release when news breaks, most of the time forethought could be the thing that saves face in the whirlwind that's the media.

1. Prepare for disaster.

The best way to get ready for the unexpected is to expect it. When ordained Voodoo & Yoruba priestess Ava Kay Jones heard that Katrina was coming through New Orleans, She packed a few things, her bird Tweety, then she and a group of friends drove straight to Houston. Knowing that the media sometimes doesn't tell you the whole story when they invite you on a show is more typical than not. When Ava Kay was invited to be on 20/20 with John Stossel they didn't tell her it was going to be a show that poked fun at and debunked spiritual matters. When Stossel asked her to put a hex on him, she refused and instead did a spiritual blessing at a cemetery. One of her colleagues didn't fare so well and did as he was told. Bad idea. Know your boundaries and what you will and won't do. You're not a performing seal.

2. Have your systems in place.

One client of mine is raring to go. She wants me to get her press releases out in a big way, nationally ASAP. I've refused. Even though she's already being interviewed by major magazines she doesn't have the systems in place yet so she wouldn't maximize her publicity. Opportunities would be wasted.

First she needs simple things like having a newsletter sign up page on her website, her website store in running order (go here if you don't yet have store software:

<http://www.kickstartcart.com/app/default.asp?PR=31&ID=50856>

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to get started), a database set up

and/or fulfillment house for sending her products, prices and descriptions for speaking engagements etc. We need to get all of the basics up and running before we go public in a major way. After we do that we'll define the niche markets we want to target and write the press releases accordingly.

3. Be resourceful.

If one thing doesn't work, try another. Ava Kay Jones waited in line for three days in Houston for assistance from the Red Cross. Every day they sent thousands of people home telling them to come back the next day...and the next, and the next.

When my sweetie and I flew her here to visit as a respite from the storm. Ava Kay and I went to the Red Cross in Marin County, but the door was blockaded and there was a sign that stated we had to go to San Francisco or Oakland for assistance.

We drove the hour to Oakland and we waited patiently as they asked inane questions about Ava Kay's

past, filled out 5 separate forms by hand, and then asked us to get them a bill to prove her residence in New Orleans as her passport wasn't good enough.

We had to fax a bill (thankfully, she brought some with her and my sweetie was around to do it) in order to get a debit card for a measly \$360, which wouldn't be operative for 24–48 hours and must be used within a month.

But first we had to wait for the fax machine to be fr.e.e and then it was broken and had to be fixed. Can you imagine the thousands of people in Houston and throughout the gulf states spending 1.5 + hours getting paperwork filled out to get a pittance? I found out from my mother that one of her friend's who volunteered to help out is being flown from California to Baton Rouge and put up in a hotel. That's where all our Red Cross money is going, not to the people who need it.

When things don't go as planned for you when you send out a press release have a Plan B. And then be willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done—which is to get your message out to the audience you want to help.

Do you want to get more media attention? Learn how to create soundbites that sell and handle any print, radio and TV appearance with ease and grace effectively. [Link to soundbite teleclasses and transcript \(new product\).](#)

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Susan Harrow, CEO of

PRSecrets.com

and

BookedOnOprah.com

, is a top media coach, marketing

strategist and author of **Sell Yourself Without Selling Your Soul** (HarperCollins), **The Ultimate Guide to Getting Booked on Oprah**, and **Get a 6– Figure Book Advance.** Clients include Fortune 500 CEOs, bestselling authors and entrepreneurs who have appeared on Oprah, 60 Minutes, NPR, and in TIME, USA Today, Parade, People, O, NY Times, WSJ, and Inc.

News2: Changing of the Guard – Old News Technology Bows to New Technology

By Dan McTaggart

It all started during hurricane Katrina...

It can be compared to Reality TV. There was a weird time during Hurricane Katrina when Network News had to cover the hurricane via a user's blog because that was the only live coverage available.

So that was like Reality TV only it was "Reality News". Not produced, just live and put up. Basically the Network news or production news was unable to cover the story as well as a person at the scene, hooked up to the Internet with a webcam and a Blog.

This guy had awesome videos of the storm that he kept putting up on his website and they kept showing them on CNN. So as you watched CNN, you were actually watching someone's blog.

Instead of "Network News or produced news" this is news as it comes in. The Internet was designed to keep working even during a nuclear disaster. Network News doesn't have that kind of technical reliability.

This is a case of the old infrastructure not working, despite how much it cost. A citizen journalist, with a webcam and an Internet connection had more access.

The question is, what if Network News had a source they could go to that had the means for anyone to put up a news story immediately for access by the media?

What is available now is audio, video and text without uploading anything. All you have to do is simply enter the URL for your MP3 audio or FLV video file and submit your text. That's it!

NewsMediaRelease.com replaces traditional press release services online,

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which are prone to misuse because the information is held in a queue for 12–24 hours before release, whereas NewsMediaRelease.com is truly fresh, off the wire, breaking news.

Instead of paying a "contribution" from \$81 to \$600 over and over, the customer only has to pay one time for unlimited releases with audio, video, social bookmarking and search engine optimization built in.

New Media Release company offers advanced distribution of Press Releases and News Articles using advanced search engine optimization, audio, video and social bookmarking. Customers pay one time for unlimited media releases.

Media Frenzy is a collaboration between Dan McTaggart of

<http://www.firefoxie.net>

and Marinda Stuver of

<http://www.e-spectations.com>

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With Marinda's vast knowledge of SEM/SEO and Public Relations and Dan McTaggart's years of SEM/SEO and Technical Experience, the professional media distribution system Media Frenzy was the perfect blend, a PR and Technical Knockout.

Keyword phrases can be "tagged" which highlights them for special attention via Technorati. Links to bookmarking sites like Furl and Del.icio.us are also available to increase popularity. The clearest, most efficient video on the Internet can be included simply by pushing a button and filling in the URL plus the height and width of the FLV video file. This is the introduction of Video Tagging on the Internet.

Everything else is done for the customer by the Media Frenzy system. Google is notified, RSS feeds are generated and pings to thousands of RSS feed sites are done in just a few minutes, automatically.

Media enquiries are welcome.

Dan McTaggart is a communications specialist and co-owner of

<http://www.newsmediarelease.com>

along with Marinda Stuver

a PR Specialist from South Africa.



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