

Module 5

This module will cover;

- Defining what is the media (from my notes?)
- What traditional media is
- Definition of the different forms of traditional media
- How to work with traditional media

Understanding traditional media and its role in a PR Strategy

The media is the most powerful marketing tool in the world today. In fact, we spend more time 'consuming' the media than we do actually 'talking' to one another.

As our society becomes even more open and 'accountable', it is increasingly likely the activities of people and organisations in the public eye will be questioned by the media.

Despite the fact the media is a ruthless opinion maker, this should not be seen as a threat. Media attention also provides the opportunity for alert organisations to send the right messages to their target audiences.

Positive exposure through the media is, because of the in-built credibility of the media itself, far more beneficial than paid advertising. It costs virtually nothing, except time.

Negative exposure or a poor interview performance on radio, television or with the press can do considerable -sometimes irreparable - damage to an organisation, to its professional standing, its image and its goodwill among its own market.

Recently the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) attacked the Crawford Report (review of Australian sport) as un-Australian, damaging to Olympic sport and as denigrating past Olympians because the report discussed the possible reduction of funding to Olympic sports. Such a strong vitriolic attack probably damaged the AOC's image more in the end, rather than the Crawford Report. (or words similar to this?)

The media remains one of the most important avenues via which audiences can be reached. It is estimated at least half of the news stories covered in any paper today has been initiated by a public relations person.

Next time you're reading a newspaper or magazine, think about whether you are reading a news-generated story, journalist generated or public relations generated story.

Communicating with the Media

Who to Talk To

Before you even pick up the phone or send a media release you must know where you would like to see your story appear. More importantly, it must be relevant to that type of media. For example, a consumer story would work best on *A Current Affair* whereas a sports story may be

Print: what happened yesterday
TV: what happened today
Radio: what is happening now
On-line: what is rumoured to be happening or just happening

best for the news or *Today* show.

In a newspaper or magazine the story need to be appropriate for that section and relevant and interesting to the audience. It is important you send your story to the right person. If a journalist receives information irrelevant to their area, it is most likely the information will end up in the bin rather than passed on to the correct journalist. You must,

therefore, research your media well. In the case of your local paper, the information will most likely go straight to the editor, sports editor or chief of staff. However, in a metro newspaper, you need to go to the appropriate writer or section editor.

Television

Apart from sports shows, sports news and sports networks, the person you would generally speak to in a television programme is the producer or researcher. Knowing whom to contact comes most from experience and common sense. PR opportunities in television include:

- Major news bulletins
- Current affairs
- Children's
- Food and lifestyle
- Community Service Announcements
- Reality television programmes

Radio

For radio the rule is simple. Unless you are working with a sports programme, you always contact the producer of the programme you are targeting. You may wish to send material addressed to the presenter, for example, Karen Tighe (ABC radio), however the producer is the one you speak to and negotiate your story with. PR opportunities in radio include:

- Current affairs programmes
- Talk back programmes
- Sports programmes
- Sports segments
- Community service programmes

Print – Newspapers

There is a myriad of contacts within the major newspapers from the Editor to a specialist writer. These include:

- General News
- Sport
- Women's pages
- Columns
- Sports pages - on larger newspapers journalists tend to specialize on specific sports, so research and know your contact.



- What's On Listings
- Letters to the Editor
- Environmental
- Health
- Fitness

Print Magazines

Magazines are a great medium from general interest through to specialist publications. Some include:

- Sport
- Health
- Fitness
- Travel
- Business
- Fashion
- Trade

What Journalists Want

Journalists want a good story. This is because newspapers need to sell and TV news programmes need to rate.

News is anything that will make readers stop and buy a newspaper. The basic categories are power, sex, money, disaster or what is new. Proximity plays a big part in determining news factor.

Journalists want their stories quickly and simply. For more complex issues they appreciate background briefings and remember the bigger the story, the longer your lead time should be.

Some basic categories of what makes a good story are:

- Exclusives
- Conflict
- Revolutionary/change
- Celebrity Profile
- Access to good spokespeople
- Good quotes
- Great photos
- Timely
- Human interest
- Extended news story
- Case study
- Road testing
- Proximity or local angle/significance
- Warningthis could happen if
- Gets people talking/shouting

Deadlines

It is crucial you are aware of the deadlines of the particular media you are trying to access. Contacting a television newsroom after the news has gone to air or one hour before the news is due to go to air will not result in media coverage of the issue unless your story is HUGE! Similarly, contacting a morning newspaper office at night is too late. Journalists need time to research, write and produce the story you are offering them. Make sure you give them that time.

The first media outlet to contact in most cases should be radio - they have news on the hour and sometimes half-hour. The nature of radio means it can break into almost any programme at a minute's notice with a good news story. Television deadlines aren't as early or as frequent as radio but breaking stories can cut into programmes and the potential exists to go live. Newspapers and magazines have the least flexible deadlines. To find out particular deadlines of specific publications or sections of a publication, just call the newsroom concerned.

Stories won't always end up the way you anticipate -sometimes they won't even get a run. News editors may think something else is more important to their audience or not like the finished product as much as the original idea. Never think of the time you have spent with one or more journalist as wasted time. You have cultivated a contact who will appreciate your help and remember it for the future.