

How to Become a Heavily Quoted Source *Reprinted from Joan Stewart, The Publicity Hound*

Ever wonder why your competitors keep cropping up in coverage--whether it's in national dailies, on big-time TV broadcast or even in local business magazines--while your company's relegated to the back of the trade?

The fact is, a lot of media pickup isn't always driven by stellar press releases, says Dan Forbush, president and founder of ProfNet*, a PR newswire service that puts journalists in touch with experts and sources for breaking stories.

“There are two essential approaches to media placement. One is to persuade reporters that your organization has news worth reporting - this approach is deliberate and release driven. The other is to persuade reporters that there are individuals within your organization who - because of their industry perspective or some form of expertise--are worth interviewing. This approach is opportunistic and pitch driven.”

How to Pay the Game

Here are Dan's tips for effectively playing the expert game:

1. **Play reporter.**
“Forget for a moment your own organization's objectives, and read the world as a reporter would,” Forbush advises. “Given your beat and the readers you must satisfy, what topics are of interest? What angles do you find fresh and provocative? With which sources--with what expertise--do you want to be in touch?”

2. **Become a matchmaker.**
“Having performed that analysis, you can now lay the role of matchmaker,” he continues. “Ask yourself, ‘Which individuals within my organization or my clientele can satisfy these reporter needs? And what presentations will be most persuasive?’”

3. **Identify ideas for the masses vs. tailored pitches.**
“When you write a news release, you're packaging ideas for reporters in masses,” Forbush says, “but when you write a pitch you're tailoring an idea for a single reporter. You're saying ‘I think you'll be interested in this person because’--and you have a good reason for thinking so because you've done your homework. You've read the publication, or you've watched the show, and you know what works and doesn't. Via Lexis-Nexis or Google, you've researched the reporter's work, and you're familiar with his or her recent reporting.”

4. **Adopt a long-term perspective.**
“In all of your relationships with reporters, adopt a long-term perspective,” he cautions. “You should craft your pitch carefully in such a way that, even if the

reporter doesn't take you up on your offer this time, you can be confident your next pitch will be read. This helps cultivate your standing as a reliable source.

5. **Perform an expert audit.**

"You can be reliable source only if you have a thorough knowledge of your organization and have identified everyone who can be helpful to reporters and how," Forbush says. "For this reason, when you join a new organization or take on a new client, you should always perform an 'expert audit.' Sit down with colleagues or clients and identify who can talk effectively about what."

6. **Develop platforms for spokespeople.**

"By profiling your spokesperson(s) on your websites and expert resources for reporters, you provide easy accessibility to these experts, Forbush says. "If you have an expert who can speak on a 'hot topic' that is currently in the news, consider sending out a media advisory alerting reporters to the availability of your spokesperson, and his or her position on the topic," he suggests.

*ProfNet, a service of PRNewswire, is dedicated to linking reporters quickly and conveniently with expert sources through its subscription-based service. Learn more at www.Profnet.com