

Building Media Contacts

- I. Should be called “Becoming a source for Media”
 - a. That’s what we’re trying to do. Become a resource for stories for journalists.
 - b. Most journalists will only contact you when they need you
 - i. If they get in touch with you, it’s because they need something.
 1. Find out what it is
 2. Decide if you can give it
 - c. Local/Hyper Local Media
 - i. Who are they
 1. Community newspaper
 2. Radio
 3. Sometimes regional magazine crossover
 - ii. What sort of content is best for them
 1. Smaller stories
 - d. Editors decide what stories get assigned, get printed and how much coverage something gets.
 - i. Understand they make these decisions based on a few factors
 1. How much value it has to the readers
 2. How much impact it has on staff.
 - ii. It’s always a balance of
 1. What can they afford to cover?
 2. What can they afford not to cover?
 3. What do they absolutely have to cover?
 - iii. Learn those answers and you will pitch accurately

iv. Understand those pressures and you will know where to direct your resources.

II. Define Your Goals / Create Media Lists

- a. Your best chance to develop media contacts exists with your local publications and broadcasts. Learn about the writers
 1. Does your business or organization exist on a beat? Find out who would normally cover travel, tourism or hospitality in your area. Depending on the size of the area and the publication it may be a business reporter or a General Assignment reporter
 2. Set up a meet and greet over coffee or lunch. Be prepared to pay, but be prepared for them to not accept.
 3. Ask them how you can help them as a reporter and be prepared to serve as a source on stories not directly related to you.
- b. Regional media is generally more difficult than local because they cover a much larger area and may not be available or willing to meet everyone
 1. Create a list of regional publications you want to target.
 2. Isolate individual staffers who would cover you
 3. Consider funding a media blitz to their area
 - a. Always bring new news to media
- c. National media is very difficult to have a relationship with
 1. Subscribe to list serves and lead services that provide queries from media. A great free service is www.helpareporterout.com
 2. Look for opportunities to open the line of communication with national-level media on queries
 - a. Understand most national/international tier media typically don't use the same sources too often.
- d. Create a target media list to identify your top publications
 1. Be realistic in the publications that you can offer content too
 2. Don't be scared to pitch off your list.
 3. Don't have too lofty of goals or aspirations; just because a publication has a great advertising equivalency doesn't mean it's a good fit.
 4. Update your list as your area develops or your story changes.

5. Update your list based on story placements
 - a. If you earn a top-tier placement, it's a typical they will not cover you again for awhile.

III. Press Trips

- a. Inviting media to visit your area at no expense to them is the single best way to create media relationships
 - i. Use your target list to determine which writers to invite
 - ii. Always give writers plenty of notice for a trip
 1. Last minute invitations feel insulting and degrading
 2. Travel writers are busy people who travel for a living. It can be less glamorous than it sounds and their schedules fill up fast.
 - iii. Consider individual visits customized to the writer
 - iv. Don't be scared to ask to be involved
 - v. Partner with other DMO/CVB to share cost
 - vi. Use Travel Oregon as a resource and ask to be involved in their PR effort
- b. Create an entire experience for the writer
 - i. Remember you may be part of a larger story depending on the publication
 - ii. The most inspirational travel stories focus on themes more than individual places, properties or businesses
- c. Help them find the hidden stories of insiders or locals
 - i. Seek out unique personalities to introduce writers to.
 1. Look for genuine people with good stories instead of polished sales pitches. Most writers see right through that – they do this stuff all the time.
- d. Deliver on your promises
 - i. Don't tell a writer your area has world-class shopping unless it really is world-class. Avoid hyperbole as it leads to mistrust.
- e. Don't expect immediate results, don't expect any results

i. Writers are taking a risk by using their time to visit you. You are taking a risk by covering their expenses. It's even. The best PR efforts come from DMO/CVBs offering writers the chance to research an area BEFORE they pitch a story or agree to coverage.

IV. Maintain Relationships

- a. Don't start a PR or media campaign until you have the resources to follow it through
- i. Don't start pitching offering resources before you have any
 - ii. Be prepared to work late and pull out the stops to help reporters
 - 1. Going the extra mile and helping on deadline creates trust and credibility
 - iii. Always offer new story angles for writers
 - 1. The goal is to have reporters and writers come to you for ideas to pitch their editors
 - a. Under this situation the ideas appear like they are more organic even though you control message.
 - iv. If you don't know the answer say so, don't ever say something for the record unless you know it's true.
 - v. Look for every opportunity to be valuable to the journalist. Those are the sources writers keep on speed dial. They look for people who help them write or help them sell stories. This is their job.

V. Journalists need us too

- i. Don't forget that more than ever journalists need good PR people to work with.
- ii. Don't forget when you do PR that the journalist is also your client. Sometimes the journalists needs and your wants don't always line up
- 1. Pitch stories that aren't in your area if it makes you more valuable to writers. Remember you want them coming back to you.
- iii. Always be thinking of the next story. A good relationship will yield many stories over many years.
- iv. Don't ever expect immediate results. Sometimes the best PR efforts take years to develop.