

Six Keys to Working Successfully with the Press

Timing. Know when and how reporters want to be contacted. They get a million phone calls, faxes and emails a day. Make your contact stand out by making it convenient for the reporter.

Speed. Promptly return all reporter's phone calls. Reporters are often working on tight timetables and may be quickly approaching deadline. Once the deadline passes, you may never have another chance to contribute to that story, or be used as a source for that reporter.

Attitude. The reporter controls an important avenue for you to get your message to your audience. Treat them with professional courtesy, while being as friendly and helpful as possible. Be mindful that the reporter is gathering information for a story, so say only what you'd be comfortable reading about in the paper.

Content. Answer every question as factually as possible, while putting the most reasonably favorable light on the situation. If you don't know the answer, offer to find out the information and get back to the reporter.

Preparation. Be prepared for every encounter you have with the press, whether it is a formal interview, a tradeshow or an impromptu call. Know the two key points you want to make and rehearse the answers to the ten most likely questions, especially including the ones you'd rather they didn't ask.

Background. The reporter can't be an expert in every arena, so help them understand the value your company or product delivers, why this information is news and how it fits into the big picture.