Five PR Tips to Never Forget

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Do you have a great idea for a story, but no clue how to get it in the news? Are you tired of pitching press releases the news media simply ignores?

After over a century of combined experience in the news media, Texas public relations firm Real News PR has a scoop for you: the media needs good stories. But most stories are pitched so poorly they are lost in the blizzard of faxes that blanket every newsroom.

Here are five steps to increase your chances of getting covered that even most Dallas public relation companies don't know:

1) Be Unusual

The old adage about "Man bites dog" still holds true. The news doesn't cover what's normal. It covers the abnormal. Often times, Texas public relations firms make the mistake of pitching stories which most people simply aren't interested in.

PR whiz Carolyn Alvey knew this when she was trying to raise money for a charity several years ago. Instead of holding a garage sale, she sent out a press release announcing a "Celebrity Garage Sale." Everything from Bob Hope's old golf clubs to Roger Staubach's long-neglected neckties was for sale. By making an ordinary garage sale extraordinary, the media was instantly sold on the story.

2) Be Visual

Reporters tell stories with pictures. If the pictures aren't there, chances are the reporters won't be either.

Even the most non-visual story can be made visual if you're creative. A dog biscuit business? Boring. A dog birthday party complete with doggie guests and party hats? Now you're barking up the right tree.

3) Choose the Right Reporter

Perhaps the most common mistake even some Dallas public relation companies make is trying to sell a good story to the wrong person. Most reporters have a specialty, like "crime" or "business."

So, seek out the reporter who will have the most to benefit from your story. Start studying the news. Before you call a TV station or try and pitch the paper, become familiar with a reporter's work.

4) Write like a Reporter

If we were going to send a press release to a reporter, we'd write the kind of headline that a newspaper would run. And we'd make the rest of the release so conversational that a TV anchor could read it right on the air.

Why is this so important? A major market newsroom gets thousands of press releases from Texas public relations firms every day. Often the decision on whether to cover your story is made in a matter of seconds. Many times that well-crafted sentence in the third paragraph of your press release is never read.

5) Wait for Slow News

The holidays are the slowest "news times" of the year. When government offices are closed, so are most of our sources. Take advantage of it.

There you go. Now you're armed with knowledge that even some well-paid Dallas public relation companies don't practice. If your idea is unique, visual, and pitched to the right person when the supply of news is running thin, you're in!

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