

Fortify Conference 2018

Dealing With The Media: Handling Queries

- You can be faced by the press or captured on social media at any time.
- Take this as an opportunity, but sometimes dealing with the media can seem tricky, and other are more successful than others.

What Kind of Media Do You Want Your Message In?

With media, there are 3 broad types:

1. **Paid media:** also known as advertising. With ads, nothing appears unless it's paid for by you
2. **Owned media:** your website, blog, your videos, newsletters, and social media channels
3. **Earned media:** meaning no money changes hands. It is people who can help tell others what you are doing: PR people, members of the media, or brand ambassadors.
Earned media is purely editorial content – public relations pros secure it with members of the media who tell others about you in print, online, or in broadcast: radio/podcasts or TV.

Why Would the Media Contact You? (Here is the potential for earned media)

In addition to information, for confirmation:

- Prices, SKU numbers, availability
- They call for photos!
- Comments or quotes
- For “expert” opinion
- For reaction
- Clarification
- An update on facts

Make sure you have the tools at hand to be responsive

- Bottle shots
- Current product information sheets
- A press kit (this is an informational backgrounder on your business and its people and products)
- *Good photos* (that can be a seminar all on its own, but here are a few tips:
 - *No sunglasses or logos on clothing (unless they are your brand)*
 - In focus and in high resolution. This is key – at the bare minimum, at least 2 or 3 MB in size. The bigger the better
- Bonus points if you have “B Roll” (video without sound or logos that show an overview of your property)

If you have a limited budget, the most important spend you could make is to make sure that you have your information and images on your website in a way that they can be easily accessed. Then press can DIY if they need to.

So when they call – be prepared!

- Know your ‘elevator pitch’: your story and your key messages
- Know your stance and how to deliver it concisely
- You should be able to deliver your main media message in 30 seconds. Drill down to the core so you can say it over and over
- If you are not sure of how to do this, get trained. It is money well spent.

When media does reach out – what is the checklist?

First, get the following essential information from the reporter:

1. Name of reporter, phone number and media outlet
2. Reporter’s deadline
3. Focus of requested interview
4. Other interview subjects for the story
5. Amount of time required, location etc

THEN, if this is a phone call, tell them you need 15 minutes and then you will call them right back. This will give you time to get organized and your messaging straight.

Make sure the media know to go to YOU

Take note of perhaps what is the most important thing of all: responsiveness and reliability

- Be responsive – answer that email or phone call
- Have your contact readily available on your website, and also your information without a password
- Follow through – do what you say you were going to do when you said you would do it
- When the media know that they can rely on you, they will come to you again when there is an opportunity.

Note that all of this is the way to *respond* to media queries.

Proactive outreach is a different PR tactic altogether, but the key takeaway in either case is that you need to have the same messaging nailed down, and the same tools on hand.

Town Hall Brands, based in Vancouver BC, works with companies to both build and promote their brands. Their key competencies are strategy, branding, graphic design, PR and social media.

The basics like bottle shots, tech sheets, and media training are all services offered, in addition to complete branding and marketing and media relations campaigns.

With more than 20 years of experience, their team is a great choice for any brands who need a refresh, or to start from scratch. Learn more on how your brand can be brought to life when you email [Leeann Froese leeann@townhallbrands.com](mailto:leeann@townhallbrands.com) or visit www.townhallbrands.com