

# HOW TO GET YOUR STORY TOLD

By Karen Friedman

Have you ever written the greatest press release of all time, only to discover no one noticed? Have you ever invited the media to a wonderful event, but no one showed? What about the time when a reporter did interview you, but it didn't come out the way you intended? Or what about that day you panicked when uninvited reporters showed up at your front door?

At one time or another, every industry finds itself in the public eye. Willingly, or unwillingly, employees are quoted, interviewed or become the subject of radio talk shows. This can be disruptive, unsettling and can have potentially negative consequences if you don't have the skills and confidence to communicate your message. It doesn't have to be that way.

Before you know it, the Republican National Convention will be in full swing -- drawing 15,000 journalists from all over the world to our city. Philadelphia, its hospitality industry and its people will be in the spotlight day after day. Hundreds of stories will saturate newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs, thirsty for good stories about the people who live and work here.

What a wonderful opportunity for PCVB members to shine!

Let's face it, most companies pay big bucks for publicity. A front-page article in Monday's business section can work wonders for the pocketbook. However, what good is that publicity if you can't get your message across? All too often, companies fail to see the big picture. It's not enough to write a great press release. It's not enough to orchestrate a memorable event.

First and foremost, reporters are looking to satisfy their own needs, not yours. They wear the shoes of their readers and viewers. While you want to tell them all about your services and accomplishments, their goal is to deliver a story that will keep an audience tuned in.

To help you get off on the right foot, follow these simple guidelines:

- ◆ **Give accurate and truthful information.** If reporters know they can trust you, they'll come back time and time again.
- ◆ **Understand the differences between TV radio and print.** Readers, audiences and listeners feel first and think later. That's why reporters want to capture the emotions of the people they interview.
- ◆ **Be sensitive to deadlines.** If a reporter calls and you don't respond quickly, the reporter often doesn't have time to wait for you. They'll just find someone else.
- ◆ **Accessibility counts.** If you agree to a TV interview at your hotel, don't tell the photographer he can't take pictures. That's like telling a newspaper reporter not to take notes.
- ◆ **Match your message to the medium.** If it's visual, think TV. If it's lengthy and involves audience discussion, perhaps a radio talk show is advisable. If it's filled with facts and details, think print.

Finally, the media won't notice you if they don't know about you. If you have an interesting story to tell, call them. Reporters are hungry for stories. Before you pick up the phone however, remember to think about their needs. What can you do to help them? How can you make it mean something to their audience? Is your story appropriate for the medium? If you spend a few minutes thinking through these questions, you can make your story stand out.

---

Karen Friedman brings 20 years of on-air television experience to media and communications training and consulting. Her Philadelphia area company, **Karen Friedman Enterprises** prepares people to take advantage of media interviews, presentations and public appearances. She can be reached at: 610-292-9780 or through her website at <http://www.karenfriedman.com>.

Copyright © 2001, **Karen Friedman Enterprises**. These articles are the property of **Karen Friedman Enterprises** and may not be reprinted or reproduced without the permission of Karen Friedman.