



## Part III: The Publics

### Chapter Nine: Media



### Get ready for a new century!

- The good old days of conventional media, dominated by a few networks and truth-minded reporters, are a relic of the past.
- Today's media is fragmented, omnipresent (universal), and run by journalists who may be aggressive and opinionated.
- Competition has driven many journalists to compromise traditional standards of truth and objectivity.



## Print is still the number-one medium

How can this be?

- Most newspapers and magazines still use news releases.
- Newspaper circulation has fallen, yet major newspapers are still hugely powerful.
- Newspapers dominate the nation's news schedule, and are used by bloggers and Internet users.
- ❖ Yet all is not well...

Many people are unhappy with the media. In a recent poll of American public:

- 61 percent think news coverage is biased.
- 53 percent think a news story using unnamed sources shouldn't be published.
- 43 percent think the press has too much freedom.

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## Objectivity in the media

- This is the traditional goal of journalism: fairness and neutrality in reporting the news.
- PR practitioners always represent a client, an organization or a point of view.
- Both sides should consider themselves to be "friendly adversaries," not "bitter enemies."
- ❖ However, some executives fail to understand the essential difference between the media and their own organizations. That is:
  - The reporter wants the story, whether it's good or bad.
  - Organizations want things to be presented in the best light.
- ❖ That's why many executives distrust the media, and consider journalists to be the enemy.

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## The Internet factor

- The Internet is a double-edged sword: cutting-edge and immediate, but at times unreliable and a threat to good journalism.
- Journalists consult blogs and other Internet sources on a daily basis for research and reporting.
- PR practitioners have no choice: they must harness this powerful medium.
- The key is still fairness and professionalism for all.



## Dealing with the media:

You must orchestrate relationships between your organization and the media. An organization must establish a philosophy for dealing with the media, keeping in mind the following principles:

- A reporter is a reporter
- You are the organization
- There is no standard reporter
- Treat journalists professionally
- Don't sweat the skepticism: journalists aren't paid to ask nice questions.
- Don't "buy" a journalist
- Become a trusted source
- Talk when not "selling". Share information with journalists, even when it has nothing to do with your company.
- Don't expect "news" agreement
- Don't cop an attitude: don't have an attitude with reporters.
- Never lie
- Read the paper!



## Attracting publicity

Why do so many people confuse publicity with advertising?  
The two are vastly different!

### Advertising:

- is a paid message prepared by a sponsor.
- enables you to control size, content, location, reach, and frequency.

### Publicity:

- costs only staff time and effort – about 10% of advertising.
- is much more credible than advertising, due to third-party media endorsement.



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- In advertising, because you pay for your ad, you have control of content, size, location, reach, and frequency.
- In publicity, you do not have control of any of these elements; you must earn everything, including how a story is covered; how much is covered; and where it may appear, if it appears at all.
- Advertising costs considerably more than publicity, which while not free, has minimal costs. The rough rule of thumb is that publicity costs about 10 percent of what advertising expenditures are.
- Because publicity appears in news rather than in an advertisement, it implicitly carries more credibility because it received so-called third-party endorsement from the news sources using it.



## Value of publicity

For any organization, publicity makes great sense for:

- Announcing a new product or service
- Re-energizing an old product
- Explaining a complicated product
- Projects with little or no budget
- Enhancing the organization's reputation
- Crisis response



## Pitching publicity

❖ It is the activity of trying to place positive publicity in a periodical-of converting publicity to news. The following hints may help achieve placement of a written release:

- Know deadlines for each media outlet
- Generally, write, don't call
- Direct the release to a specific person or editor
- Determine how the reporter prefers contact
- Don't badger
- Use exclusives, but be careful
- When you call, do your own calling
- Don't send clips of other stories about your client
- Develop a relationship
- Never lie – this is the cardinal rule!



## Online publicity

Online media work is still a “relationship business.”

Here are eight key online publicity vehicles:

- News releases
- Announcements
- Links
- Newsletters
- Online libraries
- Public appearances
- Promotions
- Events

❖ *And remember, it's the same as with print media..... The closer you are to online reporters, the more fairly they will treat you.*



## Dealing with the wires

- Wire services are mandatory vehicles for delivering the news.
- The Associated Press has 240 bureaus and 15,000 clients worldwide.
- Financial wires include Dow Jones, Reuters, and Bloomberg.
- Paid wires include PR Newswire, Business Wire, and Internet Wire.

Because competition for publicity is so stiff, all organizations should consider using paid wire services.



## Measuring publicity

Once you have distributed press materials, it's critical that you measure the results of your publicity. These print and online services can help:

- Media directories
- Press monitoring bureaus
- Broadcast transcription services
- Media distribution services
- Content analysis services

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## Electronic Media

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.....

Television is still the “800-pound gorilla!”

A recent study revealed these daily media habits:

- Television: 241 minutes
- Computer: 136 minutes
- Internet: 93 minutes
- Music: 65 minutes
- Telephone: 42 minutes
- Print media: 33 minutes
- VCR/DVD: 33 minutes
- Newspapers: 12 minutes
- Game console: 12 minutes

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## Other 21<sup>st</sup>-century media trends

- Network news has been outpaced by cable news channels, which hum at a 24/7 pace.
- World events run in one continuous loop, exposing viewers to multiple acts of chaos and violence each day.
- Specialized cable channels offer everything from food and fashion, to weather and history.
- Talk radio is a massive social and political force.

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## 24/7 television news

- Video-based news has overwhelmed society.
- Much of the credit for the rise of TV news goes to Ted Turner, who founded CNN in the 1970s.
- The growth of cable TV has given PR practitioners many new publicity avenues.
- However, it can also be a minefield for bad publicity!

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## Areas of electronic media relations

- Television interviews
- Video news releases
- Satellite media tours
- Public service announcements
- Video conferences
- Talk radio

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## Handling television interviews

- Although nerve-wracking, TV interviews can be a potent and persuasive publicity tool. Follow these guidelines:
- 1. Prepare. Know main points, audience, and reporter.
- 2. Be yourself. Appear to be relaxed and happy.
- 3. Be open and honest. TV magnifies everything.
- 4. Be brief. Get to your point; avoid jargon.
- 5. Play it straight. Don't get "cute" with humor or mannerisms.

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## Handling television interviews... (cont'd)

- 6. Dress for the occasion. Be conservative; avoid bold patterns.
- 7. Don't assume the interviewer is out to get you.
- 8. Don't think everything you say will be aired.
- 9. Don't let the interviewer dominate. Control the interview.
- 10. Don't say "no comment." It sounds evasive.
- 11. Do stop. They may leave the cameras running!



## Video news releases (VNRs)

- VNRs are:
  - news releases in video format.
  - used to handle breaking news, press conferences, and news announcements.
  - often delivered by satellite directly to TV newsrooms when breaking news occurs.
  - delivered on DVD to broadcasters if they are feature-based or "evergreen."



## VNR caveats

- VNRs are expensive. They must be produced and distributed professionally. Ask yourself:
  - Is a VNR needed?
  - How much time do we have?
  - How much will we have to spend?
  - What obstacles must be considered (weather, key people)?
  - Is video really the best way to communicate this story?

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## Ethical considerations in VNR use

- VNRs have been labeled as “fake news.”
- The public may not be able to tell the difference.
- Stations may not identify the VNR sponsor.

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## Satellite media tours (SMTs)

- SMTs:
  - are the 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent of the sit-down, studio interview.
  - are used when interviewees can't be on location.
  - simplify logistics by utilizing preset interviews, conducted between the spokesperson and TV station personalities around the world.

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## Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

- PSAs are:
  - TV and/or radio spots, 10-60 seconds long.
  - run at no cost to the sponsor. Nonprofits are active PSA users.
  - grouped as follows:
    - public affairs: information about environmental or public policy issues, such as voter registration campaigns.
    - public relations: information about free-of-charge government, association, or corporate services, such as blood drives.
    - marketing communications: information about safety, health, or lifestyle issues within a context that allows brand identification and even promotion of products and services in a generic way, such as in the areas of food, fitness, and nutrition.

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## Writing PSAs

- PSAs are written in “punchy and pointed” advertising copy style.
- The challenge is to:
  - select the essential information
  - discard unnecessary information
  - persuade the listener to take desired action
- ❖ Broadcasters use the following criteria in determining which PSAs make the air:
  1. Sponsorship.
  2. Relevance of the message to the community.
  3. Message design. The more imaginative and original, the better.
    - Above all, your honesty and integrity is critical.

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## An example of a typical 20-second PSA

- “President Bush has asked all Americans to volunteer their time for the service of others. By giving of yourself, you are helping to improve yourself and your community, and are doing your part to make a difference in the world.
- “The Volunteers of America need your help. Sign up today, and make someone’s life a lot more fulfilling—yours. This message is brought to you by the Advertising Council.”

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## Growth of talk radio

- Each week, 15 million people listen to talk radio.
- 17% of all adults tune in; the audience is mostly male, middle aged, well educated, and conservative.
- Talk radio airs the voices of “everyday people;” it has become the “town meeting” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Talk radio is still virgin territory for PR practitioners.

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## Securing radio publicity

- Generate a strong, focused message.
- Localize; tailor to audiences.
- Use positive spokespeople; they must radiate enthusiasm and goodwill
- Be timely and topical.

❖ Review Questions:

1. Discuss how advertising differs from publicity.
2. Discuss steps you should take to insure a successful television interview.

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