

## Media Relations Practice

After working for years as a media relations consultant and five years as a journalist, I've come to the conclusion there are six basic laws that govern successful media relations.

They are:

- content
- context
- organizational access
- proactive response
- relationships with the news media

**Content** must be tightly written, with a focus on the facts and an avoidance of hyperbole. It must be constructed in an electronic format and delivered to the news media on an electronic platter. The inundation journalists suffer, plus continued merger mania in the news business, means they have very little time to research or sift through (useless) information to mine the news.

**Context** is placing your organization's news within the ebb and flow of the daily news diet. It also includes timing, especially in relation to what else is going on.

**Organizational access** is very important. The news media operate on a much tighter schedule for everything compared to regular business responsiveness. A radio journalist needs the information or interview requested that hour, not the next day. Television needs it the by the same afternoon, at the latest. And print overnight!

**Proactive response** is essential in creating a two-way flow of information between the organization and news media. The more proactive an organization is over time, the less severe the reaction by the media if there's a crisis. If the news media know your organization as open and honest through years of access, then the worst part of a crisis (what are they hiding?) may be mitigated or at least minimized.

**Relationship** with the news media goes hand-in-hand with access. Over time, if your organization and PR practitioners have been open and honest with the media, that access and honesty go a long way in raising your organization's credibility and position on a journalist's priority list. You must keep in perspective the amount of information bombarding the news media these days!