

Making Ink and Airtime:
How to conduct proactive media relations in Canada



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2nd Edition

Table of Contents

William Carney Forward	4
What is public relations?	6
The PR wheel	8
Five basics for successful media relations	9
How media relations helps the marketing plan	10
The state of the news media	12
The news hole and news fence	14
Proactive and reactive media relations	15
Newsworthiness	16
What does it mean to publicize/	17
News spotlight	18
Where does news come from?	19
How to build a media list	20
Media relations planning/proposal structure	21
The intangible benefits of media training	23
Pre-interview questions	24
Interview tips	25
Types of interviewers	26
Types of interviews/tips	27
Interview tips for television	28
How to dress for TV	29
Interview tips for radio and print	30
Key messages	31
Media training agendas	32
What the news media want in Canada	34
The medium is the message/writing news releases	35
Make that news release or advisory newsworthy	37
Case studies/news release and advisory samples	39-68
Electronic news kits hit primetime	69
Electronic news tips	70
Media relations writing techniques: backgrounders and position papers	71
Personality profiles and organizational profiles	72
Elements of a feature	73
Public service announcements	74
Brochures	75
Op-Eds and letters-to-the-editor	76
Don't be a time bandit (follow up communications)	78
Making the call	80
How to make your video work	82
How to make your PR photos work	83
Media events – maximizing your attendance & news pick-up	85
Create a media friendly media section on the web site	87
MRP: media relations measurement paradigm	89
A proverbial needle in a haystack – media monitoring	91
Correcting misinformation	93
Social media – are you a cybersaur?	94
Always build two benches with the same wood	95
Review: bullet point tips, miscellany	96-112
About the author	113

This book is dedicated to my professional family, the Canadian Public Relations Society

Forward

“The Canadian news media and their global colleagues carry a great deal of responsibility and immense power to stimulate positive change in society. The media relations practice must rise to the challenges of providing the news media with legitimate information, in the format most suited to them, in order to assist with and expedite that process...It is when we are knowledgeable, aware and engaged that communicators are at our best.”

Michael Nowlan

President and CEO, Marketwire

Forward to 2007 edition.

Mr. Nowlan's comments on the state of media and media relations are as relevant today as they were in 2007. This edition of the book has been revised and updated to reflect the changing nature of media and media relations in Canada. Technology change, changes in media ownership and direction and new digital media are all occurring quickly and unpredictably, making it all the more important that practitioners keep up with change and be able to use the new tools to the best purposes of their clients.

Making Ink and Airtime covers the basics of the media relations practice, and nicely balances traditional media relations (the news conference and news release with television, newspapers and radio) and working with digital and social media to get the message out in more channels. Regardless of whether working with traditional or newer media, the main elements of media relations continue: define your market as narrowly as possible, determine the means of communications by which they receive information, craft messages that resonate with your target audience, send them out through the appropriate media channels, and engage your audience. Unlike other means of communications, media relations depends on relying on an independent third party – reporters, editors and producers – to get the message out, and Mark focuses on building and maintaining the reporter/media relations relationship.

Making Ink and Airtime augments my book *In the News: The Practice of Media Relations in Canada* (University of Alberta Press, second edition 2008). Practitioners are advised to have both. The strengths of Mark's book is its corporate focus and extensive case studies (some of which I hope to include in the next edition of my book.) *Making Ink and Airtime* is a quick read and will be of use to the first time practitioner trying to work with media, and for veterans who need a handy reference. Students and teachers will also find it of value.

Like many practitioners of media relations, Mark has worked in media and public relations. He worked as a journalist in Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto, giving him a national perspective, and has a Master of Arts in Journalism from the University of Western Ontario. He has worked in public relations for 20 years in a Toronto-based practice. He teaches as well as practices.

As noted, the field is changing constantly and the practitioner has to stay abreast of current trends. To keep current, readers of this book should bookmark Mark's website www.hunterlavigne.com and mine, www.mediarelationsincanada.wordpress.com.

William Wray Carney

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What is public relations and where does media relations fit?

Public relations, the 100 or so year-old multidiscipline, can be described as the hub of the communications wheel for any organization, whether non-profit, for profit, government or non-government.

Public relations (PR) is the organizational communication hub of that wheel. Running from it are a number of spokes (communications lines) that provide a two-way flow of information between that organization's numerous stakeholders or publics.

While most business people are generally quite familiar with advertising (the granddaddy of marketing communications), public relations remains relatively misunderstood. Therefore, many of those responsible for initiating or procuring public relations services do not fully understand the power of public relations and what it can accomplish for them.

PR is the two-way communications that takes place between an organization and its numerous "publics" or audiences, both internal and external. Hence, it is far more than just publicity as in generating ink or airtime for a celebrity or, in the political arena, the "spin doctoring" that's done to attempt to convert bad press into good.

PR is proactive and positive, always trying to avoid a problem before it occurs. Those who do not understand PR, think it is only there to clean up problems or do damage control. It uses relationship building as one of its essential tactics. It builds strong teams, often driving those teams to consensus.

There are several disciplines within PR; including media relations, investor relations, government relations, community relations and employee (internal) relations to name just a few.

As PR matures, it has become more integrated with the traditional marketing communications disciplines of advertising and sales promotion. Some people claim that it is now becoming the strategic engine for these disciplines, especially as marketing communications budgets have become more equalized in the past years.

Although some argue that advertising is dead and PR is rising in its ashes, public relations is most effective when it's integrated with many other marketing communications disciplines. Frankly, a PR-friendly organization will apply its strong PR thinking to every level of the organization, from front door reception to back door shipping and receiving.

Media relations is one of PR's main disciplines, and arguably is also one of the most difficult. It is one of the only marketing communications disciplines that go through a gatekeeper to reach the end audience. The media relations strategy that enables key messaging to pass through the gatekeeper intact is easily applied to other marketing communications disciplines. Finding the 'newsworthiness' in a message necessarily removes non-essential information. It focuses organizations intellectually to get down to their 'brass tacks.'

Media relations can be very effective when key messaging is adopted by advertising and sales promotions (such as point-of-purchase) and rolled-out in an integrated manner. Key messaging can also be adopted by other divisions of a company, from sales to human resources, and once again, from the reception desk to shipping and receiving.

PR practitioners should be the guardians of an organization's brand, and that concept of brand is not just reserved for a private sector, product-oriented company. The concept of brand, what an organization is, what it is about, what it wants to say, is the organization's being, and public relations is often its protector and conscience.

PR is also about truth. Journalists, like police officers, develop an instinct for truth. Non-truthful messaging certainly won't get through the journalistic gatekeeper very often, and if it does and is found out, an organization is in deep trouble. Truth is an essential tool in the public relations' arsenal. Canada's professional PR organizations, such as the Canadian Public Relations Society, have adopted strict codes of ethics to ensure practitioners continue to guard their organizational brands with integrity.

PR professional organizations have also doggedly pursued accreditation programs to teach, test and recognize senior practitioners. As the profession matures, so does that process. The profession is multifaceted, vibrant, and filled with many dedicated professionals who are directly involved in many, many facets of our modern society.

Visit the website of the Canadian Public Relations Society (cprs.ca) to access definitions for "public relations," and the society's Code of Ethics.

The PR Wheel



Media Relations Practice

After working for decades as a media relations consultant and five years as a journalist, I've come to the conclusion there are five 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 by the same afternoon, at the latest. And print by mid afternoon!

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.

Relationships 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. If you serve their information needs, you will generate coverage on your behalf within the long term.

How media relations helps the marketing plan

You're the product manager or marketing director responsible for marketing a new product, let's say a new high tech device.

You have a limited budget to promote the new product, say \$20,000, and you wonder what will give you the better bang for your buck, media relations or advertising?

Your strategic planning to date has definitely satisfied the "new, better, different" criteria, has an identifiable niche, has clearly defined target markets, has a strong point-of-difference from your competition. In short, offers strategic merit.

You wish you could do both media relations and advertising, and have seen the effectiveness of integrated campaigns that have ten times your current budget.

You have research data that clearly indicates which media your target markets consume. You realize you can't even come close to getting enough repetition on the broadcast segments highlighted, and that even purchasing print advertising at the frequency and size you think is needed may be quite limited.

So what value can media relations bring to the table?

First of all, a seasoned media relations practitioner will help you see the product from the news media's point of view. Your strategic thinking should be focused in the direction of what an editor and/or freelance journalist will see. In short, where is the real story? In what context does it fit? What does your product offer their audience? Development of this kind of strategic key messaging is imperative to give your product's key messaging a chance to get through the journalistic gatekeeper to the desired end audience, your ultimate target.

Media relations is one of the few marketing communications disciplines that has to go through such a gatekeeper exclusively. But in that end lies its true value. Because the gatekeeper is charged with the formidable task of informing his or her audience with third-party, relatively unbiased information, the value of that information is considered far more believable by an audience than an advertisement. And as the pace of technology development explodes logarithmically, journalists realize the value of helping their audiences with making crucial technology acquisition decisions. In many ways, the opinion of the journalist is that of a trusted family member, neighbour or friend.

The ultimate goal of good marketing communications is generating favourable word-of-mouth advertising through product trial. Good media coverage is that: word-of-mouth from a trusted source, comparable to a family member, neighbour or friend who has tried the product and says it's good. So make the media an integral (if not primary) part of the

product trial/word-of-mouth advertising process. Just make sure to provide an adequate supply of the new product for news media demos.

Many marketers equate news media coverage with what it would cost to fill a similar amount of airtime or space with an advertisement. It is very important to remember one cannot buy editorial coverage. It's not for sale. For that reason, its believability with an audience is far greater than the content of an ad. How many times more believable requires a lot more space than here to deal with properly, and frankly, a lot more work by the PR industry to develop academically endorsed, empirical paradigms to determine the true value of an impression. Just remember, media relations, unlike advertising, is more than counting impressions, it's a major step in building long term relationships with the gatekeepers who have access to your target markets.

The state of the news media

One of the first rules of media relations is to know the media. When you know something about the environment in which journalists have to work you appreciate their deadlines and their perspectives, all of which helps to improve your skill in reaching them with your story or news release.

During the past decades, the news media, particularly private sector newspapers, magazines, radio and television outlets, have suffered from the same economic turmoil as other private sector organizations. Globalization, recession, national and multinational mergers, and technological revolution have significantly affected the business side of the news media, which has caused upheaval in newsrooms across the country.

The computers and computer networks have enabled the same news reporting functions of 10 years ago to be performed by fewer people while the same technology has exponentially increased the amount of news available for dissemination. Consequently, there is more news to be processed by fewer people. Staffing levels have remained stagnant. CBC's Ira Basen has been tracking this.

Furthermore, a dramatic shift in advertising revenues from mass advertising to much more targeted marketing communications has drastically reduced advertising revenues available to the majority of private sector mass news outlets. The rise of direct mail, promotions and specialized media has spread advertising revenues across a much broader plane of media. The consequence for anyone submitting a news story or media release – the “news hole” (the space in which proactive news can be placed) has dramatically shrunk.

Other trends include a maturing news media. Many journalists, those who survived recessions, mergers and technological downsizing, have stayed in their positions longer. The rate of turnover in the news business traditionally is high but in major news markets such as Toronto there is far less movement than ever before, partly because fewer jobs are available. It still takes the average journalist ten years to get promoted into major markets. Once they arrive, economic conditions keep those reporters in their same jobs, rather than moving up into other editorial positions. Because of these factors, journalists are older, smarter, generally more educated, and usually more cynical than their predecessors. Cynicism often breeds distrust, making the current generation of news reporters more suspicious and more formidable than ever.

Specific inundation examples

- Marc Saltzman (one of Canada's most successful Technology freelancers):
 - 200 e-mails/day, 10 voice-mails.

- John Valorzi (CP Business Editor):
 - 200 e-mails per day, between 75 to 100 voice.
- Ipsos Reid in their 2005 survey found 61 per cent business journalists prefer e-mail compared to 18 per cent phone and 6 per cent fax. 28 per cent said phone is NOT the way they want to be approached.

Canadian news marketplace

- Concentration of ownership.
- Electronic highways gridlock.
- According to Ipsos Reid, business journalists receive:
 - 150 news releases/week. 18 per cent used.
 - 19 news conference invitations/month, 50 per cent get reporter.
 - 60 annual reports/year. 16 per cent used quickly. 20 media kits/month. 19 per cent used.

The news hole

The “news hole,” the space in which proactive news can be placed, has shrunk drastically.

Other trends include a maturing news media, because of the economic influencers previously described. Many journalists, those who survived recessionary and technological downsizing, have stayed in their positions longer than in the past. The rate of turnover in the news business traditionally is high, and still is to a certain extent, but in major news markets such as Toronto (or Chicago, New York, Los Angeles) there is far less movement than ever before, partly because of less jobs available.

Although it still takes the average journalist ten years to reach major markets such as Toronto, (moving from minor market, to medium market to finally this news Mecca), economic conditions have kept those reporters in their same jobs, rather than the typical movement from general reporter, to beat reporter, to editor. Progression up the “news ladder” is much slower than it has been in the past.

Because of these factors, journalists are older, smarter, better educated, and far more cynical, we would argue, than they were in the past. That cynicism breeds distrust (a traditional journalistic trait anyway) which makes reporters and editors alike a lot more suspicious in general. When it comes to reactive media relations, (when the news media come to you, usually within a negative context), they are more formidable than they ever have been.

Combined with relatively low pay (compared to other industries), and the uncertainties of most private sector jobs (downsizing is still not over), “tabloid” journalism has risen in popularity in a quest for greater audience numbers (to attract dwindling advertising dollars) as well as a justification for what they do both for the news owners and to satisfy their own increasing cynicism. “Tabloid” journalism tends to be sensationalistic, unbalanced and controversial. It has spread from weekly newspapers to television and is anticipated to eventually infect radio news and more serious, daily broadsheets.

Technological advances have made research easier and more precise, so when a news story is placed on “official record,” it can be accessed by more news media than ever before, for a much longer period of time.

The news fence

A “news fence” has always existed between advertising and editorial (the news gatherers) in most news media organizations. Journalists are trained to literally bite the hand that feeds them, that is, be distrustful of the very advertisers who ultimately pay their salaries. In public broadcasting, this relationship is even more exacerbated.

Public broadcasters, such as TVO, generally, do not rely on advertising (CBC TV is an exception) for the bulk of their revenue and therefore have an even more entrenched anti-

private sector bias than their private sector media counterparts. Some of the most critical programs (to private sector organizations) are broadcast on public networks. The economic and demographic forces influencing private sector news media described earlier are even more profound in this media sector. Government cutbacks have turned public broadcasting on its ear, and will likely continue to do so for years to come.

In smaller media private sector outlets, such as some trade magazines or broadcast outlets, the “news fence” is thinner than in major markets. But in bigger or more established media outlets, the fence can be as thick as a bomb shelter wall.

Nonetheless, private sector proactive media relations (for example, a product launch) is often suspected by many of the news media as ‘veiled advertising.’ A common, if not subconscious media response, is: “if you want to buy advertising, you should go down the hall.” In reactive situations, the media generally suspect private sector representatives are ‘lying,’ or trying to hide something. You are considered guilty until proven innocent in the court of media opinion.

You may ask yourself: “Why should I even bother? Why not say “no comment” until they go away?”

The answer is simple. They won’t go away and you will be tried in the court of media opinion in absentia. Furthermore, you will be missing a significant opportunity. An opportunity to defend yourself properly, to set the record straight, and to get positive messages about your organization onto public record.

Proactive and reactive media relations

There are generally two types of media opportunities: proactive and reactive media relations.

Proactive media relations generally involves going to the media proactively, usually for positive stories, but sometimes for negative ones as well. Reasons for such contact run the full gamut of proactive communications, including: new product or service launches; product re-launches; appointment announcements; mergers; as a part of larger lobbying efforts; and even reorganizations.

Methods of media contact can include: news releases and the social media news release; special events; news conferences; video and audio news releases; conventional and satellite media tours; telephone or personal meetings with journalists with whom you have developed professional or personal rapport.

You are in the driver’s seat. You go to the media when you are ready, on your schedule, and generally to your agenda.

Reactive media relations generally involves the media coming to you, usually within a negative context, such as: layoffs; product recalls; reorganizations; poor stock performance; specific industry regulatory issues; fires; illegal activity within the organization. This kind of media relations is often called crisis communications. We like to call it deliberate crisis response communications because you should be ready to deal with these kinds of situations when they arise.

Newsworthiness outline

Usually within the realm of proactive media relations, a ‘newsworthiness checklist’ has been developed to help determine whether or not a story you propose taking to the media, yourself, or through a public relations practitioner, is newsworthy.

What does newsworthy mean?

Reporters and editors are, essentially, storytellers. “Newsworthy” means “good story.” There are general criteria for what constitutes news, which are discussed in the following pages. However, each media outlet’s choice of news is affected by its understanding of what its audience wants.

What is news?

Out of all the activity happening everywhere, reporters and editors choose what is news. They decide what is worthy of the front page of the paper, is worthy of the cover of the magazine, is worthy of being one of the dozen or so stories that makes it on a television newscast.

Their decisions are based, to a certain extent, on practical considerations (when a television station has video of a fire, for instance, that story is much more likely to get covered in the newscast than if the camera crew did not get to the blaze in time for video capture).

For any story to make the news anywhere, the media must believe it will affect the public’s mind or heart because it possesses at least one of the seven criteria of news: impact; proximity; timeliness; prominence; conflict; novelty; and human interest.

If none of those criteria is particularly prominent, what you have is information, not news.

What does it mean to publicize?

Publicizing means selling the media on the newsworthiness of an idea. It results in positive media coverage generated by a public relations practitioner, rather than by people or actions outside an organization's control.

Often, but not always, a good public relations practitioner can try to create news out of information by finding ways to stress one of the news criteria. Sometimes, for instance, the information can be made more timely and prominent by linking it to several similar initiatives happening elsewhere (this is sometimes called "putting a spin" on a story).

A good public relations practitioner knows the media market, knows the kind of stories that radio, TV, and print are looking for, knows if a story is local or broader, knows the format in which the specific media like to receive their information.

A few general rules: TV likes action; print likes detail and radio is somewhere in between, depending on the outlet and show. Attendance at an event has nothing to do with coverage. News releases should be short and written in simple, declarative style (preferably in the style of The Canadian Press, Canada's national news agency) to be most effective, and not to trigger the "snicker factor," where guffaws erupt in the receiving newsroom.

The strong positive benefit of seeking publicity is tempered by the attendant uncertainty: once you broach a subject with the media, there is no guarantee it will be covered at all; or, if covered, that the story will be favourable.

Yet, since reporters will do negative stories if they want to anyhow, when we have a good story to tell, the publicity is almost always worth the gamble.

What's my story and why should anyone care?

The acid test of whether information can be turned into a newsworthy story is to answer, in a sentence, each of those two questions.

Unless there is some angle, at least one of the seven criteria, that can be brought to the fore, forget it. Your information is not newsworthy. Wait until you have something that is newsworthy.

The most important thing any public relations practitioner can do with the media is to develop a good relationship with them. This also applies to organizations seeking publicity. What is important is that the media see your PR practitioner, and your organization, as a reliable source of news. Don't waste their time pretending boring information is news. Every day, they receive hundreds of news releases, voice-mails and e-mails from public relations practitioners vying for a constantly shrinking news hole. To compete, you need the goods.

Even if the media promise to come to your event, or pick-up your news release, they may not. It may get pre-empted by another story which scores higher in newsworthiness. We know of some news director or assignment editors who say “yes” to everything, that they will attend a news event and that they will pick-up a news release. They do this to get rid of the PR person as quickly as possible, not that they have any intention of doing what they say they will do.

Once you have a good story, a lot of proactive media relations has to do with timing, and at times, luck. You, or your PR people have no control over natural or other disasters, or other significant stories that may occur at any moment, and shrink that already small news hole even more.

Newsworthiness in a reactive sense

Many journalists consider negative news as more newsworthy than positive news, because positive news happens more often than negative news and therefore negative news is rarer, and more newsworthy. For example, in some US cities, murders are so common, they rarely get daily news coverage, only the particularly gruesome ones.

Often the media focus on negative stories because they are ever watchful of trends. You will notice if you monitor news media closely that the media will cover a spate of minor disasters, in an attempt to establish a trend, or after a disaster of some kind, with heightened interest.

News spotlight

We like to describe the media as a roving spotlight. The spotlight will fix on a subject for awhile, go away and then come back.

If the news media spotlight focuses on an issue close to your organization’s heart, be prepared. The media may come knocking at your door. Conversely, media coverage trends can be used to your advantage.

Often, national interest stories need input from involved stakeholders, whether that be for a news agency such as CP, or a national newspaper looking for local angles.

Media monitoring and research is very important to stay on top of these media trends, to follow the media spotlight. It is much better to invest the time and money into such media intelligence, rather than have your telephone ring one day with a national newspaper or radio network reporter on the other end asking some very tough questions.

Where does news come from, how are news decisions made, and when are they made?

Generally, they are socially responsible, un-chartered professionals. By un-chartered, we mean there is no set of criteria to enter the craft. There is no College of Journalists, or Journalism Society of Upper Canada to licence journalists. There is no equivalent to the bar exams. In fact, there is an entrenched attitude that any form of professional control would endanger 'freedom of the press.' Because of this, journalism may never evolve beyond the 'craft' level into a real profession.

Therefore, education levels range from graduate degrees (rare) to non-completion of high school (more common, especially among the 'old school' journalists). Canadian newsrooms are filled with home-grown talent, as well as expatriate journalists from primarily the United States and Britain.

News comes from a large number of sources: as mentioned earlier, technology plays a major role. Generally, news services range from paid newswires (where you pay per word to have your news release transmitted electronically into news rooms across the country, or around the world) to co-operative news services, such as our venerable The Canadian Press (where news is shared by member newspapers or broadcast outlets). There are others around the world worthy of note, such as Associated Press (US), France Presse (France) and Reuters (U.K).

Most major market newsrooms have access to all of these services.

News also comes from public relations practitioners in one form or another, either proactively or reactively. Some say up to 75 per cent of the news carried in a daily newspaper, radio or television newscast has at least been through a public relations practitioner's hands, if not actually crafted by them.

News outlets also gather their own news, generated by a reporter or editor's "sources," or even by tips received from that outlet's readers or audience members. Media outlets also have numerous standard "beats," where reporters and editors cover everything from police headquarters to city hall, from the local legislature to specific industry beats.

Most media outlets meet at least once a day to decide on what's to be covered during that day's "news run." Story meetings occur usually in the morning, with radio being the earliest (usually before 9:00 a.m. and television's the latest, some just before lunch). Radio is now considered primarily an early morning news medium (before 9:00 a.m.), television an evening one, with newspapers generally being read in between, although all media are also battling for on-line instantaneity.

Through story meetings, news assignments are assigned by editors to reporters. Reporters will often suggest stories, and in our experience, usually will be accepted or rejected within seconds, about the same time it takes a PR practitioner the time to "pitch" a prospective story to a journalist.

Deadlines rule the newsroom. For daily newspapers, deadlines are the night before publication. The Globe and Mail generally “goes to bed” at 6:00 p.m. because it is transmitted by satellite the printed nationwide. The Toronto Star ‘s deadline is 10:00 p.m., and the Financial Post, 5:00 p.m. Radio and The Canadian Press have the tightest deadlines (often hourly), followed by television (before the noon, supertime and late evening newscasts) and print. However, with everything shifting online for all media, these deadline rules are going out with the bath water!

Preamble to media lists

Spend the research dollars and time to research your target audiences carefully. Know your audience is an age-old adage.

Mainstream news media such as daily newspapers and network television will often get to many of your target audiences. But don’t overlook the many vertical, very targeted media outlets such as magazines, cable TV shows and e-mail newsletters (Ezines), blogs and podcasts that can reach your target audience(s) more directly.

Ensure your media messages are in multimedia format suitable for television, radio, print and online media outlets so your message gets to your target audiences in a variety of ways.

Often, an integrated campaign that provides messaging towards the editorial, news side, can be augmented later with advertising. Display advertising in smaller circulation media outlets is not expensive. And this ensures not only the verticalized publication will financially survive to hit a target audience directly, it is another way to hit that target audience with your messaging.

How to build a media list

The first part of building a media list is strategic – determine whom you are targeting with your message. Often your desired target audiences are diverse so this should be clearly defined before beginning to build your media list.

This requires some research on your part. Mainstream news media such as daily newspapers and network television will often get to many of your target audiences. But don’t overlook the many vertical, very targeted media outlets such as magazines, cable TV shows, Ezines, and blogs that can reach your target audience(s) more directly.

The next step is getting in touch with a variety of suppliers out there who sell media lists and can customize them to your needs. Product offerings include one-time list purchases or subscriptions. These may be expensive, but invaluable to a successful media relations campaign.

It's always a good idea to purchase lists from a number of different sources, especially if you're starting out in a new media niche. To ensure your media list is as complete as possible, plan on calling and confirming information at key media outlets.

My tactical philosophy is to get the news out in a variety of ways. I recommend combining direct e-mail dissemination from your own ISP (with your name on the e-mail) with the use of paid wire services and mail/courier. Aim to hit the target media in at least three ways, via direct e-mail, via paid newswire and via courier or mail (print media kits or electronic media kits). This way you will definitely ensure the targeted news media have seen your message. When purchasing media lists, make sure they contain phone and fax numbers, e-mail (the best are those that go directly to the journalist and not to general in-boxes) and mail addresses.

Finally, you should update the list constantly. Utilize e-mail bounce backs as a warning you have wrong information or have been hit by a SPAM filter. Keep up with the list services, and never underestimate the power of an old-fashioned phone call to the media outlet's reception desk.

Media relations planning

Plans are the core to the case study, which I highly recommend practitioners get into the habit of doing as early in their careers as possible. The case study is the core to a proper wrap-up report. Highlights to this are key messaging and of course, budget. Budget is paramount. Try very hard to get parameters out of internal or external clients. Finally, it really is a cart before the horse scenario. Gather or create as much research as possible about the relevant target audiences. It all starts there. Once target audiences are determined, and fleshed out as much as possible, then target news media are properly established and then the communications to those target audiences through those target media can be created.

Proposal structure

- Preamble/introduction.
- Objectives or goals (build in measurement paradigm here).
- Situational analysis or strategic considerations.
- Key messaging.
- Target audiences.
- Target markets.

- Target media
- Recommended strategies.
- Recommended tactics.
 - Web site recommendations.
 - Media coaching.
 - News release electronic distribution.
 - Proactive/reactive media relations.
 - Matte article distribution (ready-to-use articles).
 - Media monitoring/wrap-up report.
- Timelines.
- Budget cost estimate preamble (explain fees and disbursements).
- Budget cost estimate.
- Biographies.

The intangible benefits of media training

Besides preparing strategic key messaging and practicing that messaging on camera, media training offers other more intangible benefits that I've seen in my years in the PR business.

First of all, the theory portion of a good media training course helps reduce news media illiteracy, which manifests itself in either clients being terrified of the news media, or too arrogant with them, treating them just like another marketing communications function for hire. Teaching these executives the difference between advertising and editorial, and the inherent danger of underestimating the power of the news media, tends to promote more humility. Explaining that an advertising buy does not guarantee media coverage, even in the smallest trades, is surprisingly illuminatory for some of these executives.

Conversely, once trainees understand the "information as commodity" concept, they tend to relax more when they fully understand their role in that two-way relationship. On-camera practicing of key messaging and general Q&A's reduces the fear, and/or promotes humility and increases media literacy. Also allowing trainees to interview their colleagues, to play journalist, helps them to better understand the role the news media does play and the challenges on that side of the fence. It can also better identify potential information quagmires, since no one generally knows their business better than the trainees, and all the areas that are problematic.

Media training can also greatly enhance the reputation of in-house media relations functions and officers by teaching potential spokespersons how difficult the art and science of media relations really is – that successful media relations is a complicated mix of newsworthy content, access and timing/context. The training can become a useful opportunity to fully explain media relations protocol, and how breaching this protocol can become quite career limiting! It also introduces the in-house or out-house media relations team to the executive/spokesperson team, and provides a full day where they can work together and get to know each other and respect each other's roles and responsibilities, opportunities and challenges.

One of the greatest frustrations of media relations specialists, and news media, is the slow response to interview or information requests. Yes, executives in private or public sector entities are as inundated as the media with information via e-mail, voice mail and hard copy, I call them the 100/50 club, 100 e-mails and 50 voice-mails per day. But many times I've noticed that executives don't understand the rapid timelines that the news media operate under – they don't understand how quickly something ceases to be "news" or how quickly the media may lose interest in a proactive media relations venture or get frustrated during a reactive one!

The media training experience, when done in a proactive, co-operative style, can also serve as a team-building exercise. The on-camera experience, when done as a group, can pull a group together since it can be as fearful as climbing a wall or scaling a rope bridge, or other popular team-building exercises. Media training often brings together mid-to-

senior level executives from different divisions who only see each other at sales conventions or work-related social gatherings.

Some executives I've media trained have shared anecdotes with me where they have successfully applied some of the theory and practical media relations tips to other non-media audiences, such as problematic teenagers or unresponsive customer service departments. And we all know how tough some non-media audiences can be.

We are trained from an early age to always "answer the question" when asked by teachers, parents or other superiors. However, the organizational/news media interface is a two-way flow of information, and information is a commodity to news media. Below are some questions you have every right to ask the journalist before committing to an interview, if you do not have access to PR counsel. But please note, you can deflect those intrusive contacts if you do. If a journalist does get around PR counsel(which some may try to do) then refer them back to proper contacts per protocol.

Pre-interview questions

- In what section of the newspaper will the report appear?
- Will the interview be used for an immediate news story, or for a longer feature?
- What's the purpose of the interview and when will it be aired/printed?
- What is the angle of the interview and the report you're preparing?
- Will the interview be live or taped (for broadcast only)?
- How long will the interview last and where do you want to conduct it?
- Who precisely is the audience?
- Who else are you interviewing on the subject?
- What is your deadline?
- What is your telephone number and e-mail address so I can get back to you?
- Media monitor that journalist and outlet to ascertain background/attitude/treatment.

Interview Tips

- Be media trained and have your key messages and response statements memorized.
- Never say anything “off-the-record” and be wary of providing “background” information. However, in certain cases, working with non-disclosure agreements can be beneficial to both parties.
- Never say “no comment.” Try saying something like: “When I have more information, I will be in a better position to respond.”
- Review recent news coverage on the interview subject so you are as well informed as possible.
- Take your time before answering questions. Pauses can be used as a tool to your advantage.
- Adhere to the under 10 second quote rule.
- Record your interview if possible.
- If you don’t know the answer, admit it. Promise to get back to the journalist later with the answer if possible.
- If a question is negative, do not repeat the negative, always counter with a positive.
- Correct any erroneous or misleading information in a question without repeating the negative before you go on to answer the question.
- Keep your cool, no matter what.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer. If you did not understand or hear the question, or if asked multiple ones, ask to have it repeated.
- Keep eye contact.
- Let the situation dictate your demeanour (and keep that demeanour throughout).
- Don’t answer in monosyllables such as “yes” or “no.”
- Don’t speculate on hypothetical questions.
- Don’t use trade speak or marketing jargon or get too technical.
- Don’t ever ask to review an article or broadcast story in advance of publication.

Types of interviewers

The Machine Gunner: Asks several questions, quite quickly at once. The best way to deal with this kind of interviewer is to answer the one you want to with a key message.

The Interrupter: Asks another question, or interrupts before you're finished. If you have tightly prepared key messages (10 seconds or less) you should not have too much of a problem. You can also deal with this kind of interviewer by saying: "Please let me finish my answer....or just a moment please," and finish your statement.

The Paraphraser: Is dangerous, because they can cleverly, but misleadingly paraphrase what you have said. Listen carefully to their paraphrases, and correct them immediately if they stray too far from your statements or contain misinformation.

The Dart Thrower: This type of interviewer will pin negative labels on you, such as: "Aren't you just trying to gain good publicity by donating all that computer equipment to that inner-city school?" Correct negatives with positives such as: "The school was very grateful for our equipment and now can 'have more access to the net' because of it."

The Hostile Interviewer: Answer their key question only. Don't get mad! Perhaps ask them to repeat their question. Use pauses. Or you can re-phrase the question in your own words, then answer it. Be firm, but polite. For example, Margaret Thatcher was famous for her reply:

The Overly Friendly Interviewer: Sometimes they just like meeting people. Or they can be disarming you, particularly during the pre-interview and then go 'in for the kill' when recording. Be cautious, but not too cold. You do not want to offend them if they are being genuine.

The "Last Minute" Interviewer: Take control of the interview. Correct this poor soul only if absolutely necessary to avoid embarrassing him or her. Be prepared for ill-informed questions. This type of interviewer appears to know very little about the interview subject because he probably has not had time to prepare and was handed a last minute assignment with no background. You can use his lack of knowledge to your advantage if managed carefully.

Types of interviews and tips

Telephone (and recorded) Interviews: Can be the most dangerous because you can be the most relaxed in your own environment, or distracted, for example, when driving with a cell phone in heavy traffic.

Avoid the temptation of doing the interview immediately.

And if possible, record the interview (using a telephone by-pass jack found at most electronic stores). Also ask the interviewer if you're being recorded.

The Rules on Recording: A journalist must inform you that you are being recorded for broadcast. In Canada, a reporter can record you without telling you if it is not to be broadcast however, so everything is "on-the-record." In some US states, the law requires both parties to a recorded program must agree to its release, even if the contents are just to be transcribed and not broadcast.

The Scrum: Is the trade slang to describe when a number of journalists gather around you for comment. The scrum is very common after court appearances, or in politics, for example, after Question Period. The media may also scrum you at public appearances such as speeches, panel discussions, or regulatory meetings, particularly where microphone feeds are not supplied. Often scrums are held to get specific answers to specific questions, and to get better quality "sound bites" or quotes from you.

Reporters will compete with each other to get the microphone in your face. They sometimes take on the appearance of an angry mob. But never, ever, try to avoid a scrum. The video of you running away can be very damaging.

Reporters will often ask questions all at once. Choose the one you like. If you are in the middle of answering an undesirable question and another more positive question is asked, turn to that reporter and answer their question.

Take your time in answering and remember your Key Messages. If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated. Because scrums are a form of pack journalism, pauses can be used to elicit other questions. Other reporters will always fill in pauses with questions. Don't forget the competitive nature of the journalists surrounding you and that they work in different formats.

Interview tips for television

- Focus on the interviewer, not the camera.
- Ignore camera-operators and other technicians as they move about their business.
- You should consider yourself “on-the-record” from the moment you enter the TV station until you’re in your car away from the studio. Asides can be heard and recorded in-studio, or even in the hallways or “green room.”
- Never talk over the interviewer.
- Avoid “ums” and “ahs.”
- Allow camera-operators to get shots wherever they want, and don’t necessarily expect the interview take place in your office behind your desk.
- Dress for the occasion. If you’re in the plant, wear a hard hat and coveralls. If you’re at an outdoor event, wearing a business suit may not be suitable.
- Don’t be alarmed by “re-asks,” when the camera-operator moves behind you and the reporter asks many of the same questions covered previously. This is for editing purposes or they are looking for a tighter quote.
- Stick to your original answers and stay serious. No bravado or silliness during these re-asks. You are still being recorded.
- Concentrate on the interviewer at all times. Look him or her in the eye. Use natural hand movements as emphasis to your answers. Listen carefully and actively. And never look into the camera (unless you are doing a remote TV panel discussion).
- Avoid clasping hands tightly, gripping the sides of chairs or tables, playing with pencils, water glasses, buttons, looking around, closing your eyes, blinking too much, swivelling in your chair (all these give the impression of nervousness, boredom and even lying).
- Sit straight and avoid movement. Leaning slightly forward in your chair gives the impression that you’re alert and in control.
- Wait until the lights are off, the red lights on the cameras are off, and the technician removes your lapel microphone. Then you may relax slightly, but only slightly. Manage your demeanour carefully, because the cameras often stay on you and the host for several minutes while the show’s credit roll. Nothing is worse than the audience seeing you and the host smiling after a serious interview. Never say: “I’m glad that’s over,” or “how did I do?”

How to dress for TV

- Wear medium tones - no pure white shirts. White can wash you out and make you look pale.
- Men should wear executive length (high) socks.
- Avoid patterns that have stripes, plaids and checks. Such patterns are not “camera-friendly.”
- Avoid highly polished jewellery for the same reason.
- Watch for bulges in jackets caused by electronic devices, pocketbooks, keys etc.
- Normal make-up should be worn. In-studio interviews are usually attended by professional make-up artists.
- If you’re on a media tour, have a wardrobe organized in advance to avoid bothersome decisions when ‘on the road.’
- Before going on air, eat lightly and avoid coffee, tea and alcohol (they dry up your mouth).
- Shoes should be dark and well shined.
- Avoid new haircuts, but ensure hair is neatly groomed.
- Skirts should be long enough to cover the knees when seated. Avoid wrap-around skirts. Embarrassing gaps may appear on-camera. Pant suits are preferred by many spokeswomen.
- Avoid red, black and white coloured shirts.
- Royal blue is a great suit colour with light blue as a good shirt colour.

Interview tips for radio

- Radio can be a deceptive medium. You may think your voice has energy and vitality, but by the time it makes its way through all the technology to a listener's speaker, your voice sounds flat.
- Remember to put about twice as much action into your voice as you would in normal conversation, and it will sound full of energy (but natural) on the receiving end.
- Vary your pitch, tone, rate and volume.
- Overall, sound conversational and personal. Radio is a very personal medium.
- If doing a radio interview over the telephone, keep your mouth about six inches away to avoid the popping sounds caused by letters like "p," because most telephone microphones are of poorer quality.
- Don't be disappointed if the interview took hours, but the resulting story is only about 45 seconds in length. Brevity rules radio news these days. Remember, your quotes, or sound bites (clips), should be short - less than ten seconds.

Interview tips for print

- These interviews are generally longer than radio or television interviews, but remember, a TV interview can last half a day and yield only a handful of second airtime. .
- Print reporters generally require far more detail than radio or TV.
- It is common for a reporter to use a recorder. They should not mind if you do as well. Remember to keep the machines as far apart as possible to avoid feedback.
- Don't complain if some of the quotes aren't exact or some of the facts are slightly misinterpreted. Complaining will only antagonize the reporter. If there is a serious error or misquote, please see the following section on corrections.
- Be prepared for the reporter (or a researcher) to call back to check quotes and facts. If the reporter indicates the article will be published the next day, be reachable until after that newspaper's bedtime (anywhere from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.). Ask the reporter about possible scheduling of publication, and ensure you are reachable. However, do not hand out your personal telephone (or cellular) numbers. Use a third party, such as public relations counsel, to coordinate such requests after hours.

Key messages

- Key messages are 10 to 15 second sound bytes that are memorable, to the point, and where possible, colourful. Since most people only retain 10 per cent of the information they receive, messages must be concise and where possible, memorable.
- Key messages contain the main message you want to communicate.
- Key messages must be newsworthy: For example: “this is the first helicopter of its kind to not have a tail rotor, therefore it’s among the quietest and safest on the market.”
- Key messages should contain a call to action when warranted. For example: “education spending on learning resources is now less than a half cent of every education dollar. We want that figure tripled!”
- Localize your key message when necessary. For example: “Calgarians can practice proper hand washing by ensuring the antibacterial soap is lathered for thirty seconds.”
- Paint a picture with your words.
- Use every day language and avoid technical talk or other jargon and acronyms.
- Back up your key messages with facts, such as case studies, surveys, statistics or third party experts or authorities. Making an analogy is another back-up method and using personal experience humanizes your message.
- You should have no more than three key messages for an interview.
- Use your key message at every opportunity. You don’t necessarily have to answer the question. Get into your key message as soon as possible. However, do so while answering the question at the same time!
- Key messages should be positive.
- When you have prepared your key messages, print them out in oversized print (14 to 16 point) onto cue cards and have them by your side in preparation for and during telephone interviews. If you are going to have a face-to-face interview, have your key messages memorized.

Sample media training agenda (Half Day)

1:00-1:05 p.m. Welcome and introduction

1:05 – 2:00 Theory

- Definition of public relations
- Definition of news media/brief discussion on each medium
- Current state of the news media
- What journalists want
- News Hole concept - news as commodity
- News Hole statistics News Fence and the relationship between editorial and advertising
- News Spotlight concept: news trendiness & pack journalism
- Newsworthiness concept
- Proactive and reactive media relations and differences
- Key Messaging
- How to generate news
- Media relations protocols (customized to the organization)

2:00-2:15 p.m. Break

On-Camera

2:15 – 2:45 p.m. Video Review

2:45-2:50 p.m. Interview #1

2:50-2:55 p.m. Interview #2

2:55-3:00 p.m. Interview #3

3:00-3:15 p.m. Interviews Review

3:15-3:25 p.m. Interview #1

3:25-3:35 p.m. Interview #2

3:35-3:45 p.m. Interview #3

3:45-4:30 p.m. Round #3 Interviews/Review

4:30-5:00 p.m. Key Message Review/Questions

What the news media want in Canada

- For news releases to be concise - 300 to 400 words in length- or shorter.
- For news to be on an electronic platter - in electronic format for easy editing and re-packaging.
- For images/video to be easily accessible but high quality.
- For spokespeople to come to them – electronically and in person. News conferences are generally too time consuming. And to be able to quote the spokesperson!!!!
- For news to be of interest to a given media outlet's audience.
- For there to be a correlation between the electronic media kit, news releases, web site, photography and videography.
- For the web site to have an easily accessible, non-passworded media section as well as high-resolution photography (300 dpi, 8X10 JPEGs) and video (MPEG).
- For news releases to be newsworthy.
- For news releases and media advisories to be distributed regularly.
- For all English news copy to be translated into French (and/or Chinese).
- For information to be distributed both directly to media via e-mail as well as through a paid wire service, where budget permits, so media are hit with the messaging at least twice to overcome danger of messaging lost in the inundation media face today. Ideally, hard copy by mail/courier as well.
- For designated spokespersons and PR practitioners to be always ready to deal with last minute media requests. If we can't service media in a timely manner, our competition will!

The Medium is the Message

The modern “news release,” not “press release” unless you intend to send it only to print news media, is constantly evolving as information technology continues to evolve. In particular, the advent of the social media news release (with links, embedded video and audio etc) and Smartphone and tablet technology has a great impact on where the news release is headed as a form of communication.

News media surveyed by this author consistently want news releases that are short (300 words or less) and interactive, with direct URLs to enable the easy, non-password protected download of high-resolution images, audio clips and video. The rapid progress of digital broadcast media has created inexpensive opportunities to capture and park broadcast quality audio clips, video clips, at these designated URLs as well. Cumbersome backgrounders, PDFs and other support information such as biographies and white papers, can also be parked at these URLs.

Organizational web sites should have “Newsrooms” (the ideal location is the top left of the page to match journalistic graphic interface), that not only contain news releases but also high-resolution images, broadcast quality audio and video clips, and many of these background documents. Ideally, text should also be available in both Word and PDF formats, so media are served as quickly as possible in the format they prefer. However, many ‘branch-plant’ organizations often adopt third-party URLs to avoid delays and other issues with home office webmasters.

With Smartphone technology being widely adopted by the news media, there is only so much scroll-down capability so the news release should definitely fit in that window and be roughly between 200 and 300 words, or less.

The combination of hybrid (print and broadcast) newsrooms due to media mergers and the electronic inundation of news locally, nationally and globally, make brevity of news releases more important than ever before. For years, I’ve tried to refine a style that is between print and broadcast so it is amenable to both media.

There is far more news with about the same number of news gatherers than even a decade ago. To ensure a news release is not lost in the shuffle, it is highly recommended that it be sent both directly by e-mail as well as through a paid wire service such as Marketwire or the CNW Group. Moving it on a paid wire will also help it get immediate presence on the Internet.

News release content is also paramount. There is little time for clichés these days. Words such as ‘state-of-the-art’ and ‘world-class’ tend to get a release deleted quickly. There is no room anymore for hyperbole and puffery and false claims may be closely scrutinized by the federal government! Highlighting and bolding is ‘so last century’, and quotes should be included only if they continue the story. Although providing quoted names often helps in the media monitoring search engine process, it is imperative that the person quoted or a designated back up be readily available for rapid response interviews.

Of course, a news release is for immediate distribution, so why apply the pre-Internet concept of “for immediate release?”

The prominence of search engines in getting the story to all corners of the Internet has made it also necessary to spend extra time matching keywords in the release (the higher up in the copy the better) to Internet meta-tags, so when the paid wire gets the news release into cyberspace, the search engines will snag it.

As well, pay special attention to the subject line in the e-mail. It must fit the window and capture the essence of the story. Other e-mail tips: cut and paste your text into the e-mail and never send attachments unless asked to do so; many newsroom spam filters will kill it instantly if you do. Always blind carbon copy the media in your e-mail, so they don’t get a whole page of e-mail addresses. This drives some of them to distraction, and many spam filters will reject e-mails that are sent to more than 25 addresses blind carbon copied.

When following up with news media, e-mail is often the preferred method these days. A few rounds should get you a high response rate. The telephone is considered more and more an evil interruption by many journalists and should be reserved for emergencies or the rare personal touch when welcomed and never call after 4:00 pm unless you are returning a journalistic query.

The Editor-in-Chief of The Canadian Press, Scott White, considers highly aggressive PR who call multiple editors with the same pitch “time bandits.” Enough said. One final tip for your news release writing: adhere to the *Canadian Press Style Guide* and its companion books, *NewsTalk* (Broadcast News) and *Caps and Spelling*. For any questions on proper usage, CP editor Patti Tasko (ptasko@cp.org) and her team are most helpful.

Make that news release or advisory newsworthy!

When writing a news release, it's very important to follow the Five W's of News: Who, what, why, where, when. One can also add Rudyard Kipling's "How" (The Elephant's Child). Also, write in accordance to the *CP Style*, which you can purchase directly from that venerable news institution. Always ask yourself the question: "Does it need a news release? Does it warrant a media advisory? Is this news?"

Keep the news release to about 300-400 words, one to 1.5 pages maximum. The trend today is towards shorter. I envision the 50-word news release in the near future, with longer copy, such as waivers, placed at specific URLs, as well as backgrounders, boilerplates, photos, video, survey results.

News release distribution methods

- Direct via e-mail
- Direct via mail (this traditional channel offers new efficacy)
- Direct via fax (when requested)
- Paid wire services:
 - CNW Group (newswire.ca)
 - Marketwire (formerly CCMMatthews) (marketwire.com)

Write a News Release, not an Advertisement

News Release Elements:

- Subject line: art in itself in the e-mail world.
- Headline:
- Subhead:
- Dateline:
- Lead: The "5 W's" but not necessarily all five.
- Backups to lead, the rest of the W's.
- Quotes: prefer two sentences.
- Closer: final fact, strong ending.
- Boilerplate: old fashioned but useful.
- URLs for backgrounders/fact sheets/longer stuff.

- URLs for imaging, downloadable broadcast video coming soon.
- Contacts: be reachable, have back-up.

Following are sample case studies and related news releases to elucidate both previous sections. A mixture of for-profit and not-for-profit campaigns are included.

CrosSled case study

(Winner, CPRS Toronto ACE Awards – Bronze, Special Events, 2002)

Preamble:

CrosSled's annual sales growth rate of 50 per cent per year over four seasons is based largely on awareness generated by media relations and print advertising. The total communications budget is approximately \$30,000, which includes targeted media buys. In 2000/2001 season planning, PR counsel recommended a grassroots style public event was needed to publicize the CrosSled product and sport (kicksledding). The Kortright Centre had come to CrosSled in its second season wanting to use our product as part of their public participation program. About six CrosSleds ended up being used quite successfully during the 1999/2000 season. CrosSled approached the Kortright in our third season in order to partner with them to hold the CrosSled Rendezvous.

Objectives:

- To build brand equity among current customers and potential ones
- To generate awareness through media coverage

Strategy:

- Provide a fun-filled environment to stimulate grassroots enthusiasm and word-of-mouth endorsement for the product among current and potential customers.

Strategic Considerations:

- Venue must offer outdoor winter amenities as well as indoor facilities
- Venue must be known to media and easily accessible to media
- Venue must be central point for all GTA customers

Selected Venue and Timeframe (conductive timing for partner):

- Kortright Centre, Sunday, January 14, 2001, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Target Audiences:

- Current CrosSled customers (via direct invite)
- Kortright newsletter recipients (via Kortright newsletter distribution)
- General winter enthusiasts (Kortright visitors)

Measurement:

- Number of attendees at event and quality and quantity of media coverage generated

Challenges/Limitations:

- Getting folks out in winter weather is challenging – either too cold, or too warm (rain)
- Low budget
- Relatively new product and sport

Budget:

- Fees: \$3,375
- Disbursements: \$5,775
- Total: \$9,150

Event Elements:

- Hard-packed trail for relay race, more serious race, and kid's scavenger hunt (for marshmallows)
- About a dozen sleds available for free demo, including handful of the new Racers
- BBQ for cookout (hot dogs, hamburgers, soft drinks, beer)
- Music available (Abba) via portable CD player
- Hired videographer to shoot video
- Prizes for event winners (CrosSled hats and scarves)
- CrosSled maintenance clinic
- Invited CrosSled partners (i.e. Wil Wegman, Canadian Ice Fishing Team)

Tactics:

- Media advisory distributed via CNW one week prior (Jan 5) with repeats on the Friday and Saturday mornings. Media advisory also distributed directly via e-mail to comprehensive media list.
- Videographer shot Beta quality video. Dubbed to Beta in field. Delivered by driver to all GTA TV outlets.
- Photographer shot on professional digital camera. E-mailed to paid wire service from field.

Attending Media: City-TV, Toronto Star, Liberal, TVOntario

Media Advisory

CrosSled Rendezvous at Kortright Centre to Celebrate New Sport in Canada

Unionville, ON, Monday, January 8, 2001 - The first annual CrosSled Rendezvous will be held at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge January 14, 2001 to gather together CrosSled enthusiasts and introduce the sport to the general public.

The CrosSled Rendezvous includes a scavenger hunt for kids, a relay race for adults, and a complimentary B-B-Q, all on CrosSleds of course! A number of CrosSleds will be available for demo purposes.

The CrosSled looks like a dogsled, with a seat affixed to the front of two ski rails with a handlebar attached to the top of the seat. The CrosSledder stands behind the seat, holding onto the handlebar. One foot is placed on a ski rail, while the other propels the sled forward with a kicking motion – hence the generic term kicksled or kicksledding.

CrosSled is a “150-year-old new invention” according to Knut Brundtland, a Norwegian Canadian who is dedicated to introducing the sport to North Americans. CrosSledding utilizes all of the muscle groups with excellent cardiovascular benefits and is second only to cross-country skiing for overall body development. Brundtland maintains the sport’s low impact nature makes it an excellent cross-training activity, especially for those winter athletes with temporary injuries.

Canadians have adapted this Scandinavian device to a number of uses, according to Brundtland, including as a snowstroller for those with young children, a snow walker for seniors who want winter exercise but are afraid of dangerous ice conditions, a tackle box on skis for ice anglers to haul their equipment across the ice, and an inexpensive dog sled for dog owners who want to keep their canines, and themselves, active during winter months.

What: CrosSled Rendezvous

When: Sunday, January 14, 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where: Kortright Centre for Conservation, 9550 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge
(400 to Major Mackenzie Drive West, to Pine Valley Drive South)

For more information, please contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

News Release

CrosSled Rendezvous at Kortright Centre Celebrates New Sport in Canada

Unionville, ON, Sunday, January 14, 2001 – Dozens of CrosSled enthusiasts gathered at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge today to celebrate their 150-year-old new sport.

The first annual CrosSled Rendezvous included a scavenger hunt for kids and a relay race for adults at the Kortright Centre's CrosSled Loop - trails cut through a field ideally suited for CrosSledding. Other events included a presentation by Canadian ice fishing guru Wil Wegman, who demonstrated how CrosSled helps his sport. Enthusiasts gathered around a bonfire, on their CrosSleds, to enjoy après CrosSled refreshments and bonhomie.

The CrosSled looks like a dogsled, with a seat affixed to the front of two ski rails with a handlebar attached to the top of the seat. The CrosSledder stands behind the seat, holding onto the handlebar. One foot is placed on a ski rail, while the other propels the sled forward with a kicking motion – hence the generic term kicksled or kicksledding.

Kicksledding has been a fixture in Norway, Finland and Sweden for a century and a half and Norwegian Canadian Knut Brundtland has dedicated himself to introducing the sport to North Americans. Brundtland says CrosSledding utilizes all of the muscle groups with excellent cardiovascular benefits and is second to cross-country skiing for overall body development.

Canadians have adapted this Scandinavian device for easy winter fun activities and for low impact fitness training. Other uses, according to Brundtland, include CrosSled as a snowstroller for those with young children, a snow walker for seniors who want winter exercise but are afraid of dangerous ice conditions, a tackle box on skis for ice anglers to haul their equipment across the ice, and an inexpensive dog sled for dog owners who want to keep their canines, and themselves, active during winter months.

For more details, visit CrosSled's web site at www.crossled.com. High-resolution images of the CrosSled product line-up and of CrosSleds being used by a variety of Canadians can be found and downloaded at www.crossled.com/press.

For more information, please contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

Sunrise Soya Foods/Pete's Tofu launch case study

(Winner, CPRS Toronto ACE Awards – Bronze, New Product Launch, 2003)

Preamble:

In December 2001, a campaign was developed by Hunter LaVigne Communications Inc. to promote the Pete's Tofu product launch, Vancouver-based Sunrise Soya Foods' expansion to eastern Canada and its Toronto plant opening.

Pete's Tofu was launched on Monday May 13, 2002 with English, French and Chinese news releases with detailed media follow up. News releases were distributed to 280 targeted contacts and disseminated nationally (in English and French) by CNW Group. Media contacts were offered a comprehensive media kit (hard copy and electronic formats), product samples, product demonstrations, plant tours and video. The Toronto plant was officially opened September 24, 2002 with an event that attracted 20 media contacts, as well as 100 employees, their families, suppliers and regulators.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness of new Pete's Tofu product line through media coverage
- Raise awareness of Sunrise and its brand through plant opening event
- Increase Sunrise brand awareness in Ontario and Quebec

Strategy:

- Use a two-tiered approach – a product launch and then plant opening event four months later to create news media momentum, regionally and nationally, culminating in spot news after plant opening event.

Strategic Considerations:

- Although health benefits of soya are becoming better known amongst Canadian mass consumers, the benefits of tofu products are not as well known
- Prior to the Pete's Tofu launch, awareness of Sunrise Soya products was high in western Canada, but negligible in Ontario and Quebec
- The Toronto news marketplace is particularly inundated with information, as one of North America's largest urban areas that has been considerably downsized in the past year through mergers, acquisitions and technological factors

Target Audiences:

- General consumers, including women aged 18-55 plus
- Vegetarians – general skew
- Body Builders/health trade
- Grocery store owners, managers, buyers

Target Media:

- Business, food and family editors at major daily newspapers in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City
- Business and food specialists/shows at mainstream radio and television outlets in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec, including cable cooking shows
- Food consumer and trade magazines
- Women's magazines
- Relevant web sites
- Food and cooking freelancers
- Ethnic media in Toronto and Montreal

Tactics:

- Production of print photography and video to facilitate media coverage
- ELECTRONIC NEWS KIT and hard-copy media kit development and distribution, including extensive one-page backgrounders, recipes, cooking tips, photos, plant tour video clip and glossary of terms
- Dissemination of news release and backgrounders electronically via e-mail and paid wire service (in English, French and Chinese)
- Plant media tours
- Live product drops and demonstrations to news and food media
- Follow up e-mail and telephone calls
- Plant opening with Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, Chinese lion dance performance, cooking demonstrations by noted chefs and food samples as hooks

Measurement:

- Quantity and quality of media coverage, number of media attendees at event, product awareness studies and product sales

Budget:

- Total budget was \$61,166, with \$47,566 for fees and \$13,600 for disbursements.

Results:

- Total of 21,396,964 first impressions generated (2,150.06 square inches generated with total of 58:45 broadcast minutes aired). Highlights included: two Globe and Mail photo features; local and national coverage on CBC, Global and CFTO (CTV), colour photo features in Canadian Living and Homemakers, and pick-up by The Canadian Press.
- Pete's Tofu consumer brand awareness among non-traditional tofu users in Ontario and Quebec went from zero to 5 per cent, between May and August, 2002 to a 7 per cent market share in dollars in Canada (AC Nielsen) and sales are expected to exceed one million dollars in 2003.
- More than 100 guests, plus 20 news media, attended plant-opening event.

News Release

Sunrise Opens New Plant and Launches New Brand to Meet Growing Demand for Tofu

Toronto, ON, May 13, 2002 – To meet the growing interest in soyfoods, as well as a demand for convenient, ready-to-eat products, Sunrise Soya Foods is opening a new tofu manufacturing plant in Toronto to help facilitate the launch of their newest brand, “Pete’s Tofu.”

The Toronto plant, utilizing the latest in automated tofu manufacturing technology and quality control, is expected to employ more than 50 people by the time it’s fully operational this fall. This second factory was needed to ease the production workload from their first plant (already run at full capacity in Vancouver) where 175 people are employed.

Helping “take the guesswork out of tofu” for mainstream consumers, Pete’s Tofu features five innovative, ready-to-eat tofu products. Pete’s “Tofu2Go” flavour-packed triangles with dipping sauce packs, and “Peach Mango” and “Very Berry” naturally flavoured twin pack tofu desserts, are intended to be a hit with consumers who don’t know what to do with tofu.

“The demand for tofu among Canadians in Ontario and Quebec, and Americans in the eastern seaboard cities, is growing by about 15 per cent each year,” says Peter Joe, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of Sunrise Soya Foods, a 46-year-old tofu manufacturer headquartered in Vancouver. “Our new Toronto plant will reduce our shipping costs from B.C. to the East Coast, and extend our product shelf life since much of the tofu will now be made locally.”

Sunrise is based in Western Canada, a home market in which it enjoys about 80 per cent market share and has been promoting tofu’s health benefits and versatility in cooking for decades. As a culinary chameleon, tofu takes on the flavour of whatever ingredients with which it is used. Cumulative studies suggest that tofu consumption may lower LDL “bad” cholesterol levels, and, in turn, reduce the risk of heart disease. Research also indicates that tofu may prevent hormone dependent cancers, ease menopausal symptoms and reduce the risk of osteoporosis. As a cholesterol-free source of protein, tofu also acts as a dairy, meat or egg substitute or complement in everyday recipes.

Sunrise Soya Foods was founded in 1956, and is Canada’s largest tofu manufacturer and the fifth largest in North America. Currently, Sunrise employs more than 200 Canadians. Sunrise’s brands and product offerings address health, mainstream and ethnic markets. Newcomer “Pete’s Tofu,” made with organic soybeans, is contained in consumer-friendly packaging, which features on-pack recipes. Sunrise has partnered with many grocery, health food and Asian stores in Canada and is expected to double or triple with expansion into the US markets.

To meet the growing interest in tofu, Sunrise offers two web sites in three languages and a toll-free Consumer Bean-Line at 1-800-661-2326. All Sunrise products are certified Kosher. For more information, go to www.sunrise-soya.com or www.petestofu.com.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

Media Advisory

Sunrise Soya Foods to Officially Open New Toronto Plant

Toronto, ON, September 13, 2002 – Sunrise Soya Foods, Canada’s largest tofu manufacturer, will host a grand opening of its new Toronto manufacturing facility from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., on **Tuesday September 24th**, offering savory luncheon fare by local chefs Nettie Cronish and Mark Jachecki.

The state-of-the-art, 30,000 square foot facility will be officially opened at 11:30 a.m. with a ceremonial Chinese lion dance, followed by a ribbon cutting by Peter Joe, General Manager and CEO of the 46-year-old family-owned firm. Helen Johns, Minister of Agriculture and Food, will also be in attendance.

During the culinary event, some 200 guests will be invited to tour the plant, learn about the tofu making process and view a history wall display about this “culinary chameleon’s” escalating popularity as a fast, delicious and healthy addition to Canadian menus.

Sunrise Soya Foods employs more than 200 Canadians and is the fifth largest tofu manufacturer in North America. Its brands and product offerings address health, mainstream and ethnic markets. Newcomer “Pete’s Tofu,” made with organic soybeans, uses consumer-friendly packaging that features on-pack recipes to further expand awareness. Sunrise has partnered with many grocery, health food and Asian stores in Canada and the U.S. All Sunrise products are certified Kosher.

For more information, visit www.sunrise-soya.com or www.petestofu.com, or call the toll-free Consumer Bean-Line at 1-800-661-2326.

What: Grand opening of Sunrise Soya Foods new Toronto manufacturing facility

When: Tuesday, September 24, 2002, 11:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Arrivals, refreshments and hors d’oeuvres: 11 – 11:30 a.m.
Lion dance: 11:30 – 11:50 a.m.
Ribbon cutting and opening remarks: 11:50 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
Plant tours, culinary demonstrations and sampling: 12:05 – 2 p.m.

Where: 21 Medulla Ave., Toronto, ON, Tel.: 416-233-2337
(Medulla runs north off North Queen St. between Kipling and East Mall)

Who: Peter Joe, President and CEO, Sunrise Soya Foods
Helen Johns, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Government of Ontario
Peter Milczy, Ward 5 Councillor
Nettie Cronish, vegetarian chef and cookbook author
Mark Jachecki, executive chef, Presidential Gourmet Corporation

Schneiders Oh Naturel case study

Preamble:

- Hunter LaVigne Communications (HLC) conducted a re-launch since the original product launched to media in spring 2004 without desired results

Objective:

- To raise awareness of product line through media coverage

Strategy:

- Through sampling and seasonal hook, re-introduce the product to larger news media audience

Strategic Considerations:

- Diverse target audiences requiring media relations specialists with language specific experience
- Now soft news because of spring program
- Large team to manage for both client and lead agency, HLC

Target Audiences:

- Women 18-49 years old (emphasis on women 18-34 years)
- Young teenage girls
- Older baby boomers (male and female)
- Urban, professional, well educated and affluent

Target Markets:

- Toronto
- Montreal
- Calgary
- Vancouver

Target Media:

- Major market daily newspapers and wire service contacts (business, health and food)
- Consumer magazines (mainly women targeted, business, health and food editors and writers)
- Trades and business magazines (food, packaging, plant, grocery)

- Marketing Publications/Editors (both trades and dailies with some electronic and web)
- Ethnic Media (print and broadcast)
- Freelancers (mainly food and health)

Tactics:

- Sampling program to 250-plus news media (English, French, Chinese) with news release as well as direct e-mail and paid wire dissemination (Marketwire (formerly CCNMatthews))
- Winter BBQ angle taken
- Integrated with launch of print and TV advertising along with feature article dissemination through News Canada

Measurement:

Quantity and quality of media coverage

Budget:

Total budget was \$31,710, with \$22,150 for fees and \$9,560 for disbursements. Does not include sampling costs and shipping.

Results:

- 12.2 million impressions including: Soy Daily, Marketing Magazine and online, 24 Hueres Montreal, Calgary Sun, CFTR 680 News (weekend run), Le Soleil, Toronto Sun, Canadian Packaging, Food in Canada, Food Service & Hospitality, Grocer Today, Western Grocer, Toronto Star, CBC Radio (national), Vancouver Sun, The Record (Kitchener/Waterloo), Forever Young magazine, 7 Jours, Capital Sante, L'actualite Alimentaire and Chinese publications Canadian Chinese Times, Ming Pao, Epoch Times, Calgary Trend Weekly, Calgary and Chinese Times.
- The combination of advertising and public relations work propelled Oh Naturel into second place in unit and dollar share in the category eclipsing the more established BOCA brand. Share figures continued to show strength after both the PR and media campaigns were completed. Overall consumer sales doubled immediately following the campaigns to achieve over half a million consumer units in the first six months of 2005.
- **Media Relations Ratings Point (MRRP) Score:** 85 per cent

News Release

When you BBQ this winter, go Oh Naturel

Kitchener, ON, January 13, 2005 – Canadians certainly love their BBQs, and show their dedication from coast-to-coast by lighting up the grill year-round. In fact, surveys show that almost one-fifth have fired up the BBQ at temperatures below minus 20 degrees Celsius. This year, Schneiders encourages Canadians to brave the cold “Oh Naturel!”

This passion for barbequing can now be combined with another popular past time: New Year’s resolutions to lead healthier lifestyles. It makes perfect sense to use the Schneiders Oh Naturel!™ line of meatless burgers, wieners, ground round, chick’n strips, beef strips, chick’n nuggets, meatballs and chick’n burgers to help achieve this goal.

“Research showed that 80 per cent of burgers and wieners are consumed from the BBQ and yet most meatless products have performed poorly on the BBQ,” says Tracey Peake, Marketing Manager, Schneider Foods. “We designed our meatless burgers and wieners specifically with the BBQ in mind knowing that they have to be juicy, flavourful and taste great off the grill.”

Schneiders Oh Naturel!™ products are a good source of protein, contain all the goodness of soy, are lower in fat, low in or free of trans and saturated fats, cholesterol free, lower in calories and sodium and are a good source of fibre. They are available at major grocery stores across Canada, including Sobey’s, A&P, Dominion, Safeway, Overwaitea/Save-On, IGA and Wal-Mart in the frozen, produce or meat sections.

The Schneiders Oh Naturel!™ products are produced in a new 20,000 square foot facility in Burnaby, B.C., dedicated to meatless products, employing 30 full and part-time employees.

“Schneiders is the first major brand to combine great taste, convenience and good nutrition in a ‘centre of the plate’ meat alternative,” adds Peake. “These products are made with Schneiders care and attention to quality, so the products include an improved texture and great taste not normally associated with soy products.”

For more than a century, the name "Schneiders" has been synonymous with great taste, tradition, and quality. Founded in 1890, the company now employs more than 5,500 people and has sales of more than \$1-billion. Schneider Foods produces more than 1,000 products with operations across Canada. Schneider Foods was acquired by Maple Leaf in March 2004, and is an independent operating company of Maple Leaf Foods.

For more information, go to www.schneiderfoods.ca. A high-resolution product photo of Schneiders Oh Naturel!™ product packaging is parked at:

[http://www2.ccnmatthews\).com/database/fax/2000/Schneider1.jpeg](http://www2.ccnmatthews).com/database/fax/2000/Schneider1.jpeg)

Winter BBQ Tips

Schneider Foods offers the following Winter BBQ tips to keep you safe this winter:

1. Don't grill in your garage, even with the door open. Harmful fumes can accumulate.
2. Wear an old parka or apron, including gloves, so you don't stink up or dirty your better outerwear and make sure you have a winter mat inside the entrance so you don't trudge snow and ice into living areas.
3. Avoid wearing a scarf and a hat with dangling drawstrings while winter barbecuing, as they can catch on fire quite easily.
4. Keep snow and ice off the barbecue and clear the snow around it regularly so it doesn't become slippery when the barbecue heats it up or freezes up afterwards.
5. Invest in a good pliable plastic cover that will not break in very cold weather. Wait until the barbecue cools before placing the cover back on or it could melt onto the lid.
6. Below minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit), knobs and handles can become very brittle and break off, so handle with care and have small vice-grip pliers handy for knob and handle emergencies.
7. Ensure your barbecue area is well lit so you can see what you're doing in the dark. Remember that many parts of Canada get dark in the winter BEFORE dinnertime. Headlamps work well if you don't have barbecue area lighting.
8. Use a meat thermometer to check internal temperatures because cooking times will greatly vary between summer and winter.
9. Have a spare propane tank filled in case the one that's connected to the barbecue runs out during cooking.
10. Never use a blowtorch to thaw out frozen tank fittings and never lick the barbecue lid to see if your tongue sticks.

For information, contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

Yellow Brick House Pathway for Peace case study

Preamble:

Yellow Brick House is a non-profit shelter for abused women and children and homeless women and children, serving York Region (north of Toronto). United Way funding had been cut drastically, so the shelter is dependent on the Ministry of Community and Social Services (COMSOC) for most of its funding. It has to generate about \$300,000 per year in self-raised funds to meet its current budget. Holding any kind of media or public event at the shelter was not possible due to security and privacy concerns. The Pathway for Peace, the brainchild of Mark LaVigne, APR, is a very simple concept. It is designed to refurbish a run down public space. Through that space, a pathway of cobblestones is built and a monument erected. Then the cobblestones or “bricks” can be “sold” in kind. Once or twice a year a plaque is erected to honour those who bought bricks.

Objectives:

- Generate awareness of Yellow Brick House and abuse/homeless issues through media coverage
- Generate money through brick sales

Strategy:

- Attract a noted celebrity to open the pathway so it can raise money and awareness at the same time.

Strategic Considerations:

- Potential violence against the venue by enraged former partners was a concern. (The monument was firmly rooted ten feet deep and lighting was installed as precautions).
- Attract enough initial donors of products and services to make the project financially viable (more than \$100,000 worth of goods and services were donated)

Selected Celebrity:

- The former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, agreed to “launch” the pathway.

Target Audiences:

- York Region-based families and businesses.

Measurement:

- Quality and quantity of media coverage generated over 1.5 year period
- Brick sales, since main marketing communications vehicle was media relations over the same period

Challenges/Limitations:

- Lack of budget to purchase or generate marketing communications other than media relations and direct mailing to shelter donors
- Location of media events 60 kilometres north of downtown Toronto

Budget:

- Fees: public relations counsel and project management was Pro Bono
- Disbursements: \$32,860 including landscaping and pathway construction, three monument stones, engraving and placement, three sets of plaques

Event Elements/Critical Path:

- Teaser photo-op event of monument arrival for engraving held May 23, 2000.
- Launch event held June 27, 2000 with the Honourable Hilary M. Weston and Aurora Mayor Tim Jones in attendance. Key invitees to launch included key COMSOC officials, other local politicians, more than 100 school children and dozens of Yellow Brick House staff, volunteer board members and former residents. Ribbon cutting/plaque unveiling conducted by Weston & Jones.
- Plaque commemoration events were held Sept. 26, 2000 and June 29, 2001 where plaques were unveiled on monument. Mayor Jones attended both.

Tactics:

- Media advisory distributed via paid wire and e-mail one week prior to events.
- Videographer was hired at half rate for launch event where he shot Beta quality video. Dubbed at downtown facility and delivered by driver to all GTA TV outlets.
- Photographer shot images on professional digital camera at all three events. E-mailed to key local media each time.

Results:

- More than six million first impressions have been generated in news media over 1.5 year period including local TV such as CKVR-TV, Shaw and Rogers, local newspapers such as the Era Banner, Town Crier, the Liberal and the Auroran, Global TV, and CBC Radio (5 minute documentary).
- The path paid for itself in six months. It so far has raised about \$4,000 in profits that go directly into shelter revenues.

Media Advisory

Pathway for Peace in Aurora to be Opened by Lieutenant Governor

Aurora, ON, June 20, 2000 – A ‘pathway for peace,’ a fundraising initiative for women’s shelter Yellow Brick House, will be officially opened in Aurora June 27th by the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

The path has been built through the centre of Temperance Park, just west of Aurora’s main intersection of Yonge and Wellington Streets. Individuals, families and companies can purchase bricks in the path to raise money for Yellow Brick House. All purchasers, and project donors, will have their names (or names of their choice) placed on a plaque that will be mounted on the monument in September.

Bricks are being sold for \$25 (families and individuals), \$100 (small business) and \$1,000 (corporate). Contact Yellow Brick House at (905) 727-0930 Ext. 230 to purchase a brick.

Why: Path opening by the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
 When: Tuesday, June 27th, 2000, 11:00 a.m.
 Where: Temperance Park is located on the south side of Wellington Street West, at Temperance Street, one block west of Yonge Street. Aurora Town Hall is three lights east of Yonge and Wellington Streets on John West Way. Town Hall is one block north on the west side.

A public reception will follow at Aurora Town Hall after a brief private tour of Yellow Brick House. Her Honour will arrive at Town Hall at approximately 11:45 a.m.

For information, contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

News Release

Pathway for Peace in Aurora Opened by Lieutenant Governor

Aurora, ON, June 27, 2000 – A ‘pathway for peace,’ a fundraising initiative for women’s shelter Yellow Brick House, was officially opened in Aurora today by the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

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Besides raising money and awareness, the path project is also an acknowledgement of the Town of Aurora and its resident’s support throughout Yellow Brick House’s 21 years. It is hoped the pathway for peace fundraising concept may be used by other women’s shelters across the province, and even nationally, creating a nationwide pathway for peace.

Founded in 1978, and located in Aurora since 1982, Yellow Brick House is a 21-bed shelter for abused and homeless women and their children. It also operates an eight-apartment longer-term facility (called Reta’s Place and also located in Aurora) and an outreach office and counselling centre in Thornhill. It serves York Region and provides shelter, counselling, and education services. Visit www.yellowbrickhouse.org. Media may access this information electronically, and download images after the event, at www.yellowbrickhouse.org/media.

-30-

For information, contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

Corporate anniversary case study (2001)

Kodak Canada 100th Anniversary

I Knew Kolorkins Could Fly

Our major objective in creating the Kodak Kolorkins event was to generate news media coverage of Kodak Canada's 100th Anniversary as well as to launch a new promotion involving Kodak's mini bean bag Kolorkins. Research indicated that corporate anniversaries do not generate widespread media interest. We decided to create an event that would gain media interest, and themed it after a popular WKRP episode. The event consisted of two helicopters dropping the Kolorkins with parachutes towards a giant "100" painted on Kodak's parking lot. Mayor Mel Lastman attended as a judge. \$10,000 was donated by Kodak employees to a local homeless youth shelter. Mr. Lastman also declared our anniversary date as Kodak Centennial Day and Kodak Photo Week. Nineteen news media attended, generating television coverage on every GTA television station as well as numerous print and Internet articles.

Objectives:

- Generate news coverage on launching Kodak's Centennial initiatives.
- Generate news coverage of the launch of Kodak's mini-bean bag Kolorkins.
- Generate news coverage on the new Kodak DCS620 professional digital camera.
- Have Mayor declare Kodak Centennial Photo Day or Week.
- Provide an event to generate employee enthusiasm.

Research:

- Primary and secondary research indicated that company anniversaries, even those as significant as centennials, have difficulty gaining media coverage in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) media.
- Anecdotal research (brief media survey) determined that WKRP enjoys high recall among "media types."
- Transport Canada and helicopter specialists provided green light for tactical elements.
- Developed parachute to enable Kolorkins to safely descend from helicopter. Two test Kolorkin drops.
- Researched local charitable recipients that tied in with Kodak's philanthropic programs.

Strategy:

- Provided a significant photo opportunity for daily newspaper and television photojournalists and videographers at Kodak's Canadian headquarters and plant site.

News Hooks:

- *Kolorkin/Centennial launch; 100 employees; VIP as judge; Charity as recipient; Use of the new Kodak DCS620 (in helicopter); Webcast*

Strategic Considerations:

- VIP as judge: Mayor Mel Lastman agreed to officiate.
- Charity: identified as Horizons for Youth (a homeless youth shelter) -- tied to the event to reduce the "commerciality" that some media may use as an excuse not to attend.
- Capitalized on the highly popular "*As God is my witness I thought turkeys could fly*" episode from the TV show *WKRP in Cincinnati*.
- Timed event to take place in May which is Photography Month.
- The news media was at that time focused on helicopters as an aid to police chases throughout the GTA.

Event Elements/Tactics:

- Two helicopters hired to drop 100 (in three batches) Kodak Kolorkins with parachutes onto Kodak's parking lot east of Building 11. Second helicopter flew above first helicopter to shoot the Kolorkins landing. This provided media with an additional photo angle, as well as the photo for the paid wire photo release and video for VIDEO.
- Below the helicopter was a giant "100" (25 feet by 25 feet) painted in large numbers on the parking lot.
- The Kolorkin Parachutists were targeted at the two zeros. The number to fall in the zeros would determine the amount of money to be donated by Kodak to the designated charitable recipient (\$10,000 would be awarded despite how many actually landed in the zeros).
- Helicopter rides after the event were offered to assembled photojournalists and editors of photo specialty publications (i.e. Don Long, Gunter Ott) so they can use the new DCS620 professional digital camera to shoot the "100" focal point. Employees were also offered rides.
- Six DCS620's made available to attending media.
- Media were invited to attend the event via a paid newswire (GTA only) media advisory. National media were invited with a webcast focus; Hard copy of media advisory with an actual Kolorkin was distributed to photo editors/TV assignment

editors directly three weeks prior. Follow up was conducted by telephone calls and e-mail.

- A videographer was hired to record the event and distribute video to local TV stations (i.e. CFTO/CITY/Global). Also, CNW 60 second report created from that tape. A photojournalist was hired to shoot the event and move that image with cutline on paid newswire after the event to complement media coverage.
- Fencing assembled per Transport Canada regulations. Parking plan developed for 280 vehicles to fit around the cordoned off area with the rest sent to back field.
- Tent (50 X100 feet) assembled with media table, podium, sound system, and Ethernet connection for live webcast. Refreshments inside tent. A live webcast was conducted from the tent.
- Kodak 100th anniversary collaterals developed (hats, pins, bookmarks, t-shirts, Kolorkins, and jackets worn by all participants) for employees and guests.
- Blown-up and real cheque for \$10,000
- Two-way radios for key personnel (pilots, PR, Security).
- A 100-foot crane was reserved in case of high winds or severe weather.

Budget:

Client considers this proprietary

Evaluation:

Met Objectives:

- 19 media attended the event. Television coverage generated in all GTA television stations (VIDEO picked-up by non-attending TV stations CITY-TV, CP24, and CFMT). Total of 13 TV broadcasts, reaching 1.9 million viewers. Print coverage generated in key trades (for digital camera business) including front cover of Computer Dealer News. Coverage generated in Adnews, key trade for Kolorkin promotion. Total reach of 2.3 million readers.
- Webcast had more than 100,000 hits. Internet coverage of event reached more than 500,000 audience.
- Mayor Mel Lastman officially declared week of May 3rd to 8th as Kodak Photo Week and May 6th as Kodak Centennial Day.
- Kodak internally described the event as “the best in its 100-year history.”

Post-Mortem:

- Although this was an event closed to the general public (because of safety concerns), the media advisory did not stipulate that so media reported it was happening the morning of. Copy should have stipulated.
- Although two GTA daily newspaper photographers did attend, those newspapers did not run coverage. The shot proved very difficult to perform both from the ground and air. A raised platform closer to the drop area may have helped, although safety requirements negated such a platform. More time aloft to get the perfect shot may have helped, but time constraints on the helicopter rental negated a time extension.
- More budget was needed to retain attendance of Toronto's Gordon Jump, WKRP's Arthur Carlson.

Media Advisory

As God is my witness, I thought Kolorkins could fly

A new breed of paratrooper will adorn the skies over Toronto May 6th to officially launch Kodak Canada's 100th Anniversary. More than 100 Mini Bean Bag Kolorkins, equipped with parachutes, will be dropped from a helicopter (Bell Long Ranger) hovering over Kodak Canada's Toronto plant.

The Mini Kolorkins will attempt to land within the zeros of a giant "100" painted on the surface of the parking lot. Mayor Mel Lastman will judge how many will actually land within the zeros. For every successful Mini Kolorkin landing within the zeros, \$100 will be donated to the Horizons for Youth organization, a local shelter for homeless and troubled youth. The Mayor will also officially declare May 6th as Kodak Centennial Day.

A second helicopter (Robinson R44) will hover above the first to provide news photographers and videographers with another angle to shoot the parachute drop over the plant's main parking lot. As well, the new Kodak DCS620 professional and DC265 consumer digital cameras will be available to news media to shoot the event both from the air and ground.

The event will also be webcast on www.kodak.ca One-hundred Kodak employees will also be on hand to officially witness the Kolorkin drop.

The four inch tall Mini Kolorkins are descendants of the popular 10-inch tall Kolorkins of the 1980's, and used by Kodak worldwide to act as ambassadors, mascots and premium items for the promotion of Kodak products. The series of five different Mini Kolorkins will be available to purchasers of Kodak products throughout the company's Centennial year of 1999.

When: Thursday, May 6th, 1999 at 11:00 a.m.

Where: Kodak Canada's plant at Black Creek and Eglinton
Enter from the north side of the plant off Industry Street, which runs off Todd Bayliss Boulevard (off Black Creek, first light north of Eglinton on the west side of Black Creek)

Why: To launch Kodak Canada's 100th Anniversary with the Mini Kolorkins and the company's new DCS 620 professional digital camera.

For more information:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

News Release

As God is my witness, I knew Kolorkins could fly

Toronto, ON, May 6, 1999 - More than one hundred Mini Bean Bag paratroopers landed on Kodak Canada's parking lot today to kick-off the company's 100th anniversary in this country.

The four-inch tall Mini Bean Bag Kolorkins, descendants of the popular 10-inch tall Kolorkins of the 1980's, helped raise \$10,000 for Horizons for Youth organization, a local shelter for homeless and troubled youth that is in the same neighbourhood of Kodak's sprawling plant.

The Mini Kolorkins will attempt to land within the zeros of a giant "100" painted on the surface of the parking lot. Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman officiated as judge to determine how many Mini Kolorkins actually landed within the zeroes of a massive painted "100" on the surface of the company's parking lot. The Mini Kolorkins were dropped from a helicopter, hovering 100 feet above the parking lot. The Mayor also officially declared May 6th as Kodak Centennial Day.

"As God is my witness, I knew the Mini Kolorkins could fly," quipped Ted Knight, Director, Corporate and Business Unit Communications, Kodak Canada Inc. "We are very proud to have been in this country for 100 years," added Ed Jurus, President, Kodak Canada. "And we're looking forward to the next hundred."

Kodak Canada, which employs more than 1,400 people in Canada, manufactures a variety of products at its main Canadian facility, including inkjet and micrographic products for the worldwide market. The company's charter was officially instigated November 3rd, 1899. Its first Canadian location was 41 Colborne Street in downtown Toronto.

Mayor Mel Lastman has earmarked the homeless issue as one of his main concerns as both mayor of the country's largest city and as a private citizen. He has successfully lobbied provincial and federal politicians to launch a number of initiatives in this issue.

Horizons for Youth organization is an emergency shelter for homeless and troubled youth aged 16 to 24. The shelter can provide 35 beds at any given time, and serves up to 800 young people each year. It is a member of the United Way.

Images, shot with the company's new DSC620 professional digital camera from a second helicopter which hovered above the first, are available at Kodak Canada's web site at www.kodak.ca/go/netcast. The series of five different Mini Kolorkins will be available to purchasers of Kodak products throughout the company's Centennial year of 1999.

For information, please contact:

Names, office phone, cell phone and e-mail of PR, client, and third-party if applicable

McCormick Gourmet Super Spices

Preamble:

- The Gourmet Super Spices campaign launched **Tuesday, March 2, 2010**. Media relations tactics included an English and French matte article package with article, sidebar, and recipes distributed via News Canada, English and French news releases distributed via Marketwire and direct e-mail, and a Chinese news release distributed via Dynasty PR. Product sample kits went to an A list of about 100 media.

PR Objectives:

- Through proactive product media relations, generate positive media coverage in both the consumer and trade food news holes to help drive awareness and sales. At least 10 million total impressions will be generated, a 75 per cent overall score (MRP) with a cost per contact of \$.05 or below.

Target Audiences:

- Primary purchaser is female aged 35 – 54 with 2+ kids at home. Children under 18 at home, predominately maturing (kids 6 – 12) and established (kids 13 – 17) families
- Relatively affluent households with income of \$70M+
- Health focused homes

Target Markets:

- Toronto (extended Golden Horseshoe) 6.6 million including Peterborough, Kingston, Barrie, London, Guelph, Kitchener, Windsor, Ottawa, Hamilton – 6.5 million
- Montreal, Quebec City (Laurentians/eastern townships) corridor: 3.6 million
- Vancouver and lower BC mainland including Whistler: 2.6 million
- Calgary/Edmonton Corridor - 1.9 million
- Maritimes: Halifax (NS), St. John's (NF), 500,000
- Prairies: Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, 250,000
- Smaller towns and cities in between covered by News Canada distribution
- Chinese Canada focused in major urban areas including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal

Target Media:

- Major market daily newspapers and wire service contacts (mainstream food)
- Consumer magazines (mainly women targeted, food editors and writers)
- Trades and business magazines (food, packaging, grocery)
- Electronic Media (Radio and TV where relevant)
- Websites/Ezines (food)
- Freelancers (mainly food)
- Community newspapers and small dailies (through News Canada distribution channel)

Strategic Considerations:

Gourmet launch (September 13, 2007) generated a total reach of 30,429,472, with a cost per contact of \$.002 and an MRP score of 79 per cent.

Budget:

Fees of \$8,000 and disbursements of \$15,890 for a total of \$23,890.

Results:

- Total Impressions Captured: 47,444,820 (10 million was target)
- Cost per impression: \$.001 (\$.05 was target)
- MRP 87.28% (75% target)

Highlights included the unusual pick-up by Rita Demontis of our Super Spices story in her nationally syndicated Eat column, netting in verbatim coverage sourced from her Toronto Sun full page article in 30 SunMedia dailies and 28 on-line corresponding properties. Major daily pick-up here included the Toronto, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Edmonton, and Calgary Suns. Total impressions there were 5.3 million impressions. Other major news portals in English and French that picked-up the story in verbatim fashion from the news release included Yahoo, Google, Altavista, Reuters, Congoo, Findarticles, Topix, MSNBC with reviews in Tidingsmag.com, Canadian Packaging, 24 Heures, Hamilton Spectator, Grocer Today, Ontario Restaurant News, Pacific/Prairie Restaurant News. Total impressions there were 31.7 million impressions. News Canada distributed articles and recipes netted 8.1 million impressions, with Chinese media relations bringing in 1.8 million impressions.

News Release

McCormick Gourmet Super Spices: A new reason to season

London, ON, March 2, 2010 - Nutritionists have long recommended spices and herbs as a way to add flavour without fat, salt or sugar – making it easier to meet today’s dietary guidelines. But now studies suggest adding more spices and herbs to your diet may not only please your palate, it could enhance your health.

“To make it easy and delicious to enjoy the potential benefits of spices, we have created a unique collection of new recipes, specially designed to deliver up to half a teaspoon of antioxidant-rich spices per serving,” says Brian Rainey, Executive Vice-President Sales & Marketing for McCormick Canada. “Many spices and herbs appear to have some beneficial effects, but there are 10 McCormick Gourmet Super Spices that may hold the greatest potential to improve our health.”

McCormick Gourmet 10 Super Spices:

- Cinnamon
- Ginger
- Oregano
- Paprika
- Cayenne Pepper
- Parsley
- Basil
- Rosemary
- Thyme
- Turmeric (*common in curry powder*)

Botanically, spices and herbs are classified as fruits and vegetables. That’s why these plant-derived ingredients are naturally high in antioxidants. And, since they no longer contain the water that makes up a significant part of the weight of fresh produce, spices and herbs offer a big antioxidant punch in a very compact package.

Spices and herbs also are rich in phytonutrients, such as carotenoids, flavonoids and other phenolics, which possess health-promoting properties beyond being great antioxidants.

To help enjoy the taste and health benefits of these 10 McCormick Gourmet Super Spices throughout the course of the day, here are some simple tips:

At breakfast:

- Sprinkle Cinnamon on your bowl of oatmeal, yogurt, French toast or muffin batter.
- A dash of Thyme is a welcome addition to scrambled eggs or omelettes.

At lunch:

- Stir dried Oregano Leaves or Crushed Red Pepper Flakes into favourite canned soups, chicken/tuna salads or vinaigrette dressings. Try these on pizza to get a delicious antioxidant boost.
- A sprinkling of Ground Ginger over sliced fresh fruit makes a refreshing dessert.

At dinner:

- Wake up the flavours of favourite side dishes with Crushed Rosemary Leaves (a natural with mashed or roasted potatoes) or Curry Powder (perfect for rice dishes or couscous.)

More information and recipes can be found at www.spicesforhealth.ca.

McCormick Canada is a wholly-owned subsidiary of McCormick & Company, Inc., a global leader in the manufacture, marketing and distribution of spices, seasonings and flavours to the entire food industry. Founded in 1889 in Baltimore, Maryland, McCormick & Company employs more than 7,500 people. McCormick & Company includes Schwartz (UK), McCormick Foods Australia, Ducros (France), McCormick de Centro América (Central America), and AVT McCormick (India). McCormick Canada celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2008. More information can be found at www.mccormick.com.

Product and recipe photos are parked at: www.marketwire.com/mccormick.

To view directions/ingredients/tips for the Mango-Blueberry Cobbler and Citrus Salmon with Orange Relish recipes, please visit the following link:
<http://media3.marketwire.com/docs/McCormickGourmetSpicesforHealthNewsRelease.doc>

For news media information and product samples, please contact:

SANYO Internet Radio

Product Synopsis:

The SANYO Internet Radio R227 with built-in WIFI provides an easy to use Internet audio interface that plays thousands of free stations from around the world without a subscription. Perfect for the bedroom, den, kitchen, office, or even hotel room, the Sanyo Internet Radio sports an easy network key entry when used on secured wireless networks. It enables search by country or genre, with eight Internet station presets. It also has an FM stereo digital tuner with eight station presets. Loaded with clock radio functionality, including wake-to-internet or FM radio, the R227 boasts excellent stereo audio with dual speakers. A simple one-button on/off negates complex computer boot-up, player selection and shutdown issues, as well as provides easy background audio while working on a computer without overloading Internet feeds. It also solves the problem of poor AM reception in many offices and condominiums by accessing an AM station's web stream instead. The unit is quite compact at 215 X 140 X 110 mm/8.6 X 5.6 X 4.4 inches (wxhxd). Complete with remote control, built-in WIFI, Ethernet jack and input jacks for MP3/WMA players, audio-out and stereo headphone jacks, the R227 will be available in Canada by November, 2008. It supports such audio files as AAC, AIFF, MP3, RM, WAV, WMA and playlists (M3V) stored on a networked computer. It will be initially marketed in a black wood gloss finish and brushed aluminum front through selected retailers for an MSRP of \$219.99*.

Planning began in December, 2007, with launch October 27, 2008.

Objectives:

- To generate significant early adopter news media buzz for this product!
- To generate minimum of 10-million impressions, with a cost per contact of at least \$.005 cents

Strategic Considerations:

- Sanyo's first major mainstream audio product was its transistor radio in 1956
- Canada is one of the leading countries for both Internet use and WIFI within offices and households
- Canada has amongst the highest multicultural mix in the world, with Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver being amongst the most multicultural cities
- Canada has a plethora of news media serving this multicultural mix, including radio

Target Audiences:

- Tech adopters in 30 to 40 year old age demographic, male skewed
- New Canadians
- Room guests at the more innovative or upscale hotels

Target Markets:

- Extended Golden Horseshoe, 6.6 million including Ottawa, Peterborough, Kingston, Barrie, London, Guelph, Kitchener, Windsor
- Calgary/Edmonton Corridor - 1.9 million

- Vancouver and lower BC mainland including Whistler: 2.6 million
- Maritimes

Tactics:

- Three day exclusive to 680 News tied in with give-away promotion (October 23)
- Sanyo Canada launch October 27, worldwide exclusive)Sanyo US launch December 2, 2008)
- Paid wire distribution with photo as part of Marketwire/CP Press Pack
- Canadian Press photo shoot with product and model with product shots. CP photographer Dave Starrett captured beautiful generic downtown image in background as directed.
- Product loaner program – all products then purchased by media
- Chinese and South Asian media relations conducted by Dynasty Advertising and Public Relations, Markham, ON. Adaption from English media materials.

Results:

- Total media outlets: 259
- Total hard copy: 54
- Total .com: 202
- Number of CP photo pick-ups: 131
- Total captured MRP impressions: **64,724,939**
- Fees: \$10,587.79
- Disbursements: \$5,600.00
- Total: \$16,187.79
- Cost per impression: \$.001
- MRP: \$81.55 %
- Ad Value: \$620,263.27

News Release

SANYO CANADA LAUNCHES NEW INTERNET RADIO PRODUCT

Concord, ON, October 27, 2008 – Fifty-two years after it launched one of the world's first transistor radios, SANYO has unveiled in Canada its new Internet Radio, combining the convenience of Internet radio's plethora of crystal clear channels from around the world with wireless Internet efficacy.

The SANYO Internet Radio R227 with built-in WIFI provides an easy to use Internet audio interface that plays thousands of stations and podcasts from around the world without a subscription fee.

High resolution product images are available at www.marketwire.com/sanyo/

Perfect for the bedroom, den, kitchen, office, even a hotel room, the Sanyo Internet Radio sports an easy network key entry when used on secured wireless networks. It enables search by country or genre, with eight Internet station presets. It also has an FM stereo digital tuner with eight station presets.

“Canada is one of the most multicultural and urban concentrated countries in the world, and the SANYO Internet Radio R227 meets the needs of those radio aficionados perfectly,” says Barry Richler, Vice President, Consumer Products, Sanyo Canada. “Many radio stations in remote parts of the world cannot be consistently received on conventional shortwave radios. Also, it is difficult to receive AM signals in many downtown offices and condominiums. The problem is easily solved by accessing a station's web stream instead,” adds this industry veteran. “As well, you can listen to the eclectic music programming of such FM stations as WFUV out of New York City, or CKUA from Calgary, without having to turn on your computer, or sit at your desk for that matter. It will make you fall in love with radio all over again.”

Loaded with clock radio functionality, including wake-to-internet or FM radio, the R227 boasts excellent stereo audio with dual speakers. A simple one-button on/off negates complex computer boot-up, player selection and shutdown issues, as well as provides easy background audio while working on a computer without having to reboot after those too-frequent updates from software providers.

The unit is quite compact at 215 X 140 X 110 mm/8.6 X 5.6 X 4.4 inches (wxhxd). Complete with remote control, built-in WIFI, Ethernet socket, input for MP3/WMA players, headphone jack, and output to connect to an external audio system, the R227 will be available in Canada by late October, 2008. It supports such audio files as AAC, AIFF, MP3, RM, WAV, WMA and playlists (M3V) stored on a networked computer. It will be initially marketed in a black wood gloss finish through selected retailers for a very affordable MSRP of \$219.99*.

SANYO Canada, established in 1958, is based in Concord, Ontario (a business suburb north of Toronto). Founded in 1947 in Osaka, Japan, SANYO, which stands for “three oceans,” has \$22 billion worldwide in sales. The company provides a full range of SANYO consumer and industrial products including audio and video, digital cameras, wireless communication, LCD projectors and monitors, security video, air conditioning and home appliance products. SANYO is also the world’s largest manufacturer of rechargeable batteries. Its environmental focus includes solar energy panel products, non-fluorocarbon refrigeration, and electric vehicle power solutions (for the Ford Escape Hybrid and Honda Accord). It is also a major manufacturer of lab equipment and CO2 incubators. Visit www.sanyo.ca for more information.

* Retailers may sell for less.

High resolution product images are available at www.marketwire.com/sanyo.

-30-

For news information and news media loaners only, please contact:

Electronic news kits hit primetime

Face-to-face media interface, whether that be in one-on-one interviews, or at news events, require an easy way to provide the news gatherer with an easy-to-use and portable news kit.

Costs have fallen in the electronic news kit production area whether they take the form of CDROMs or USB sticks.

Tip: high tech and electronics journalist Gordon Brockhouse, Editor of Here's How magazine, advises that a one-page hard copy news release accompany the CDROM or USB stick so time-pressured news media can make a decision in five seconds whether or not to even load that media into their systems.

If the story is not of interest, the CD can join the coaster or dog Frisbee stockpile of Internet CDs one or join that drawer filled with USB sticks.

Tip: He also finds electronic news kits much easier to use than going to web sites looking for images, even when direct URLs are supplied. He recommends the hard copy news release accompanying the ELECTRONIC NEWS KIT include a menu of what's actually on the disk, to speed up the news processing even further.

Electronic news kits become particularly useful at media events, or to send along with product shipments, whether hardware or software. E-mail media relations, if the above protocol is followed, is also very effective. Combining both is the best way to go, so key media are reached by two channels and invariably can at least find one of the communications under deadline pressure.

The time-pressure these journalists are under is very important to keep in mind. Ipsos Reid, in their comprehensive media survey in 2005, found on average that business journalists receive about 150 news releases per week (about 18 per cent are used). They also get an average 19 news conference invitations per month, with about 50 per cent getting a reporter to attend. On average, 60 annual reports are received per year (16 per cent are used quickly). And 20 media kits are received per month (19 per cent used).

Electronic news dissemination tips:

- Embed the news release within the e-mail message. Attachments are time consuming, and can be infected with a virus. Therefore, many journalists simply delete attachments.
- Format the embedded news release. Transferring from word processing software will always leave unsightly and hard-to-read aberrations. Take the time to correct those before hitting the send button.
- Blind copy your distribution. Often the number of contacts a practitioner would hit would use up a page or two of names and e-mail addresses before getting to the copy. This will frustrate a journalist who may very well hit the delete button in response. Also, you may not want to share all of your contacts with everybody.
- Use specific subject lines. Using something such as “Company XYZ news release” will simply get lost in the shuffle!
- Attempt to research beats properly so media are properly targeted.
- Include prices in the news release if it is product related, as most high tech news releases are. A lot of the freelancers work when many practitioners and clients are sleeping. Make sure the prices are in Canadian funds!
- Include a direct URL with the release so news media can quickly go to a section of the client’s web site to retrieve high-resolution product images or other lengthy works such as backgrounders, annual reports, and white papers.
- Include a technical contact with releases to help with installation or other problems.

Media relations writing techniques

There are some other media relations writing tactics that we will cover briefly in the following pages. Many of these can be effective elements for news media kits, electronic news kit compilations and web sites.

The backgrounder

- The backgrounder looks in the rear-view mirror and creates CONTEXT
- Several kinds of backgrounders:
 - Problem/solution
 - History of an organization
 - History of a product: How made, where came from, process
 - Company/organization or industry backgrounder
 - Biography of a person
 - Accomplishments

Position papers

- A position paper is also known as a white paper or briefing notes and sometimes is confused with backgrounders.
- A position paper is forward looking, while a backgrounder is backwards looking.
- A position paper or white paper is a detailed report about an ISSUE or TREND relating to an organization or an industry.
- A position paper can be used to brief spokespeople in advance of meeting various publics such as news media or investors.
- A position paper can also be distributed to opinion leaders and news media to provide an organization's POSITION on a particular issue (often tied to changes in regulations or laws).

The do's and don'ts of writing personality profiles

- Do create a full-colour picture.
- Do tell the reader who the subject is and why he or she is interesting.
- Do treat the profile as an interpretation, not necessarily an official biography.
- Do understand the subject's motivations.
- Don't write in chronological order – start at why the subject is interesting now.
- Do ask the subject to reflect, evaluate himself or herself, describe good and bad points, highs and lows.
- Don't just focus on his or her job. Try to see the whole person. What does he or she do at home, what are their hobbies?
- Do describe the person – are they serious, jovial, upbeat? What are they like under stress, at play, relaxed?
- Do keep in mind that personality profiles often can become the focus of a larger feature on an organization.
- Don't forget to look for the interesting hook.

Organizational profiles

Sometimes Personality and Organizational profiles can blend, depending on the more interesting focus

- An organizational profile is similar to a fact sheet, but written in feature article style.
- An organizational profile includes the facts: objectives, main business activity, size, market position, revenues, products, key executives;
- Much of these end up as the boilerplate for a news release;
- Anniversaries, major changes, centennials, can lead to the creation of a historical corporate profile: “30 years ago, XYZ Corporation started in Larry's garage.”

Elements and characteristics of a feature

- The format of a feature is similar to a news release providing contacts, headlines and datelines, but is often used to generate coverage of softer news and provide context/background.

Elements:

- **Headline:** Informational or creative (play on words, puns, alliteration, rhymes).
- **Lead:** News release lead is a summary of facts. Feature lead is much softer, starts with the focus, which is intended to attract attention.
- **Body:** Can be as long as it takes to tell the story. Up to 10 pages. However, the medium dictates the message. A food feature is often 500 to 750 words long. Business features can run between 1,000 to 2,000 words. Entertainment pieces the same. Newspapers have less space, magazines more.
- **Summary:** News release summaries often include boilerplates. Last fact dissemination. Feature summaries entail the crux of the story.

Characteristics:

A picture paints a thousand words. A feature can provide the palette for that picture with:

- A soft sell approach – use client or product name sparingly.
- Extensive use of quotes.
- Colourful use of descriptive words makes a feature entertaining.
- Features can be distributed/used in several ways: Distribute to a variety of publications; write an exclusive for one publication; Interest a freelancer or reporter in a story; post on organization's Web site; buy the space (advertorial).
- Placement opportunities exist in: specialty newspaper sections (auto, food, real estate); general or specialty magazines; business and trade magazines; internal publications; ezines and Web sites.

Public service announcements

- Used heavily in radio, less so in television, also in print, particularly in community/events sections.
- Mandated under CRTC regulations.
- Used to promote the programs of non-profits and government (but not election ads) and sometimes informational program by trade group qualifies.
- Should be tested by checking with sample group of PSA directors at radio and TV.
- Used mostly in non-peak times but getting celebrities as spokespeople invaluable to enable higher frequency as well as peak exposure.
- Scripted in UPPER CASE and double spaced and should vary in length 60, 30, 15 seconds to maximize flexibility.
- Recorded in video and/or audio form (MP3s and MPEG4s are fine).
- With scripts, make it as local as possible.
- Most highly used PSAs relate to:
 - Kids
 - Health
 - Safety
- Web site addresses should be included and if the non-profit does not have a web site, build one!

Brochures

Questions to ask before developing a brochure:

- What is the main audience?
- How will it be distributed?
- What is the organization's database like? Does it also include e-mail addresses?
- What is the possible budget?
- What is the objective?

Developing a brochure:

- Do a formal plan:
 - Preamble
 - Objectives
 - Strategic considerations
 - Product or organizational backgrounder
 - Target audiences and markets
 - Three key messages
- Then do a story board.
- Design an electronic version as well – to be used as an e-flyer.

Op-Eds and Letters-to-the-Editor

What is an OP-ed and when is it useful?

- Op-Ed: is short for “Opposite the editorial page,” a concept that originated with the New York Times.
- Op-Ed is an article, NOT an essay, that builds to its point.
- It is an excellent opportunity for individuals and/or organizations to reach an audience of opinion leaders.
- It is a great opportunity for an organization’s executive to become a spokesperson for a particular industry, cause or issue (Industry groups, universities, think tanks often originators of such PR).
- It is also a way to get the “real” story out.
- The Globe and Mail and National Post are the main conduits for Op-Eds in Canada.
- But regional or local papers also publish Op-Eds such as the Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen (politics) or Calgary Herald (oil patch).
- Op-Eds can also be used by the trade press for specific industries.

Tips for writing and offering Op-Eds:

- Keep it between 400 to 750 words (length preferred by daily newspapers).
- Present one main idea or single theme.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint about current social issues, situations or news.
- Get to your point in the first paragraph, then back-up your opinion with facts and stats (ratio of opinion to fact should be 20 per cent opinion to 80 per cent fact).
- Use short declarative sentences.
- Avoid the “I,” write in journalistic third person.
- Use active verbs, NOT passive text.
- Describe writer’s background in the cover letter or note.
- Follow standard practice by offering the Op-Ed to one publication at a time.
- Query editors before sending Op-Ed to see if there is interest in the first place.

Letters to the Editor

- A letter to the editor is an effective way of refuting or elaborating on previous news coverage and opinion columns.
- Always check to see who to send it to and the publication's requirements.
- Keep it short – 100 to 200 words or less.
- Be temperate, factual, and unemotional.
- Identify the subject in the opening paragraph.
- Identify the article or editorial, if it's a response, when and where it was published (sometimes a newspaper loves to publish views against its competition).
- State the theme of the letter in the second paragraph (agree, disagree, want clarification on something).
- Give your viewpoint, with back-up facts, in the next several paragraphs.
- Give your name, title, organization, and telephone number/e-mail address at the end of the letter. Publications often will contact writer for confirmation purposes.

Don't be a "Time Bandit"

Scott White, a 26-year veteran of The Canadian Press (CP) advises the public relations community to not be a "time bandit" when it comes to interfacing with his extremely busy journalists.

White, Editor-in-Chief of Canada's national news agency notes "the primary job for CP is to cover the day's spot news developments, preparing material for a national audience. So what might be appealing to the morning jocks of an FM radio station probably won't be of much interest to CP."

Following up new product stories, and pitching to multiple editors within CP not only aggravates these journalists unnecessarily, but actually steals valuable time from this news operation that runs on minute-to-minute deadlines 24/7. Hence, White's term "time bandit." "We receive literally hundreds of communications from PR professionals each day. Some of our editors, especially those in Business and Health-Lifestyles, can barely keep up with the flood of information. What is most maddening from an editor's perspective is a call about something that our organization would have absolutely no interest in covering, such as new product news."

Many of us in the media relations trenches know that getting one of our client's stories covered by The Canadian Press is often the 'holy grail' of our 'beat.' Pick-up by The Canadian Press and the 1,500 news media that subscribe to CP and its broadcast wing Broadcast News (BN) literally means at least 10-million impressions when all is said and done!

White's best advice to PR professionals is to "anticipate, anticipate, anticipate. We need to deal with PR people who not only react quickly when we need quick reaction, but actually anticipate that we'll need reaction before the event happens. This works when PR professionals know the day's scheduled news events and can offer up comment or information as quickly as possible."

Monitoring Canadian Press wire stories published by the daily newspapers and distributed in real time via CP Command News service will certainly help PR pros understand what CP is interested in and to know when clients can add to the steady flow of news from CP's Toronto headquarters and seven bureaus. For busy PR pros, receiving the CP news feed wirelessly is a very good way to stay on top of what interests CP and what news it carries, enabling practitioners to react quickly to news developments.

Knowing when to call and pitch is also very important. Former General News Director Mike Omelus, a 21 year veteran at BN, will take calls from PR pros he knows brings newsworthy information to the table the one or two times a year that they reach out to him. "PR is essential in helping the news media get the job done. It's an important relationship. But knowing our needs, and those of other news organizations will help you understand what we and other outlets will consider newsworthy."

The Canadian Press is affiliated with the largest news agency in the world, the Associated Press (AP). CP delivers real-time text, audio, photos, graphics and online services to newspapers, broadcasters, publishers, web sites, wireless carriers, cable companies, and even elevator screens and gas station pumps.

CP also offers several invaluable tools for PR pros, such as The Canadian Press Stylebook, Broadcast News NewsTalk, and Caps and Spelling – all crucial in helping PR write acceptable copy for news media consumption.

Commercial services that help fund the non-profit news side of CP include its Command News service for monitoring CP wire news in real time, and photography assignment and photo distribution services.

For more information, go to www.cp.org.

Making the call

When I was a journalist, the inundation of information was mind-boggling. There was a constant incoming mountain of information. News releases arriving by fax, media kits arriving by courier, newswire stories provided by Broadcast News, a division of The Canadian Press, all followed by hundreds of phone calls made by well intentioned people wanting to know if I had received their information and was interested in their story. Sometimes these calls worked when their news was put into a tight sound bite. Sometimes I would scramble and dig into the blue box looking for a kit that seemed interesting after the “verbal sell.” But not usually.

And now that e-mail has significantly increased the flow of information into newsrooms and freelancers’ home offices, how can one follow up telephone call cut through all the “noise”? What follows are some suggestions from two journalists in the field.

Marc Saltzman, who is one of North America’s most successful freelance technology journalists in both print and broadcast, receives between 150 and 200 e-mails per day, plus about 10 telephone calls per day. He hates the phone. “The phone ruins my writing flow, e-mail is much more conducive,” he says.

Which leads to follow up call tip #1. Find out the journalist’s preference in communication. Is it e-mail, telephone or fax.

Online media databases and directories (available from services such as Marketwire and the CNW Group) include journalist preferences when it comes to receiving news releases and related information. PR practitioners who subscribe to these types of databases are also able to record their own notes, tips and bits of information on particular journalists or media outlets. Knowing a journalist’s preferred means of contact with your news releases and follow up, as well as any additional information like deadlines, story preferences, technological savvy, etc. can make the process of media relations simpler and more effective.

Saltzman also stresses that practitioners should “choose their battles” for follow up calls. “Isolate the important stories.” He also notes that PR should do their homework. Don’t follow up on an inapplicable lifestyle story to a tech product journalist for example.

John Valorzi is the Business Editor at The Canadian Press, which is the nerve system for the Canadian news business and one of a handful of newsgathering co-operative organizations that feed the world’s news outlets. He receives about 200 e-mails a day and gets between 75 and 100 telephone calls per day. He likes phone calls by the way, as long as they are worthwhile and provide context. “I don’t mind receiving (follow up) calls, but more than half are from juniors who simply ask if I got the release, not from seniors who can debate things or tell me the context.”

Valorzi points out that two or three times a week he gets follow up calls from practitioners wondering if a release is of interest when it's actually been on The Canadian Press wire for three or four hours. He begs that we monitor the CP wire before we call.

He also begs for data that makes a story newsworthy. For example, if a product is being launched, how many jobs will it create, how much money will be spent on building the new plant. He notes that is worthwhile follow up information that will interest him.

And he reminds us to do post-mortems on stories that bomb out. "Did it have hard edge, quantifiable information that lifted the release beyond just a product release? Before being called 100 times, the PR person has to understand that content is king."

How to make your video work

Television news is one of the most powerful and trusted news media these days, and to get a softer story into the TV newscast one must follow one paramount rule – have moving pictures.

In congested news markets such as Toronto, getting a videographer or camera assigned to your story is a challenge to say the least. If you're lucky, you may get one or two cameras out to your news event. That leaves another three or four stations, not including the networks, that will not cover your story because they are not there with a camera.

PR practitioners can maximize their TV impact by investing in video and hiring a news videography service.

Tips for video:

1. Hire a videographer with news experience (and union credentials) – wedding video won't cut it!
2. Shoot it in high definition or still in some cases BETA format.
3. It should be in edited, eye-catching footage and delivered in a timely manner.
4. Don't shoot shots – shoot sequences. Tell the story.
5. Produce a shot list to use as a rough guide.
6. Allow for time to light the shot properly.
7. Shoot as a news videographer would shoot it – don't make it too polished.
8. Keep the video visually entertaining.
9. Work with the camera operator/producer to capture the best shots and sequences.
10. Hire a staging company when it is a news event so lighting, backdrop signage and audio feeds are all present and in working order.

Distribution of video is dependent on budget and timing. If it is a relatively hard news story with time sensitivities, courier delivery of the tapes if it's a one-market focus or through satellite if it's of national interest will be necessary.

Ensure concise hard copy news materials accompany the Beta tape and make sure the video is not too long – under ten minutes is ideal. TV stations don't have the time or staff to go through long tapes! Check on this because some TV news rooms are fully digital.

These tips also hold steady for web video, which is in high demand these days as print media market their on-line versions and utilize web video on those on-line sites. The Internet is becoming a "broadcast medium," with moving pictures, as opposed to its tradition of being a print medium, with text and still images. Two service providers for web video are CPIimages and News Canada.

How to make your PR photos work

One of the most effective tools for getting positive news coverage is the still photograph.

Whether aimed at community newspapers, or the larger dailies, public relations (PR) photos that get picked-up by publications can powerfully convey your organization's message. But there is a real art and science to the news photo.

Ron Welch is General Manager of CPimages, (www.cpimages.ca) a division of The Canadian Press, Canada's only national news agency. Mr. Welch says "editors know the value of good pictures – they draw readers' attention, they sell papers and they can make or break your chances of getting your point across."

Welch, who has been in the photo business for 25 years, offers 10 tips to help communicators get the best out of their news photo.

Tips for PR photos:

1. Hire a photographer with editorial experience – they understand what photo editors are looking for and will deliver them in the correct digital format, colour corrected and ready to go.
2. Good photos are new and in some way unusual.
3. A good photo shows action the instant it happens.
4. Strong photos portray people and appeal to the emotions.
5. They always relate to some important person, event or place.
6. The photo should wrap-up a story and provide an overall view of it.
7. Remember context – excellent news photos tie in with a current story, the season, the weather, a fad.
8. Large empty spaces should always be avoided in news photos – the entire frame should contain useful information.
9. Stand-up group shots, unless filled with VIPs, don't work.
10. The digital format of choice is an 8X10, 300 dpi JPEG.

PR photos can be distributed in a number of ways – through paid wire services such as Marketwire (formerly CCNMatthews) and directly to photo editors via e-mail. The latter distribution tactic should not be overlooked, because some community newspapers and

smaller dailies do not subscribe to paid wire services, and they tend to be heavy users of photos generated by PR, especially of local events or people. Captions under 50 words please!

Media events – Maximizing your attendance and news pick-up

As the news media becomes more and more saturated with information, particularly in news meccas such as Toronto or Montreal, journalists find it increasingly difficult to attend media events.

Here's why.

Electronic highways into newsrooms have enabled a shrinking newsroom workforce to cover more territory because of the concentration of information into databases and the plethora of internal and external wire services. The widespread adoption of e-mail increases information flow. Working on very short deadlines, most journalists are reluctant to leave their desks for a story.

In a 2005 media poll, Ipsos Reid found on average that business journalists receive about 150 news releases per week. About 18 per cent are used. They also get an average 19 news conference invitations per month, with about 50 per cent getting a reporter to attend. 60 annual reports per year on average. 16 per cent are used quickly. 20 media kits per month. 19 per cent are used.

Your task, as a media relations practitioner, is to make your story as easy to digest as possible and readily accessible via electronic communications. When your story is highly visual through the presence of celebrity spokespersons or a particular location or geography, then plan your event with the following in mind:

- Find out what is going on before picking the date and time – pay attention to the news and advanced notification of events. The Canadian Press provides online access to its calendar of events viewed by daily newspapers.
- Make it downtown, as close to news media outlets as you can.
- Make it late morning or early afternoon to enable media to get there on their rounds after their morning story meetings and before late afternoon deadlines.

Capitalize on the visuals by hiring your own photographer and/or a videographer

Hiring a photographer/videographer enables you to provide media-ready images to news outlets or post them online for access by journalists who are unable to attend your event. Having your own images also permits you to document the event in your own fashion and provides a permanent archival record for future reference. Hire someone already trusted by the news media, perhaps a freelancer who works for a wire service or news organization. For example, CPimages, a division of the Canadian Press, specializes in capturing “news style” photos that the news media want. Services provided by well known and trusted companies such as CP Photo Assignment Services, Marketwire, and

the CNW Group can either be the ultimate insurance policy in case a few to no media show up, or can expand an event's media coverage.

The need for speed is paramount. You should have the final photography and videography into news media hands by 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. at the latest. Let them know by voice and e-mail that it's coming. At the event itself, try to engineer a great shot. Trust the news photographer you have hired – they know their business. Move the chosen photo on a paid wire service. Write a tight newsworthy caption. And have an electronic version ready to e-mail to media on demand as well and have it posted at a specific URL for easy, self serve downloading.

Have BETA quality video shot, and if you have the budget and time, edit it properly and in media hands by the 4:00 p.m. deadline. Have hard copy accompany it, and ideally, a CD containing the whole news kit in electronic form. Make sure you have good clips of all the spokespeople involved, capture the ambiance of the event, include wild sound and make the tape short – less than eight minutes.

News events also offer another important aspect beyond generating news coverage. You can create events that also include customers and/or employees. And there is always the intangible effect of a successful news event. It raises morale within the company. There's nothing more exciting for employees than to see their company in the news in a positive sense. And good news can go a long way in helping the HR folks to promote a healthy work environment.

Create media friendly media section on your web site

Web site media sections are an opportunity for an organization to provide the news media with an easy-to-use, multimedia platform to disseminate information about that organization and its news.

A web site “newsroom,” a term that seems to be gaining acceptance in mainstream usage, should contain that information in at least two easy-to-download formats, Word and PDFs. The news media have little time as it is, and DO NOT have the time to spend digging for information, cutting and pasting or reformatting information that they intend to use in a story.

“Often when we are on deadline, we have space to fill and need these materials faster than PR contacts can deliver,” says Gordon Brockhouse, editor-in-chief of Here’s How magazine. “This often happens after normal business hours. The company that makes it easiest for us, by having information and images available online is the one that gets the space.”

The web site newsroom should at the very least also contain high-resolution (8X10, 200 dpi) photography. MP3s are another information source, primarily for radio news consumption, that are easy to capture and inexpensively park in the web site newsroom.

Don’t forget that web video is also a good educative tool. “I wouldn’t be likely to use video myself, but I often go to a web site to find out about things, using the video archive,” says food writer and editor Liz Campbell. “I find I learn more quickly with auditory and visual input than by reading.”

Campbell also notes that the media section should be easy to find on the web site. Placement of the Newsroom link button should also be prominently displayed, such as to the far left where journalists are trained is the most important information on a printed page.

Content of the newsroom should not only be in multimedia format, easy-to-download text, still images and video, but it should also be brief in nature, a series of fact sheets, and quotes. Longer pieces can also be parked there, such as white papers, speeches, and annual reports. Over time, a significant archive can be built.

Lots of time and money are spent on web site design, but a survey of web site media sections shows that the media section is not given enough attention. “As part of our continued efforts to make our organization media friendly, we are looking at enhancing our web site’s media section in an overhaul in the near future,” says Richard Truscott, former Director of Communications, CGA Alberta.

Journalists need 24/7 access to web site newsrooms so passwording the section can be problematic unless that function works very quickly and seamlessly. Understanding that this tactic helps with the media monitoring process, many journalists surveyed do not like

it, find the process obtrusive and time consuming. Nothing but public information should be parked in a web site newsroom anyway, so passwording entry may be counterproductive.

Ten tips for web site media sections

1. Enable text in the web site newsroom to be easily copied and provide text in Word and PDF formats.
2. Photography should be high resolution (8X10, 200 dpi).
3. MP3 audio clips should be captured and parked there.
4. Web video can be a great educative tool.
5. Park short broadcast quality video clips.
6. Other materials such as advertisements can be included.
7. Create short, informative backgrounders and fact sheets including price lists and store availability.
8. Also park longer documents such as annual reports, speeches, and white papers.
9. Passwording the web site newsroom can alienate journalists and hinder their ability to gather information outside of regular office hours.
10. Prominently display the “Newsroom” button, ideally far left, top corner.

Media relations measurement paradigm levels playing field

Evaluation of media coverage has always been a problem. Credibility was always at the mercy of the many different paradigms used to calculate reach and quality -- until recently.

After four years in development under the leadership of Tracey Bochner, APR, Senior her group of senior agency, industry and client side media relations specialists has launched the Media Relations Ratings Points (MRP) system, in partnership with the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS).

To understand how valuable this media relations measurement paradigm is, look at how media relations evaluation has been conducted previously.

Generally, it starts with the audience numbers. Then a multiple is applied to arrive at impressions. Traditionally, multiples for print can range from two times to 10 times, depending on the evaluator. "For broadcast, if you called an outlet and asked different people who work there on both the editorial and sales sides, you would probably get different answers on the 'reach' because those numbers depend on how that department reports the numbers which could be total show reach, quarter-hour audience reach or even total station reach," Bochner observes.

MRP provides consistency. The system uses standardized data on print readership, and provides BBM numbers for broadcast, which are often inaccessible to PR firms unless they have official advertising agency status or ad agency partners. The cost for the data is modest (and there is a discount for CPRS members). The measurement template and user guide is free to anyone to download at www.cprs.ca.

All of the audience data, including web site audience information, is provided by News Canada, which won the RFP. "We're delighted to be working on this project and believe it is very important to clients to have a common media relations measurement paradigm," says Ruth Douglas, President, News Canada.

What MRP does not do is provide advertising equivalencies, and rightfully so. That form of measurement has at least a few problems. Firstly, editorial cannot be purchased and therefore cannot have an advertising equivalency. As Bochner puts it: "You simply cannot buy media coverage!" Secondly, editorial often has far more third-party word of mouth generation power than does advertising. Bochner adds that "you can't buy space on the front page, above the fold, so how would you measure that through ad equivalencies? It doesn't make any sense."

In a nutshell, the MRP system provides a score based on standardized criteria that incorporate tone as well. The tone plus the ratings generate an overall percentage score. "In the tests we have done to date with our clients, we consider 75 per cent or above a good campaign," notes Bochner. The system also works out a cost per contact (this is where the standardized reach data becomes useful), "so our clients can demonstrate ROI

to their stakeholders and evaluate a program's success compared to other campaigns," says Bochner.

For more information on MRP, go to www.cprs.ca.

MRP is a Trademark and Media Relations Rating Points is a copyright of CPRS.

A proverbial needle in an electronic haystack

A combination of the new copyright law, the trend towards subscription-based news media web sites (and subsequent silos from web search engines and other media monitoring services), has made the media monitoring task feel like a search for a needle in an electronic haystack at times.

“With copyright licensing and high technology investment, media monitoring definitely has gotten more expensive,” says John Weinseis, former President, Bowdens Media Monitoring Ltd (now Cision). “But the results have also improved dramatically in terms of speed and quality. New services have been developed by many participants to provide multi-media portal based delivery along with rudimentary analysis. The bigger concern seems to be the ability to weed out irrelevant material.”

One very senior and savvy Toronto-based practitioner uses at least seven different services to provide her clients with accurate and timely media monitoring reports. Media monitoring services have been hindered by these new regulatory and competitive realities, while at least one senior independent media relations practitioner thinks of throwing in the towel some days because the media monitoring task has become so expensive and time consuming.

"Our number one goal is to provide a one-stop monitoring service to our clients across multiple platforms. That's why we're focused on developing partnerships that allow us to respond to their media monitoring needs and the direct feedback we receive while working with our customer base, by providing ongoing enhancements to our portfolio of news sources, functionality and infrastructure," said Arturo Duran, President of Interactive and Business Integration, CanWest MediaWorks Inc. "For example, FPinfomart recently added the Globe and Mail, blogs, as well as over 140 new international sources and broadcast transcripts, and there is more to come."

Agencies that have a number of junior practitioners on staff definitely have a competitive advantage these days since they can afford the extremely time-consuming deep web searches, conduct the old-fashioned read and clip services themselves and chase hard copy and electronic media coverage once they know it has been published or broadcast.

How do we survive this media monitoring nightmare?

- Subscribe to as many media monitoring services as budget permits and lobby hard to get the large enough budget to do a good job.
- Train in-house staff and clients to accurately seek and report coverage as a team effort.
- Build-in inherent tracking systems from media follow up to chase as much coverage as possible.
- Get on as many comp lists as you can.
- Subscribe to all key media within the client's category.

- Deliberately build in key words and specifically named quotes in news releases to help with electronic monitoring.
- Hire as many web savvy under-25's as possible.
- Beg every journalist who has promised coverage to send you tear sheets, MP3s, DVDs and give them your courier account numbers to send them at no charge and send profuse thank you's afterwards.
- Some chains, such as Sun Media, offer an in-house tear sheet acquisition service that is expensive, but worth every penny since they can dig internally for the coverage as a part of the fee.

Some good news aggregators and search engines (in alphabetical order):

- Ask.com
- Bing.com
- Excite.com
- Google.com
- Info.com
- Lycos.ca
- Yahoo.com

Correcting misinformation

Often, demanding a correction or apology will bring attention to the misinformation that may have been missed in the first place.

So be sure it is important to correct the misinformation in the first place. Misquotes are often not worth fixing just because they weren't verbatim. If the product's price is only off a few dollars, why bother the reporter who rounded it off?

However, if there is a blatant fact error for example, work with the reporter directly to have it corrected in the media outlet's database. Information can spread far and wide so you want the error fixed at the source. But only do so if it is really important! Don't necessarily demand a correction notice that will likely get buried on page 150. But do ensure the public record is correct.

Work with the offending reporter first. If you can't get it fixed that way, then go to that reporter/columnist's editor next. Don't jump over anyone's head as a knee-jerk reaction.

Again, ensure the error is important enough to warrant action and potentially burn some bridges with news media that may have taken years to build.

Social Media: Are you a Cybersaur?

Cybersaur is a term I officially coined in the Toronto Star in 2010. It means, tongue in cheek, for those who only communicate by e-mail.

I am constantly asked while developing speaking notes and lectures to address media relations and social media.

First of all, they are two separate disciplines, and since the jury is still out on whether or not the public relations function will end up responsible for social media, or if it will fall more into the hands of broader marketing communicators such as advertising agencies, or carve out its own niche all together, within or outside customer service departments, it is NOT included in the graphic on page 7.

There are other semantical considerations here as well.

First of all, many media relations professionals have been practicing social media tactics for years if the definition is broad and includes web video, audio, interactive web pages, and web-based newsrooms for example.

And some actually communicate with journalists via social media channels such as Twitter, FaceBook and Linked in.

But most media I have informally canvassed recently, still like getting news from us via e-mail.

Most certainly, the social media phenomenon is eating away a journalist's most valuable commodity, TIME. Many are now spending a few hours a day communicating with their audiences via social media. So adding this channel to our mix of getting information to media, on top of e-mail, paid newswire, fax, regular mail and of course, telephone calls, may not be the best idea. However, as previously counselled in this book, find out what your media targets want, and how they want to receive it!

Always build two benches with the same wood

A final note on strategy.

Often practicing PR is akin to building puzzles. It's left to us to proactively, gently, and many times, almost invisibly, blend an organization's opportunities and problems into a delectable morsel for one or more of our organization's publics.

PR is not rocket science. It's not even science. In fact, it's far more Art than Science because it's very intuitive. However, intuition is very difficult to sell. It's a great starting point, but you will need formal strategic structure to not only "sell" the program or campaign, but to get key messaging through the gatekeepers, including the news media.

In order for PR to work, it must be very strategic and it is in many ways the most strategic of all the marketing communications disciplines. One of the fundamentals of effective modern PR practice is research. And research can particularly identify a program or campaign's target audience, an underpinning of strategy - an absolutely crucial one. Or, if you will allow the metaphor, the frame to be used in building your bench - the strategic framework for all marketing communications.

Practitioners can then create planks for that bench for each marketing communications discipline such as public relations (of course), promotions, sponsorships, advertising, and web site and other electronic communications. The power of integrated communications can then be realized. Your target audience has a common place to sit and absorb the messaging.

This is what I call building two benches with the same wood.

This metaphor can also be applied tactically, especially in our current times of budget restraint. Practitioners can look for opportunities to blend a number of tactics to meet common objectives, for example, launching three products together instead of one, or satisfying both external and internal communications objectives at the same time.

Finally, **Building Two Benches With the Same Wood** is a great replacement for the old saying that involves harming small birds!

The following review section compiles the key points made in previous articles into teacher-friendly bullet points. If a class-sized book order has been made, contact the author at mark.lavigne@sympatico.ca for an electronic copy.

Review

What is public relations?

- Media relations (MR) is one of Public Relations (PR)'s main disciplines, and one of the most difficult.
- MR is one of the only PR disciplines to go through a third party gatekeeper to an end audience.
- Other traditional PR disciplines include government relations, community relations and employee/internal communications.
- Key messaging must be newsworthy.
- Finding the “newsworthiness” in a message necessitates the removal of non-essential information and helps get messaging through the gatekeeper.
- MR is very effective when key messaging is also adopted by advertising and rolled out in an integrated manner. Better to have MR first, advertising second.
- Better to have media relations first, to build a brand name and image, then have advertising sustain it.
- Media relations instigates third-party recommendations which in turn influences the opinion leaders.
- The old advertising adage that you must hit a target audience with a message up to seven times before it is fully received still applies in our information- saturated world.

Generating news coverage

Content, relationships, access, timing

- News release alone generally generates a two-inch by two-inch bit of copy.
- Target product or news to relevant news hole, the space into which proactive news can be placed.
- Offering product trial is imperative.
- Give it to them on an “electronic platter” (i.e. high resolution images, web video and audio).
- Respond to interview and information requests from the news media ASAP or they’ll move onto the next organization or story.

Word of Mouth

- Media relations reaches and influences the influentials – those 10 per cent who advise others and are opinion leaders.
- Media relations stimulates word of mouth.
- 67 per cent of North Americans get recommendations from word of mouth, half get recommendations from editorial.

Canadian news media marketplace

- Past recessionary pressures combined with the technological revolution have reduced the number of news gatherers drastically while concentration of ownership and increased competition for advertising revenue has also exacerbated these pressures.
- Concentration of ownership has created more media mergers further concentrating personnel numbers and creating the hybrid newsrooms and journalists who do both print and broadcast.
- Electronic highways into newsrooms have enabled stagnant staff numbers to do more because of concentration of information into databases and the plethora of internal and external information networks such as wire services.

- Canadian editors are now processing about 25 per cent more stories than just five years ago. According to Ipsos Reid, on average, business journalists receive about 150 news releases per week. About 18 per cent are used. They also get an average 19 news conference invitations per month, with about 50 per cent getting a reporter to attend. 60 annual reports are received per year on average. 16 per cent are used quickly. 20 media kits are received per month. 19 per cent are used.
- The technological revolution, including convergence, has enabled the same news job of ten years ago to be performed by fewer people, while at the same time technology has increased the amount of news available to media outlets.

The News hole

- Print lifeblood of the news business offering the biggest news hole.
- Specialty News Holes – focusing on audience of news hole.
- The news hole has shrunk overall.

News fence

- The News Fence is the relationship between editorial and advertising.
- Thickness and height of fence varies from media to media.
- Approach the relationship between editorial and advertising very, very, very carefully.

News spotlight

- News is a roving spotlight. Trends are hot, then they're not.
- Examples: terrorism, pandemics, natural disasters, peak oil.

Newsworthiness

- Newsworthiness is a combination of filling a news hole, respecting the news fence between advertising and editorial and getting into the news spotlight as it focuses on an issue or occurrence.
- Not ignoring the five journalistic W's: who, what, why, where, and when (plus Kipling's How).
- News releases should be between 300 and 400 words, 1 to 1.5 pages.
- Distribute news releases through e-mail, paid wire and mail/courier.

Proactive/Reactive

- Proactive PR is generally sending good news out and reactive PR is generally dealing with bad news.
- Reactive PR can be less severe when long term proactive media relations has been conducted and media relationships established.
- Key is to be quick, with a planned response.

- Key messages are the life raft in both proactive and reactive PR.

Key Messaging

- Types of key messaging include corporate, overall key messaging.
- Key messaging can also be specific to product or issue.
- Key messaging stems from organic development.
- Key messaging constantly evolves with continuous improvement.
- Practice makes perfect.

Media list building tips

- Determine whom you are targeting with your message.
- Obviously include mainstream news media such as daily newspapers and network television.
- Don't overlook the many vertical, very targeted media outlets such as magazines, cable TV shows, Ezines and blogs that can reach your target audience(s) more directly.
- Ensure your media messages are in multimedia format suitable for television, radio, print and online media outlets.
- Variety of suppliers out there sell media lists in hard copy or electronic form and can customize them to your needs.
- Purchase lists from a number of different sources, especially if you're starting out in a new client relationship in a new media niche.
- To ensure your media list is as complete as possible, plan on calling and confirming information at key media outlets.
- Aim to hit the target media in at least three ways, via direct e-mail, via paid newswire and via mail/courier (print media kits or electronic media kits).
- When purchasing media lists, make sure they contain phone and fax numbers, direct-to-journalist e-mail and mail/courier addresses.
- Update the list constantly, ideally monthly.

- Utilize e-mail bounce backs as a warning you have wrong information or your message was bumped as suspected spam.
- Don't underestimate the power of an old-fashioned phone call to the media outlet's reception desk.

What the news media want in Canada

- News releases should be concise, between 300 and 400 words in length.
- News must be on an electronic platter, in electronic format for easy editing and re-packaging.
- Images/video must be easily accessible and high quality.
- Spokespeople must come to them – electronically and in person. And quote the spokesperson!!!!
- News must obviously be of interest to a given media outlet's audience.
- Should be correlation between electronic news kit, news releases, web site, photography and videography.
- Web site should have easily accessible Media Section (Newsroom is a popular term) as well as high-resolution photography (300 dpi, 8X10 JPEGs).
- News releases should be newsworthy.
- Ideally, news releases and media advisories should be distributed regularly.
- All English news copy must be translated into French (and/or Chinese).
- Where budget permits, information should be distributed both directly to media via e-mail as well as through a paid wire service to overcome danger of the messaging lost in the inundation of information the news media face today.
- Designated spokespersons must be always ready to deal with last minute media requests. If we can't service media in a timely manner, our competition will!
- Media monitoring best covered by a service, or a number of services.

News release do's and don'ts

- Avoid clichés:
 - “state-of-the-art”
 - “world-class”
- Avoid hyperbole, puffery.
- Competition Act: be very, very, very aware of it.
- Avoid highlighting, bolding.
- Pay special attention to keywords for search engines.
- Quotes add colour but should continue story.
- Quoted spokespersons should be available for interviews.
- Contextualize the story.
- Never call it a “press release!” Call it a “news release.”
- Never use “for immediate release.” That’s an oxymoron!!

Newsroom tips from The Canadian Press

- Provide news they can use – timely, national, trendy, hard news. monitor CP news, calendars and advisories to match your story to what they are covering.
- Monitor the news – offer your spokesperson as an expert on news of the day – prepare rapid response logistics and protocols.
- Use common sense – find the relevant CP staffer to pitch to. Send your release to the appropriate reporter or editor – if turned down, don’t shop around within CP. Don’t be a “time bandit.”
- Be prepared – why should CP care? Be prepared to answer “who benefits from this news?”
- Be ready – explain context – how your news impacts other organizations – share prices, number of employees, market.

- Have facts nearby: number of employees, annual revenue, head office location, number of retail outlets etc.
- Avoid calling news media in the late afternoon between 4 and 6 p.m. and back off when it's a hectic news day, what CP calls a "Red Ball."
- Be a CP news junkie – use the CP Command News service to monitor the CP wire in real time and get a heads-up to news affecting your organization before it's in tomorrow's newspapers.
- Review the CP Style book and Caps and Spelling. And if you have a question on style, call or e-mail the editors. They respond very quickly.

(Source for tips: The Canadian Press, 2005)

Making the call

Tips for follow up telephone calls

- Find out the journalist's preferred medium: phone, e-mail, fax, social media channel.
- Always ask if they're on deadline.
- Pay close attention to your e-mail's subject line.
- Don't tease by withholding details in your news release to enable a follow up call as an excuse.
- Don't wait until the last minute to follow up (a week before an event is perfect).
- Make sure the beat matches the content before you follow up.
- Provide a customized story angle or context in follow up communications.
- Pick your battles, don't follow up on everything.
- Media monitor before following up, you may have already made the Canadian Press wire or news web site.

E-mail do's and don'ts

- Avoid SPAM filters: send out e-mail in small batches of under 25 recipients that will break through SPAM filters at media outlets.
- Always say “please” and “thank you.”
- Use “we.”
- Subject line should be as specific as possible including actions i.e. “approval needed.”
- Fit main messaging into one screen – 20 to 25 lines. If longer use subheads.
- Cut and paste text in body of e-mail, never send unsolicited attachments to the media.
- Use web site direct URL's to sizable files such as JPEGs, PDFs, spreadsheets, and backgrounders.
- More and more e-mail is mobile, so keep in mind the media are on Smartphones and tablets.
- Be prompt in your replies, responding in under two hours idea.
- Always put all of your contact coordinates into the e-mail.
- Always review copy before hitting the send button.
- Always review recipients before hitting the send button.
- Always blind carbon copy (BCC) when sending to media so you send to yourself and BCC all others on the list.
- Signed approvals are only legal on fax, not e-mail, for example for Non Disclosure Agreements (NDA's), or news release (other)approvals.

The pitch

- The follow up is often the best way to customize pitches to specific media outlets and/or niches and/or journalists.
- Follow up to both media advisories and news releases.
- Often multiple messages are mass distributed so follow up pitches can customize.

Pitch research

- Know the outlet through variety of resources such as CARD, Marketwire CNW, Cision, News Canada.
- Know the journalist through same.

Pitch Do's and Don'ts

- Brevity is paramount:
 - Mail – one page max.
 - E-mail – two or three sentences with URLs.
 - Voice-mail – 20 seconds ideal.
- News style in pitch letter can be loosened a little.
- Lead must be enticing.
- Always keep the media outlet's audience(s) in mind.
- Connect your news to trends or current events.
- Don't bug them near deadline (after 3 p.m.).
- Best timeframe for most journalists is between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. but remember that most radio newsmakers are gone by early morning.
- Offer your help in developing THEIR story.
- Mention available resources such as Web video, VNRs, ANRs, imaging, graphics.
- Repeat your contact info in verbal and give your name at the end once more.

- Look for valid follow up reasons:
 - Ensure receipt of product sample.
 - Offer interview window.
 - Customized context.
 - Offer recent developments since news release was issued.
- Break up big lists – many SPAM filters will bounce back large groupings.

Tactical timelines

- E-mail follow up to advisory or release within two to five days.
- Voice follow up within one to two weeks.

How to make your video work

- Television news is one of the most powerful and trusted news media these days, and to get a softer story into the TV newscast one must follow one paramount rule – have moving pictures.
- In congested news markets such as Toronto, getting a videographer or camera assigned to your story is a challenge to say the least. If you're lucky, you may get one or two cameras out to your news event. That leaves another three or four stations, not including the networks, which will not cover your story because they are not there with a camera.
- PR practitioners can maximize their TV impact by investing in video and hiring a news videographer or service.

VNR/VIDEO tips

- Hire a videographer with news experience – wedding videographers won't cut it!
- Shoot it in Betacam format(some stations still use that) or high definition video.
- It should be in edited, eye-catching footage and delivered in a timely manner.
- Don't shoot shots – shoot sequences. Tell the story.
- Produce a shot list to use as a rough guide.
- Allow for time to light the shot properly.

- Shoot as a news videographer would shoot it – don't make it too polished.
- Keep the video visually entertaining.
- Work with the camera operator/producer to capture the best shots and sequences.
- Hire a staging company when it is a news event so lighting, backdrop signage and audio feeds are all present and in working order.

Other TV tips

- Distribution of VNRs/VIDEO is dependent on budget and timing. If it is a relatively hard news story with time sensitivities, courier delivery of the tapes or DVDs if it's a one-market focus or through satellite or broadband if it's of national interest.
- Ensure concise hard copy news materials accompany the video tape and make sure the VNR is not too long – under ten minutes is ideal. TV stations don't have the time or staff to go through long tapes!
- Give TV news directors maximum flexibility so they can use their own anchors or reporters. Use split audio so announcer track is on one channel and natural sound on another.
- Never use a stand-up reporter. Stations want to use their own.
- Work in a local angle wherever possible. You can send it along separately.
- Utilize clear, succinct art work or graphics to make points. These are attractive to TV editors.
- Use footage that is difficult for stations to obtain.
- Humanize it with consumers or patients affected by the product.
- Use industry leaders, CEO level, wherever possible.
- Utilize a good pitch letter to accompany hard copy audio or video news releases (that is when you send actual tape). The letter should include the key messaging from the release, but also be localized, or contextualized. Also include the news release in a hard copy package.
- Audio News Releases (ANRs) should be written in broadcast style, not print style as in a news release. The Canadian Press publishes the broadcast stylebook "NewsTalk."

Photo tips

- Good photos are new and in some way unusual.
- A good photo shows action the instant it happens.
- Strong photos portray people and appeal to the emotions.
- They always relate to some important person, event or place.
- The photo should wrap up a story and provide an overall view of it.
- Remember context – excellent news photos tie in with a current story, the season, the weather, a fad.
- Large empty spaces should always be avoided in news photos – the entire frame should contain useful information.
- Stand-up group shots, unless filled with Uber-VIPs, don't work.
- The digital format of choice is an 8X10, 300 dpi JPEG.
- Photo distribution through paid wire services such as CNW or Marketwire **and** directly to photo editors via e-mail.
- The caption that accompanies the photo should be under 50 words, explaining the photo and its context.

Media events tips

- Find out what is going on before picking your date and time – pay attention to the news and advanced notification of news events.
- Make it downtown, as close to news media outlets as you can.
- Make it late morning or early afternoon, to enable media to get there on their rounds after their morning story meetings and before late afternoon deadlines.
- Make it visual, both for photographers and videographers:
 - Hire your own photographer and videographer, ideally ones that are known or trusted by the news media. Check for union sensitivities!
 - Get final photography and videography into news media hands by 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. at the latest. Let them know by voice and e-mail that it's coming.
 - At the event itself, try to engineer a great shot. Trust the news photographer you have hired – they know their business.
 - Move the chosen photo on a paid wire service. Write a tight caption. And have an electronic version ready to e-mail to media on demand as well.
 - Have high quality video shot, and if you have budget and time, edit it properly and in media hands by the 4:00 p.m. deadline.
 - Have hard copy accompany it, and ideally, a CD containing the whole news kit in electronic form.
 - Make sure you have good clips of all the spokespeople involved, capturing the ambiance of the event and including wild sound. Make the video short, less than eight minutes.
 - Create an electronic media kit that contains as much of the background information as possible in electronic form – including high-resolution digital images.
 - Have at least a few paper-based media kits available. Some news media still like paper!
 - Cheaper way is to simply post still images on web site if you have online access from the event or nearby, and shoot high-resolution images.

- News events can also include customers and/or employees. And there is always the intangible effect of a successful news event. They can raise morale within the organization. There's nothing more exciting for employees than to see their company in the news in a positive sense.

Web site media section tips

- Enable text in the web site newsroom to be easily copied and provide text in Word and PDF formats.
- Photography should be high resolution (8X10, 200 dpi).
- MP3s and MPEG4s should be captured and parked there.
- Web video can be a great educative tool.
- Other materials such as advertisements can be included.
- Create short, informative backgrounders and fact sheets including price lists and store availability.
- Also park longer documents such as annual reports, speeches, and white papers.
- Passwording the web site newsroom can alienate journalists and hinder their ability to gather information outside of regular office hours.
- Prominently display the “Newsroom” button, ideally far left, top corner.

Media monitoring tips

- Subscribe to as many media monitoring services as budget permits and lobby hard to get the large enough budget to do a good job.
- Train in-house staff and clients to accurately seek and report coverage as a team effort.
- Build-in inherent tracking systems from media follow up to chase as much coverage as possible.
- Get on as many comp lists as you can.
- Subscribe to all key media within the client’s category.
- Deliberately build in key words and specifically named quotes in news releases to help with electronic monitoring.

- Beg every journalist who has promised coverage to send you tear sheets, MP3s, MPEG4s, DVDs and give them your courier account numbers to send them at no charge and send profuse thank you's afterwards.
- Some chains, such as Sun Media, offer an in-house tear sheet acquisition service that is expensive, but worth every penny since they can dig internally for the coverage as a part of the fee.



About the author

Mark Hunter LaVigne, APR, FCPRS, knows both sides of the “media fence” well. For five years prior to his career in media relations, he was a national on-air radio journalist and since 1990, he has worked in public relations agencies including his own media relations and media training practice.

After completing a Master of Arts in Journalism at the University of Western Ontario’s Graduate School of Journalism, Mark worked as a radio journalist in Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. Prior to UWO, he completed an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications and English at York University in Toronto. He went to a Jesuit high school prior to that, also located in Toronto.

He is an award-winning, accredited member (APR) of the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS), a member of the College of Fellows (FCPRS) is a Past-President of CPRS (Toronto) and served several years on the national board.

He regularly speaks at conferences and workshops and guest lectures.

Mark sits on the Advisory Council to the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario.

He has also taught part-time in the Corporate Communications Program at Seneca College, a graduate level PR course situated at Seneca’s York University campus as well as at Ryerson University.

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