

How to Avoid Miscommunications with the Media



“You just don’t understand.”

How many times have you spoken or been on the receiving end of those four words? Misunderstandings stem from miscommunication. And although communication is the one skill every [public relations](#) professional must have, we’ve all been guilty of missing the mark one time or another.

“‘Controlling’ the message is one of the things many PR folks struggle with. However painful it is to admit, the reality of media relations is that you can’t control everything. Period.” writes the author of our white paper [How to Make Sure the Media Gets Your Story Straight](#). “You will never dictate what gets covered and what gets tossed. You’re not paying for coverage—that’s what advertising is for. And you don’t work in the newsroom, so you don’t make those calls.”

However, there are things you *can* do to limit media relations

misunderstandings. The biggest of those things: **Understand that you can't be everything to everyone all of the time.**

Targeting your media outreach isn't a new concept. Breaking down media lists by geography, media type, etc. is a best practice most PR professionals are familiar with.

However, the size of a media outlet, where they're based out of, and a journalist's coverage area are only a few things to consider.

Even if you're reaching out to a fairly small group of journalists and influencers, that audience likely consists of a spectrum of values, behaviors and opinions. And understanding individuals' psychographic and behavioral differences can help avoid misunderstandings in your media outreach.

Here are four tips to consider when researching and pitching journalists.

Understand their interests and attitudes.

Even when two journalists report on the same topic, they typically have different takes on the same story. Understanding different journalists' interests will result in more pitches crafted to their unique needs. It also can be a win for your brand. No story is one-dimensional. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see the different aspects of your brand story covered across the media?

Interests, attitudes and preferences don't stop at type of story, either. For instance, our latest Social Journalism Study delves into the different perspectives journalists have on the channels PR pros use to pitch them. Understanding the nuances of channel preferences will lead you to reaching out and building relationships with journalists in the most effective way possible.

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE WHITE PAPER

How to Make Sure the Media Gets Your Story Straight

Get our tips for building more positive relationships with the media.

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