

Media Relations Lessons from The Washington Post and Other DC Newsrooms



When the worlds of [PR](#) and media are discussed, it's impossible to avoid parallels. The challenges both industries face and the changes required are often similar if not the same.

Don't make the mistake, though, of viewing PR and media simply as two lines running parallel with one another. This oversimplification can cause many to miss the crux of PR and media's relationship and lead to disconnects and disappointment.

Rather, the relationship can be viewed as a double helix – a pair of parallel lines intertwined around a common axis.

When PR is done right, the axis that connects it with the media – the thing that both parties can work together to support – is the media's reading, viewing and listening audience.

I was reminded of this while reading [Got Scoop? DC Reporters Discuss How Social Media Has Changed the Game](#) on PR Newswire's

media blog Beyond Bylines. In the article, senior audience relations manager Christine Cube (@cpcube) shares a few lessons from a recent Society of Professional Journalists panel.

Aaron Davis (@byaaroncdavis), a Washington Post reporter who covers politics and government, was joined on the panel by Kavitha Cardoza (@KavithaCardoza), who covers education with WAMU (FM) Washington and teaches in American University's Department of Communication, and Cuneyt Dil (@cuneytdil), founder of the District Links e-newsletter and freelancer with Washington's Current newspapers.

Although the trio's conversation focused on the state of journalism in the District, the obstacles and opportunities they discussed not only apply to most news markets, they also impact their PR counterparts.

Build better relationships with today's journalists by remembering these media insights and PR tips.

1. Coverage is constantly changing. Don't fall behind.

When is the last time you brushed off your media list? Don't get too locked into assumptions based on what a news outlet previously covered. You could be overlooking an opportunity.

"Washington's not really unique – it's like any town with a myriad of local stories," writes Christine. "So what wins when it comes to local coverage? You might be tempted to say politics, and while that's not incorrect, DC is chock full of other news."

During the panel, Kavitha shared how WAMU is adding new beats to adapt to their listeners' current interests.

"Among them, race and ethnicity now is a beat," reports Christine. "Previously, WAMU split up news according to geography, with someone covering DC, Maryland, and Virginia."

As you update your media lists, don't just look at whether or not a contact is still at a publication. Regularly assess whether they and the publication are still covering the topics you're pitching them on. Conversely, don't disregard publications that aren't currently covering your niche. While you shouldn't pitch them right now, keep them on your reading list and periodically circle back to see if their coverage area has expanded.

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