

Media Relations Tips



Respect deadlines.

The final question in any interaction with a reporter should be, "What's your deadline?" It may be necessary to coordinate interviews or gather information for the reporter, and you need to plan accordingly for a deadline that could be the same day at 3 p.m. or several weeks away.

Never utter "no comment."

There will come a time when a reporter asks you a question for which there is no right answer. Fight the instinct to wave it aside with a "no comment."

Instead, take a moment to gather your thoughts or ask for time to return their call with more information.



Connect the dots

Your expertise as the communications professional for your organization is being able to bring all the story pieces together for the reporter. Go above and beyond to provide contact information, arrange interviews and arm the reporter with the background needed to write the story.



Aim between the quotation marks

O.J. Simpson's defense attorney and Nancy Reagan understood the power of a great quote, just think back to the lawyer's words about the infamous glove, "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit," or the former first lady's anti-drug campaign slogan "Just say no."

Choose your words carefully and aim for ones that are colorful and descriptive. A quote crafted well can live on past its delivery. As a spokesperson, you want your message to be more than crisp and clear, you want it to be compelling and catchy too!



Recognize that reporters are people too.

Please act accordingly. In other words, aim to be courteous, straightforward and accurate. Read what they write, always return their calls, don't hound them with "Did you read my release?" queries and be sure issue a thank you for their coverage. Build a relationship, and endeavor to be more than a name attached to an email address that occasionally sends interesting messages.

Offer the story on a silver platter.

Throw away that stiff corporate text jammed with quotes that just blow hot air and instead use storytelling to make your press release a winner. It's not uncommon for a reporter to receive more than one hundred news releases in a single day. Keep yours out of the trash can by making it short, jargon-free and complete with a phenomenally catchy lead, some sparkly quotes and absolutely relevant content.