



DAVID GERSHWIN CONSULTING

## **7 Ways To Manage The Media** *by David Gershwin*

### **1. Identify your key messages – no more than three.**

Whether it's an event, an announcement, or a new product, find the three most important things you need to speak about. I know you have 173 important things, but in a 30-second news segment, you can pretty much count on the fact that 170 of them won't make the cut. You'll need be the initial "editor-in-chief": decide what's important for you to communicate to a larger audience. In other words: *Write your own headline.*

### **2. Be an expert: cite real facts and figures.**

Have a point to make? Back it up! With facts and figures that bolster your argument and help make your points, your messages will be stronger and more robust. And in citing them, you yourself will be more confident and believable to a larger audience. Start your research, do your homework, and you'll shine in your interview.

### **3. Speak in language your 12 year-old niece or nephew can understand.**

If your 12 year-old niece or nephew can't understand what you're saying, neither will a reporter who doesn't have a technical background or a keen understanding of the inner workings of your business. You need to keep it simple and make it understandable for as large an audience as possible. I'm not asking you to be less intelligent – I'm asking you to be clear.

### **4. Make a media plan.**

You have a budget to plan how to allocate your company's resources, right? You have processes in place to comply with local, state, and federal regulations, right? Shouldn't you have a media plan as well? Absolutely. You need to designate how media inquiries are handled, who is authorized to speak for the company (the CEO? a VP?), and how they will represent your organization in good times and bad. Just like you have a fire drill, you should have a media drill to prepare for the unexpected. You won't anticipate every possible scenario, but you will know what to do when you have to be on camera five minutes after you arrive at the office.

### **5. Want to say "No comment"? No way!**

When you saw the perpetrator on TV coming out of the courthouse (doing the infamous "perp walk"), and the perp or the perp's lawyers said "no comment," did you think to yourself, "Wow, what a media-savvy individual! They really have control of their message!" Nope. What you *did* think was: "Guilty!" You're not guilty. So don't say "no comment." There – now go back to #1 on this list, and develop your key messages!

### **6. Target specific media outlets who cover your industry.**

Would you like to be on the cover of *TIME* Magazine? So would I. But unless you've just won the Nobel Peace Prize or reside at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., your chance of making the cover is between slim and none – and slim just left. Take the time to think about the media outlets that you read for your work – and the media outlets that have a local or subject matter "peg" to the story you want to pitch. Specialty publications read by colleagues and clients in your industry may not have the reach of, say *TIME* Magazine, but they are reaching the people you need to communicate with in order to grow your business.

### **7. Practice, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**

Laurence Olivier didn't become a world-class actor by resting on his laurels. He practiced his lines and honed his craft. While we don't expect you to be Laurence Olivier in your next media interview, you can make your own luck by practicing with a stand-in, memorizing and internalizing your key messages, and preparing for the types of tough questions you might expect a journalist to ask. Who knows – maybe you WILL make the cover of *TIME* Magazine. And when you do, let me know!

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