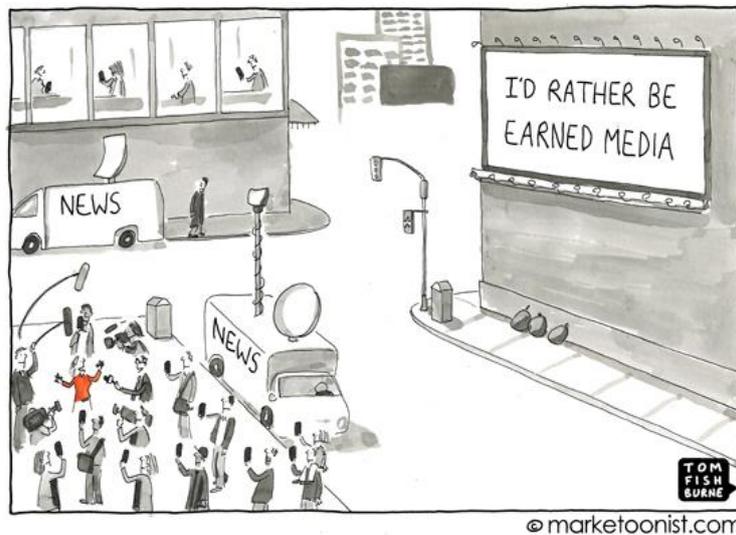


PR AND MAKING MEDIA



Did you know that 55 per cent of the news content you consumed last week was the result of some form of PR intervention? (Australian Centre for Independent Journalism (ACIJ) Study Spinning the Media, 2010)

The relationship between PR and the media has been a hot topic ever since it was broadly recognised that PR actually has something to contribute to the modern media landscape.

Unsurprisingly, this notion doesn't sit well with most journalists who see it as a challenge to their journalistic objectivity to acknowledge the extent of influence PR has in media today. But for the most part, even they recognise that globalisation and convergence of media and communications channels means the lines that once clearly defined our realms are indelibly blurred.

What this really means in practical terms is that over half of the stories you have read in the paper or online, viewed on TV or heard on the radio have been either:

- a) informed by a journalist's correspondence with a PR professional about a topic/story/information
- b) informed by a media release produced by a PR professional, or
- c) 'some other form of promotion' that has come from a PR professional.

The first message that can be taken out of this is directed at business:

If you don't have internal PR capabilities, or an external agency doing your publicity, remedy this today. You'd be crazy not to.

What this means on a professional level, for PR, is a bit more involved, but nonetheless important.

On the topic of tending good relationships, JK Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series said it perfectly: "Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike".

The ACIJ's statistic demonstrates the inherent value of the media to what we do, and in turn reminds us to be diligent and consistent in servicing our relationships with media contacts.

I daren't speak for the whole media industry, but I have had many conversations with journalist friends and media contacts on the topic of "things PR people can do better" to be better partners in this relationship. The most common recommendations are pretty simple:

- Don't cold call: preferably email to introduce yourself and your idea, then call to follow up
- Focus on news value (don't pitch rubbish)
- Respect deadlines, and
- Know when to push, and when to back off when following up.

The PR/journalist interface is symbiotic – we both get something out of it - but it is worth remembering that the way we do our respective jobs goes a long way to either strengthening or fracturing this working relationship. At the end of the day, it is really in PR's best interests to have a go at being a more attentive partner.

After all, "publicity is absolutely critical. A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front page ad" (Sir Richard Branson).

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