

tips for building strong media relationships

1. Journalists owe you nothing

2. The story is not yours to control
3. If you don't want it published, don't say it
4. Forget about conspiracy theories - no-one's against you, and if they are it's in your interests to build relationships
5. Answer journalists' questions as honestly and openly as you can
6. Don't ramble just to fill in time
7. If you're not sure – say so!
8. Think pictures, think colour, think character (especially for TV)
9. Find other people in your community who are willing to tell their story to illustrate your point
10. No matter how annoyed you get, treat journalists with respect
11. Newspaper journalists and photographers need more time than radio and TV. If you are holding a media conference, make sure you allocate extra time for the press
12. For TV and radio, practice the art of the one-liner – sum up your point in one sentence
13. Please don't overstate the 'devastating impact' or use fear to peddle your cause – develop a reputation for even-mindedness and clarity
14. Average TV grabs are 2-8 seconds (25 words), radio 10-15 seconds (50 words), newspaper story 10 paragraphs and shrinking
15. Your 'angle' may not be the story – get over it!

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16. Avoid jargon, clichés and acronyms
17. If a literate 12 year old can't understand what you're saying, you've missed your opportunity
18. Slow news days are Sunday and Monday – reporters will love you if you call in with an interesting or entertaining story
19. If you send out a media release – make sure your contact details are correct, and be available!
20. If you contact the media, make sure you have something worthwhile to say
21. Don't read too much into a journalist's enthusiasm for a story – with the best will in the world, s/he cannot control how the story is used
22. Be passionate, use gestures
23. Unless you develop a particularly good relationship with a specific journalist, don't drip feed your story and don't play favourites – just get it out there!
24. If you're not happy with the story, contact the journalist and discuss it with her/him

25. Remember, there's a very good chance *you did say* what they said you said!

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