Radio, Television, and the Web

Chapter 15
Chapter discusses tactics used by PR personnel when they use radio, television and the web on behalf of their employers and clients. Important to know because:

- Television reaches a mass audience—150 million viewers daily watch local TV news. Network news reaches another 30 million, and another 34 million people watch regional and national cable news programs.

- Radio—each week it is estimated that 94 percent of Americans ages 12 and up listen to radio—a total audience of 223 million
Using Television

- PR pros utilize four approaches for getting an organization’s news and viewpoints on local television:
  - Send a news release
  - Send a media alert or advisory
  - Phone or email the assignment editor and make a pitch
  - Produce a video news release (VNRs)

- Other television options: satellite media tours (SMTs)...arranging or booking personal appearances on television (and radio) news programs, talk shows
TV Personal Appearances

- TV and radio stations increasingly operate on round-the-clock schedules and require vast amounts of programming to fill the time available.
- Savvy PR people can get their people on talk and magazine-style shows.
- Must be familiar with opportunities out there—with programs and shows locally and nationally—research the formats and contents, the audiences reached.
- Watch the programs and study their formats.
On network TV, three shows are considered the “Holy Grail” for publicists: NBC’s “Today,” ABC’s “Good Morning America,” and CBS’ “Early Show”

Collectively these shows draw about 14 million viewers between 7 and 9 a.m. every weekday
Local TV and Radio Opportunities

- Channel 5 and Channel 2 “Talkback”-style issue-oriented Q&A segments
- Channel 4’s “Lowcountry Live” and Channel 5’s “Midday” program
- News radio: WTMA and WSC morning and afternoon programs are local-news driven
- Research the hosts and producers
- Contact them with guest/topic ideas
Radio Opportunities

- While TV has VNRs, radio has ANRs (audio news releases)
- Are also prepared based on time—30 seconds, 60 seconds for example—as opposed to columns inches or words for print
- In radio releases, a more conversational style is used, and the emphasis is on strong, short sentences
- This allows the announcer to breathe between thoughts and the listener to more easily follow what is being said
Tips for Successful ANRs and VNRs

- **Topicality**—Remember the newsroom maxim: News is about issues that matter to the majority of listeners or viewers.

- **Timeliness**—Another newsroom maxim: The favorite word is “now” followed by “today” and then “tomorrow.” The least favorite word is “yesterday.”

- **Localization**—Reporters are always seeking a local angle. Maxim: If it’s not local, it’s probably not news.

- **Humanization**—Show how real people are involved or affected. Maxim: People relate to people—and animals.
Tips (cont’d)

- Visual Appeal- Successful VNRs and ANRs provide vibrant, compelling soundbites or video footage that subtly promotes, but also illustrates and explains. Newsroom maxim: Say dog, see dog.
Radio and TV PSAs

- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)—these are defined by the FCC as unpaid announcements that promote the programs of government or voluntary (non-profit) agencies or that serve the public interest.

- As part of their responsibility to serve the public interest, radio and TV stations provide airtime to charitable and civic organizations to make the public aware of and educate them about such topics as heart disease, mental illness, and AIDS.
RMTs and SMTs

- Radio media tours and satellite media tours are a series of prebooked one-on-one interviews for radio or television from a fixed location (usually a radio or TV studio) via satellite or a network with television or radio journalists, hosts or DJs.
The Web

- The Web is also a major vehicle for distributing information and reaching millions of people.
- Online news sites are increasing, today there are more than 6,000.
- A study found that more than 50 percent of the 110 million users of the Internet in the U.S. use this medium as a source of news and information.
- MSNBC.com is one of the biggest, reaching 4 million viewers/readers a day, an audience no daily newspaper in the U.S. can match.
Weblogs and Social Networks

- Weblogs or blogs have become an integral part of the Internet. These are essentially regularly updated online personal journals with links to items of interest on the Web.
- Facebook.com and Myspace.com are forms of blogs popular among young people.
- PR pros are starting to pitch stories to Weblogs—see examples p. 412
- Webcasts and streaming video—organizations are increasingly using Webcasts to transmit news conferences and interact with journalists....

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