Distributing News to the Media

Chapter 10
Material to Media- The Challenges

- It’s essential in public relations that the right media— and the right audience(s)— receive your material.
- Various distribution methods are available: mail, e-mail, faxing, online newsrooms, electronic wire services, feature placement firms.
- Editors complain all the time about receiving news releases that are not relevant to their publications, broadcasts or audiences.
- Releases are also often sent to the wrong person.
- Difficult keeping current contacts due to journalists changing jobs or beats as frequently as every 90 days.
Media Databases

• Help PR people find the names and addresses of media gatekeepers
• Vary in format and scope
• But what most offer is essential information such as:
  – Names of publications and broadcast stations
  – Mailing addresses
  – Telephone and fax numbers
  – E-mail addresses
  – Names of key editors and reporters
  – Many also give a profile of each media outlet in terms of audience, deadline and placement opportunities
Online Databases

• Printed annual media contact books such as Bacon’s have been used for years by PR people seeking media contacts
• Today, online databases are the way to go because they can be updated continuously
• The publisher of the Cision (formerly Bacon’s) online directories claims 10,000 updates are made daily
• See Cision and Vocus PR software management websites
The Online Advantage

- Online databases enable you to rapidly compile a tailored media list for your messages.
- For example, if you need a list of business editors at daily newspapers with 50,000+ circulation, it can be compiled with a few simple keystrokes.
- You can also print your lists on mailing labels and e-mail the release to the media you have selected.
But More Doesn’t = More Media

- The computer has made it easy to launch a thousand news releases with the click of the mouse.
- But publicists should avoid such a random mass approach because it can create a blizzard of unwanted, irrelevant news releases at media across the country.
- Media databases are better used as a starting point for thinking more strategically about what particular media outlet should be contacted.
Establish Standard Media Lists

- Example could be one list of only local media in your organization’s headquarters city
- Second list might include local media in cities where your company has manufacturing plants
- Third list could be statewide media
- Fourth list could be include trade and business media covering your industry
- Releases can be tailored to better fit each of these lists
Editorial Calendars

- Media databases can also be helpful in telling you when to approach publications with specific kinds of stories.
- Trade publications, business periodicals and many general interest magazines are often organized to have a certain editorial focus each issue (i.e. editorial calendar).
- As a PR pro serving a client or organization, you need to be familiar with such editorial calendars.
- Newspaper supplements should also be on your pitch and placement radar.
- See Charleston magazine’s editorial calendar.
- Charleston magazine online
Tip Sheets

- Keep tabs on the numerous newsletters and online resources that list media placement opportunities.
- PR Week, Jack O’Dwyer’s Newsletter, Ragan’s Media Relations Report, and PartyLine are among the popular ones.
- Tip sheets allow you to use the rifle approach, instead of shot-gunning material all over the country in the hope that some editor, somewhere, is interested in it.
Distribution of Materials

• E-mail is far and away the No. 1 method PR gets material to media

Other Ways:
• Online newsrooms
• Electronic newswires
• Mat or feature distribution firms

• Photo placement firms
• Mail
• Fax
• CD-ROMS/DVDS

(See Selecting A Distribution Channel general tips page 255)