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 can 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)