

Becoming a Media Darling in the Construction Universe

Written by Kelly Moore, PR Consultant

Do you ever open the newspaper or turn on the news, see a competitor featured in a news story and think, “Why can’t I be that lucky?” If so, you’re not alone. Construction professionals operating businesses of all sizes often mistake diligence for luck when it comes to media relations.

Like any business relationship, your connections to the media—be they local, regional or national—must be nurtured. In addition to frequent (and legitimate) contact, you must take the time to educate yourself on what it takes to become a go-to source for the reporters key to your industry.

Understanding the mutual benefits of a working relationship with the media is the first step toward building rapport. In other words, configuring your mindset away from “What can this reporter do for my business?” and toward “What can I do for this reporter?” greatly improves the chances of the relationship’s success.

One of the most important things you can do for a reporter is be available. Sounds easy enough, right? But we’ve all had days when taking even one extra phone call or e-mail seems like an insurmountable task. Prioritizing requests from media, however—even on days like the one just described—is essential if you are hoping to become a frequent source.

Another action to take to become a valuable media resource is to bring news story ideas to those editors and reporters you are most interested in getting to know. Be sure the ideas are genuinely newsworthy (not simply a plug for your business). Every once in a while, call in with an idea that has nothing to do with your industry but might still be of interest to the reporter. Submitting solid and unbiased news stories adds to your credibility come pitch time.

What is pitch time, you may ask? It’s when your business is looking to achieve news coverage of an upcoming event, recent accomplishment or involvement in a project. When the time comes, knowing how to approach media with your story idea is paramount.

Here are three pointers to keep in mind:

1.Link your story to a national trend—news media love local examples of national trends. Is your story idea an illustration of something happening on a much broader scope?

2.Make sure you've got the right person—do your homework to ensure you're not pitching a business story to the sports editor.

3.Be respectful of the reporter's time—do not call to check in on how your story idea was received. The only reason you should make a follow up call is to add information you may have left out of your original pitch.

Pursuing media attention takes time, effort and consistency. But if you stick with it, eventually you can turn the tables, receiving calls from—instead of making calls to—the media.

What about those calls from the media? You may already get them from reporters and writers representing small trade magazines you've never heard of. These are just as important as calls from the national news. Here's why:

You never know who is calling—Smaller media outlets have a tendency to work with freelance writers, and freelancers get paid when their work gets published. As such, they have motivation to shop their articles around. When quoted in an article written by a freelancer, there's a good possibility your expertise will appear in more than one outlet.

It's all about the links—Does the outlet calling have an online presence? Chances are pretty good they do. Chances are also good the story will include a link back to your website. And what do links lead to? Higher search engine rankings.

Media coverage is media coverage—You may think to yourself, “My clients and prospects don't even read this magazine.” But, you can make sure they do. News coverage of any kind provides an implied third-party endorsement. Share the news the same way you would a reference letter or a testimonial. Ask the reporter when the story will run, capture it and put it in front of your stakeholders. Blog it. E-mail it. Digg it. (And for the old school, mail it!)

There's no telling what kind of results an interview with a smaller media outlet may yield. A client of mine recently wound up on ABC World News after doing an interview with a small regional construction magazine. It happens!

Construction Business Owner, February 2010 Issue

Kelly Moore is a public relations consultant who has worked with clients in a variety of B2B industries, including construction, landscaping and manufacturing.

Tags: 2010 February Issue, internet marketing, marketing

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.