

Do You Need to Shift Your PR Strategy?

“Why isn’t our news getting attention in the media?” “Are we getting enough value from our PR agency if no one is writing about us?” These valid questions strike fear in the hearts of every PR professional who works hard to earn coverage and share stories about their clients.

While more market challenges abound, there are still ways to effectively increase visibility that your client deserves.

Current media and PR job landscape

A recent *Bloomberg News* [article](#) reported on the booming opportunities that are available for PR jobs, while there is a continuing steep decline in the number of journalists.

There are 6.4 public relations specialists for every reporter, data from the U.S. Census show. The Labor Department forecasts that PR jobs will expand by 9 percent to **282,600** in the next 10 years, while jobs for journalists of all kinds will decline by 9 percent to **45,900**. This ever-widening gap continues to cause fierce competition for news coverage and supports the need for a shift of strategy that PR counsel should execute for their clients.

Continued reduction of newsrooms

Social media buzzed in early May when NOLA.com/*The Times-Picayune* was sold to a competitor and [all its 161 staff were fired, including 65 reporters and editors](#). The newly merged newspaper will launch in June and use the brands and features of both publications and combine the websites under nola.com. The status of the newsroom in terms of its size remains unclear at this moment.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* wrote about [growing “news deserts” across the U.S.](#) where communities have been left without any local coverage at all. And it’s not just smaller towns and cities that are being affected; this is also happening in larger urban areas.

With traditional newspapers shrinking or folding, and the pressure for reporters to write more stories while also focusing on supplementing their news coverage on social media, it’s no surprise that journalists are overwhelmed with pitches and story ideas each day.

The battles between journalists vs. PR

There is no doubt that many PR professionals have to step up their game. Journalists are sharing their frustrations over the influx of ineffective PR outreach through public Twitter shaming. Others plead for better strategies: reporter @michelleruiz tweeted this tip: “Don’t reach out and ask what I’m working on/what’s top of mind for me right now. Look up what



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I write, and tailor a pitch.”

Meredith Hobbs, a reporter with ALM’s *Daily Report*, recently participated in a media panel program at the Legal Marketing Association’s annual conference in Atlanta. She said that her email overflows, and she just doesn’t have the time to respond to every PR pitch. Bottom line: If she doesn’t respond, she isn’t interested. She acknowledged that there is a real risk that she might overlook an ideal story idea because she can’t always get to every email that PR specialists send to her.

American Lawyer’s Vivia Chen sounded off on PR while recognizing that reporters and PR people do need each other. Her [commentary](#) gave a list of irksome PR habits to avoid with journalists. That piece was soon followed by a [response](#) she wrote after John Buchanan, senior communications manager at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, provided her with ways in which journalists annoy publicists.

How can you get your client’s news to cut through the clutter?

There are ways to get noticed despite the storm of information flooding reporters’ inboxes.

1. Tell your story, your way. Don’t feel the need to rely on media to share the news – be creative; use video, podcasts, LinkedIn and other social media. Incorporate [business development tactics](#), recruiting messages and [events](#) into how and where your client gets its story across.
2. Define realistic expectations to avoid disappointment and frustration. My colleague Bethany Chieffallo provides common-sense approaches to [balancing client, media and colleague expectations](#).
3. Keep learning about your client’s business and industry so you understand the challenges and opportunities they face; that can help you refine a PR campaign. Know their audiences and business goals so you can align your strategies accordingly.
4. Roadblocks to success can take on many forms and overcoming them requires a deeper understanding of timing, planning and preparation. My colleague Liz Lindley shares [PR tips](#) to improve the value of a media relations campaign.

The opportunities between PR and journalists are increasingly unbalanced through supply and demand. [Developing effective PR campaigns](#) requires a keen approach that demonstrates value, earns results and meets expectations.

Need a fresh approach to getting your story out? Contact me at vhood@jaffepr.com.