

Summertime PR

Summer is around the corner and that can be a good time to optimize your public relations program. Historically, the summer months are a slow time for the news media, especially late July and August. During this time, the news media, particularly local outlets, are in need of news stories. Just like attorneys, educators and other folks, many journalists and media professionals take vacations during this time, but it still presents an opportunity to generate some additional media coverage for your firm, as well as build relationships with key journalists.

Here are several action items that will help you take advantage of the traditionally slow summer news cycle.

Pick up the phone – Make it a point to call two or three journalists and find out what stories they are working on or planning. This is a good time to let them know what your firm may have lined up for the near future – expansion, new hires, new practice area, etc. You will also be top-of-mind if there is a breaking news story and the media is looking for a legal source in one of your firm's key practice areas.

Make a lunch date – Invite a local legal or business reporter to lunch or for coffee. This is an excellent way to build a relationship. Don't worry if you don't have a topic or story idea to pitch. It may work to your advantage if the reporter doesn't feel pressured to listen to your story pitch.

Pitch soft news stories – Like the holidays, late summer is a good time to pitch soft news stories. Perhaps your firm is doing some charitable outreach that would make a good photo opportunity. If you have nothing scheduled, plan something. One firm hosted a "Dog Days" of summer luncheon for its employees and clients, and invited them to bring their dogs. This generated local print and broadcast coverage for the firm and boosted employee morale at the same time.

The summer will be over before you know it and the crush of the holidays will quickly be upon us, so use the season to your advantage.



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