

The Sources **HotLink**

Tips and Practical Ideas to Get Positive News Coverage

Number Eight, Summer 1998

Getting in touch

Don't Play That Game – Ending Telephone Tag

Many recent studies have shown that despite the multitude of communications technologies now in every day use, it is actually becoming more difficult to get in touch. Anyone who has ever experienced the frustration of “telephone tag” will certainly find that easy to believe. When trying to publicize an event, contact the media or respond to a crisis, the difficulties of getting in touch with the right people may seem insurmountable. Here are a few practical steps which make communication easier:

- ☎ Take a moment to ameliorate your attitude: if you are furious every time you reach a message it will show in your voice. Voice mail *can* be a useful tool if approached thoughtfully.
- ☎ Give some thought to what you want to say in a message before you call. Don't get caught stumbling for words once the tone has sounded.
- ☎ Make your message brief yet complete. Enunciate your name and number, followed by your reason for calling. This can be especially useful as it gives the message recipient notice of what to prepare when returning the call. A stranger's name and number is unlikely to motivate someone to call back. You may wish to give some time parameters – “Please call me before 5pm Tuesday. I will try you again Wednesday at 9:30 am.” You are providing information on the urgency of your request and also letting them know that you will try them until you get in touch. Conclude your message by restating your name and phone number.
- ☎ If you leave a call-back time, make sure you are in the office. Consider giving a more precise time (rather than simply

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Media know-how

Learning To Live With Editors

Editorial line-ups

Periodicals have editorial calendars, writers' guidelines, readership profiles for advertisers. Study these and back issues. Editorial fit, good writing and readership relevance will interest an editor.

Canadian Periodical Index

The Canadian Periodical Index lists stories from hundreds of periodicals, showing title, publication, issue, date, page reference. Study it for keywords and to see how stories have played. (ISSN 1192-4160)

Response Time

A journalist may need to play voice mail tag with twenty sources, do a dozen phone interviews, draft and polish a 2,000 word story...for a one-week deadline. Return all media calls within 20 minutes. You'll make friends.

Contact Log

Start a sheet on every story: create date/time, journalist, paper/station, phone, fax, E-mail, topic, approach to story, also contacting, deadline, run

date section/program, action, date, time, person, comment. Use it to stretch your goals in being responsive.

Co-ordination

The benefits of coordinated media relations are: response time fast, story lines identified, background information available, the right spokespeople involved, people and locations prepared, approvals determined, PR counsel available.

In-depth interviews

Imagine a conversation where the other person is pulling written sentences out of a hat. When you generate media interest, you should be prepared to do in-depth interviews. Genuine leather has creases, grain, character. You can be both real and positive at the same time. You'll gain credibility.

Al Czarnecki APR is president of Al Czarnecki Communications (416) 261-9828. You can find more resources relating to public relations and social marketing on his World Wide Web site – www.web.net/alcom.

What Are Journalists Up To On the Internet?

It's a good question... and the answer can be found in a new survey compiled by Middleberg and Associates. Here are a few highlights:

The study records an amazing pace of change: “The practices of journalists, in how they research stories, has changed more in the 40 month period represented by our four surveys, than in the previous forty years.” Wow!

89% of respondents or their staff go online at least once a month, 45% do so daily.

42% of journalists report that they use the Internet as a primary vehicle to find new sources and experts – that certainly explains some of the 5,000 visits **SOURCES SELECT Online** receives every month!

The entire survey can be found at www.mediasource.com. It came to **HotLink's** attention through *From the Hip*, the electronic newsletter of HipHype Canada. *From the Hip* is a great resource – visit HipHype at www.hiphype.com.

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"during business hours") and avoid a frustrating day of back and forth messages.

- ☎ Think about some alternatives when you cannot reach an individual. Is there someone else in the organization who could fulfill your needs? Perhaps a receptionist or executive assistant can tell you when the person is most likely to be available. Seek out different communication vehicles – a telephone hater may be contacted via E-mail, fax or (gasp!) mail.

Double Your Exposure

Has your organization been featured in the media recently? Share the details and a copy of the story the next time you're in the news and you'll find yourself gracing the pages of *HotLink*.

Fax (416) 964-8763,
Mail: 4 Phipps St., Ste. 109,
Toronto, ON M4Y 1J5
E-mail: sources@sources.com

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4 Phipps St., Suite 109
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1J5

Phone: (416) 964-7799

Fax: (416) 964-8763

E-mail: sources@sources.com

World Wide Web:

<http://www.sources.com>

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News From Sources

Sources is a Family Affair

Well, the dog days of summer are here, the time when we slow down and take a moment to assess our recent accomplishments and plan new strategies for the fall. At *Sources*, we're looking back at our most successful directory in recent memory, with more newcomers and virtually all those listed confirming that *Sources* remains an integral part of their media relations strategy. In the fall, we are looking forward to putting some special effort into reaching every single working journalist in Canada. We want to be certain that they are all aware of the value of *Sources* in reaching Canada's experts – you! We are also making sure that we reach the new crop of specialty periodicals and broadcasters, ensuring your expertise is available not only to major outlets, but the expanding world of niche publications.

One of my favorite individuals in *Sources* has received great results since listing in the Winter 1998 issue. Bert Cowan, a certified fraud examiner and

my dad, has had numerous calls from the media since his listing appeared. In June he was featured in an article "Spies Among Us" in *The Training Report: The Newspaper of Training Ideas and Strategies*. Congratulations dad! I told you *Sources* was a good idea! Remember that you don't have to be related to a staff member to appear in *HotLink*. Send me news of your appearance in the media, and I'll let *HotLink*'s readers know.

This issue of *HotLink* includes reviews of several new publications, tips on using that scourge (or blessing) of the modern era, voice mail, and advice on dealing with editors from media relations consultant Al Czarniecki. Enjoy! If you would like to share your experience or resources with the 1,000 readers of the *Sources HotLink*, don't hesitate! I welcome all your comments, queries, criticisms and submissions.

Keep cool for the rest of the summer.

Kirsten Cowan, Editor

Spread The Word

Do you know an organization which would benefit from listing with *Sources*? Let us know by phone: (416) 964-7799, fax: (416) 964-8763 or via E-mail: sources@sources.com. Be generous and share the secret of media coverage with others!

Put Yourself in The Spotlight!

Display advertising puts your listing in the limelight every time a reader opens *Sources*. Deloitte & Touche, Citizenship & Immigration Canada, CN and many others use advertisements to direct journalists to their listings and also to raise awareness about their specific services like resource materials, hot-lines, media directories or World Wide Web sites. Call Graham Blair at (416) 964-7799 to find out how advertising in *Sources* can get you rave reviews!

The Canadian Journalists' Calendar 1998



from *Sources* and
The Canadian Association of Journalists

Make a Date with Canada's Journalists!

If your organization wishes to raise its profile with the media, sponsors a public awareness month or week or hosts a conference or series of events you'd like journalists to know about, advertising in the 1999 *Canadian Journalists' Calendar* is for you! Featuring the best of Canadian photo-journalism, this popular calendar is distributed to thousands of journalists across the country. The year is filling up fast; reserve now to guarantee the month you need! Call Graham Blair at (416) 964-7799 for details today!

The Sources *HotLink* – Summer 1998 Phone: (416) 964-7799

Frequently Asked Questions about the Sources Subject Index

Why is the Subject Index so important?

Your entries in the Subject Index are the most powerful feature of your *Sources* listing. Your choice of headings tells journalists, editors and researchers you have expertise in the subject they are looking up, and leads them directly to your company or organization. Journalists can find you in the A-Z Index if they already know you, or they may come across your listing while browsing through *Sources*, but journalists on a deadline will usually turn to the Subject Index to find experts on the topic they are working on. Choosing your headings carefully maximizes the chances of them finding and calling you.

How can we find headings which best describe our expertise?

- 1) We can fax or E-mail you lists of headings related to your area of expertise. We have more than 100 such lists available in fields ranging from Biotechnology to Religion, Post-Secondary Education, Farming, Clothing, Computers, and many more.
- 2) Make a list of the subjects on which your company or organization has expertise or views; then browse through the Subject Index in your copy of *Sources* or on the *Sources* Internet site to find headings matching your expertise.
- 3) If your organization was ever listed with *Sources* before, we have your previous list of headings on file. We can send this to you to update. Simply delete headings that are no longer appropriate and add new ones that are.

How many subject headings can we choose from?

There are more than 18,000 headings available to you in the *Sources* Subject Index database. There are also more than 1,500 cross-references which guide users selecting one term to substitute or related terms.

Can I make up my own headings?

It depends. Suggestions for improvements and additions are very welcome, but *Sources* maintains editorial control of the contents of the *Sources* Subject Index database, which is a proprietary information resource used by a number of publications and online directories. A Subject Index Editorial Board decides on changes and additions to the database. Additions are commonly being made in rapidly changing fields, especially science and technology. Additions involving minor variations of existing headings, or which are too narrowly specific, are unlikely to be made because *Sources* users indicate that a proliferation of such headings makes it harder to find what they are looking for – counterproductive for the organizations listed in *Sources* as well as for the journalists who use *Sources* to find contacts to interview and quote.

Will journalists using the Sources World Wide Web site find us in the same way as users of the print edition do?

You appear under the same headings in print and online.

The Search Engine on the *Sources* Internet site has some extra features not available in print. Online users can use a “Contains” query which allows them to specify topics containing word roots.

The *Sources* online search engine also has a feature which prompts users to try an alternative when they misspell a commonly misspelled word or when they use a term which has more than one accepted spelling.

What are some common mistakes in selecting subject headings?

➤ Headings which are too general. “Education” and “Environment” are common examples. Reporters are rarely if ever told to write a story on “the environment”. They are more likely to look up topics like “Blue Box Recycling” or “Wildlife Preservation”.

➤ Headings which are too restrictive. A heading like “Mirimichi River Salmon Fishery”, might be an example. A journalist would be more likely to look under headings like “Salmon” or “Fisheries/Fishermen” or “Sport Fishing”.

➤ Vague or obscure headings, such as “Analysis”, “Facilities”, “Solutions”, “Trends”, “Prevention”.

➤ Repeating of minor variants of the same heading rather than choosing a broad range of headings. An example might be “Comic Books/Adventure”, “Comic Books/Horror”, “Comic Books/Romance”, “Comic Books/ Science Fiction”, “Comic Books/Superhero”. In an already specialized category like Comic Books, a reporter will first look under the “Comic Books” heading. If you are there, the other entries are probably superfluous. You might be better off choosing additional headings like “Popular Culture” or “Animation”.

➤ Prefacing headings with adjectives. This usually reduces your chances of being found. If one of your areas of expertise is Houses, suitable headings might include “Housing”, “Construction/ Residential”, “Mortgages”, “Building Standards”, etc. Most reporters would think of these and similar headings; few would try headings like “New Houses”, “British Columbia Houses”, “Leaky Condos”, “Sub-standard Houses”, etc.

➤ Using phrases, marketing slogans, or mission statements as subject headings, e.g. “Excellence in customer service”, “Marketing Solutions”, and “Easy-to-Use”.

➤ Concentrating only on what you do rather than on what you know. Fighting fires may be primarily what fire departments do, but they know a great deal about defective wiring, gas explosions, chemical spills, and how not to store propane cylinders. Make sure your headings reflect the full range of your organization’s expertise.

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Frequently Asked Questions
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Where can I get more help or information?

- 1) Call us at (416) 964-7799. We'll be glad to help.
- 2) Lists of subject headings grouped by category are available on the *Sources* Internet site at <http://www.sources.com/category.htm>; or we can fax or E-mail you a copy.
- 3) Look through the Subject Index in your copy of *Sources* to see how it works and how other organizations make use of it.

HotLink Lends An Ear

Do you have questions or comments about this newsletter, your listing in *Sources*, or any of the services *Sources* provides? Call us at (416) 964-7799 or sources@sources.com by E-mail. Your suggestions and observations are important to us!

From the listings desk.....

Thank you!

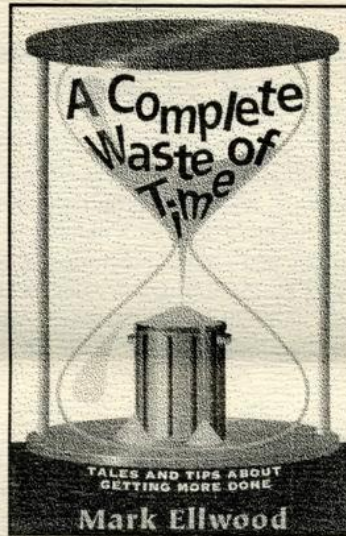
Many thanks to all of you who responded to our recent Renewal and Update drive. Having the opportunity to add or change information in your listing ensures that journalists receive accurate information about your organization.

We will be sending out Renewal and Updater packages again in the fall, but in the meantime, REMEMBER – we are here to help! Whenever you have changes or questions about your listing give us a call at Sources. Our team will help you stay connected and any changes that you require will appear online within a week, making your latest information just a keystroke away!

Enjoy the rest of the summer season.

Tracey Parn, Listings Co-ordinator

The HotLink Bookshelf – Reviews from the Editor of HotLink



A Complete Waste of Time: Tales and Tips About Getting More Done.

by Mark Ellwood.
Pace Productivity Inc.,
1997. 251 pages. \$19.95



What a great book! In a truly novel approach, Mark Ellwood has bracketed his practical tips on time management with hilarious modern fairy tales illustrating the issues at hand. I laughed out loud at the adventures of Willard Thistlewaite in "Chronicle of a Chronically Ill Meeting" and Nicholas Wigglesworth in "Tribal Quest on the Fifth Floor." The jargon free, easy to implement solutions Ellwood outlines are as memorable as the characters he has created. Since finishing *A Complete Waste of Time*, I have been inspired by its hero, time management guru Crispin Quirky, to slay some dragons in my own worklife, including runaway paperwork and run-on meetings. A truly rare find in an "industry" book, *A Complete Waste of Time* is educational and entertaining.

☆ - don't bother ☆☆ - not totally uninteresting

☆☆☆ - some information of value ☆☆☆☆ - a good resource

☆☆☆☆☆ - Great!

Relationship Marketing: New Strategies, Techniques and Technologies to Win the Customers You Want and Keep Them Forever.

by Ian Gordon.
John Wiley & Sons,
1998. 314 pages, \$34.95.



With *Relationship Marketing*, Ian Gordon attempts to lay down a blueprint for a way of doing business tailored to the new millennium. Emphasizing the development of reciprocal lifetime relationships with customers rather than short-term gains, *Relationship Marketing* responds to the increased inter-activity between supplier and purchaser brought about by the digital age. Although packed with industry jargon, Gordon's judicious use of examples, many of them Canadian, and his obvious passion for his subject make *Relationship Marketing* a worthwhile read.

The Benton Foundation – www.benton.com



This informative and inspirational World Wide web site contains a full record of the activities of The Benton foundation, a U.S. organization that aims to use emerging communications tools to work for a better, more democratic world. Of particular interest to many *HotLink* readers is the Best Practices Toolkit (www.benton.org/Practice/Toolkit.html). Geared specifically to non-profit organizations, the Toolkit contains a thorough selection of links and resources enabling non-profit and policy alternative groups to compete in a digital world. Definitely worth a browse.