

The Sources *Hot*Link

Tips and Practical Ideas to Get Positive News Coverage

Number Thirteen, Fall 1999

Ten Tips for Working Faster on the Internet: Part Two

(Part One of this article appeared in *HotLink 12, Summer 1999.*)

Check your E-mail according to a schedule, and stick to it.

It's too easy to get sidetracked from other important work by "just checking" your E-mail when a new message appears in your in-basket. Resist the temptation to check your E-mail whenever the impulse strikes and stick to a schedule. Many software packages are automatically configured to download E-mail every few minutes. If seeing E-mail in your in-box is too tempting to ignore, change the preferences for download times to the schedule that fits you best. Twice a day – once in the morning and once in the afternoon – is good for most people

Handle your E-mail according to standard time-management principles.

Handle your E-mail according to standard time-management principles.

In other words, handle E-mail **once**, just like you would handle paper mail. Read it, decide what to do with it (trash, file, act, or forward for action), and then **do** it. Not later. Now. Keep E-mail in your in-box only if it is **active** – either unread or waiting for answers.

Use E-mail software that permits automatic filtering of new messages.

The latest versions of common E-mail software such as Microsoft Outlook 98, Outlook Express and Netscape Mail enable you to create multiple fold-

ers to hold messages on specific topics. After creating your folders, you can apply filters, or "rules". These rules will automatically check all incoming E-mail for message that meet specific criteria, and will automatically move these messages to the folder specified in the rule.

For example, if you want to filter your E-mail from the E-mail group **CanMedLib**, you can create a rule that will identify **CanMedLib**'s headers and automatically move those messages to a designated folder. That will leave your in-basket reserved for personal messages that require your immediate attention.

Most E-mail software packages also permit you to create auto-responses to specific E-mail messages that you receive often. For example, if you have a special E-mail address used by patrons to send reference questions, you can direct your E-mail software to auto-respond to every message sent to that address with a particular piece of text – for example, an acknowledgment that the message was received and will be followed up within 24 hours. To create an auto-response, you create a rule to identify the distinctive information (in this case the E-mail address for refer-

Continued on Page 4

Writing For Broadcast

When writing for radio or TV, there are issues to consider that don't apply to writing for print. What you are composing will be read out loud, and those hearing it don't have the benefit of re-reading something that was unclear. Precision becomes all important. Remember:

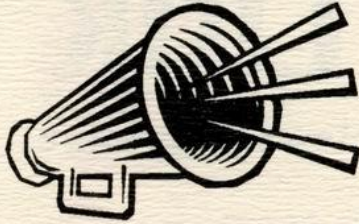
- avoid abbreviations wherever possible – they are far too unclear.
- spell out the pronunciation of words that could vary in their pronunciation (i.e.: Gloucester – "Gloss-ter").
- Avoid cramming too many thoughts into a piece – your listener won't be able to retrace the convoluted evolution of a thought.
- Try out your piece on a friend or colleague unfamiliar with the issue or issues. If they don't understand it on first listen, go back to the drawing board.

Writing for broadcast is a special skill. By taking a moment to think about the uniqueness of these media, you can avoid many common pitfalls.

Source: communication briefings, 806 Westminster Blvd., Blackwood, NJ 08012, USA Tel. (609) 589-3503.

Inside This Issue:

- Internet Timesavers – This Page
- 5 Rules for Interviews – Page Five
- A Closer Look at PR – Page Six
- Listing Advice, News From **Sources**, and more!



Make yourself heard!

If you have experience or advice that would help the readers of *HotLink* improve their media relations, don't be shy! *HotLink* welcomes articles on a variety of topics relevant to communications, public relations and media relations. Publishing an article is a great way to tell 1,000 organizations about what you do. Call 416-964-7799 or E-mail kcowan@sources.com for information.

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News from Sources

Welcome to the 13th issue of the *Sources HotLink*. We've received a great response from our larger, eight-page format, and it is certainly a pleasure to be able to cram twice as many hints and tips into each issue. This one is no exception, with a continuation of Rita Vine's fabulous tried and true methods for working better and faster with the Internet. Also appearing is a thought-provoking and educational piece from Carol Levine APR, on the role of public relations in *your* organization.

As always, page three is devoted to your *Sources* listing, and this one has great advice on how to make your listing more effective, attracting more journalists and more calls. This is the moment to contact your listing co-ordi-

nators if you haven't already. There is still time to update your listing and have it reflect the most up-to-date information about your organization's mandate, personnel and contact information. Even if your listing is perfect the way it is, drop Tracey and Heather a line and they'll stop reminding you to send in your changes! Don't forget that you can change any aspect of your listing, including your descriptive paragraph and your subject areas.

Enjoy this issue, and please feel free to comment on any aspect of the *Sources HotLink* or the *Sources* Media Relations Service. All the best for a healthy and productive Fall.

Kirsten Cowan
Editor

Recent Comments from Journalists

Letters to Sources

Sending out a new issue of *Sources* always brings in lots of comments from journalists receiving their new copy, or seeing one on a colleague's desk and wishing they had one of their own. Here are a few recent arrivals in the *Sources* mailbox.

I am an Ottawa based freelance writer interested in obtaining an updated copy of the *Sources* networking book for 1999 and also being put on the permanent mailing list to receive new editions as they come out. I have found a previous edition of this book, which I use regularly, very informative and helpful.

Jeff Buckstein, Freelancer,
Globe&Mail, Report on Business,
Ottawa Citizen, Canadian
MoneySaver

Sources is a valuable resource for me. I do appreciate getting it.

Felicitas B. Ackermann
Editor of *Cross+Roads*, newsletter
of the Canadian Lutheran Bible
Institute

I just received my copy of the summer 1999 *Sources*. Thanks. I use it regularly in my freelance writing.

Alex Binkley, Freelancer,
Ottawa, Ontario

A few other media outlets that have recently requested copies of *Sources* include Sleeping Giant Productions, a television documentary production house that came by our offices asking for as many copies as we could spare (and they could carry). The new *Report on Business Television (ROBTV)* also wanted a bundle - last month they requested 20 copies!

The Sources *HotLink* – Fall 1999 Phone: (416) 964-7799

Enhance Your Sources Listing and Get the Most for Your Dollar

BY TRACEY PARN

Here are some easy ways to make the most of your *Sources* listing.

Get the most for your public relations dollar. Think about what your listing should include. Consider the following a checklist for reviewing your listing or as something to pass on to members of your organization who want to know what your *Sources* listing is and what its components are designed to do.

1. **Your basic listing** price includes a 50-word descriptive paragraph, up to 15 contact names and numbers, and a minimum of 40 subject headings. Additional contact names are \$25 each. Extra subject headings are \$5 each. Extra words in your paragraph are also \$5 per word.
2. **Your Descriptive Paragraph** tells journalists who you are and what you do before they call. Draw in journalists who are just browsing through the pages of *Sources* for story ideas. Make your paragraph as clear and concise as possible.
3. **Your Contacts** are the people you select for journalists and researchers to call. Many organizations direct media calls through their public relations department while others select contacts based on individual areas of expertise or choose a contact for each major region. You decide. A contact can include: name, title, mailing address, phone, fax, E-mail and an after-hours phone number. The more information the better! Make sure all the contact persons you select are aware they may be called by the media.
4. **The Subject Index** leads journalists to your listing. *Sources* offers a comprehensive and fastidiously maintained subject index with carefully and appropriately selected

headings for you to choose from. Your listing will include at least 40 subject headings – they will direct journalists to your listing when they are preparing a story in your area of expertise. Think of it as 40 times the coverage!

5. **A French-language Paragraph** allows you to reach *Sources* users in Canada's other official language. It's only \$99 per year and includes up to 60 words.
6. **Your Logo or Photograph** appears at the top of your *Sources* listing and catches the attention of *Sources* users. Over 80% of our listees choose to include this eye-catching feature. Black and White logos cost only \$99 per year.
7. For organizations without a logo, or with logos which don't include the organization's name, **Large Type** (27.5 point type) also draws attention to your *Sources* listing. For only \$49 a year it's a bargain.
8. If you have a **WWW** site, be sure to include the URL in your basic *Sources* listing. Additionally, you can "hotlink" your site for only \$25 per year. A hotlink establishes a direct link from your *Sources* online listing to your company's own WWW page. Instantaneous and hassle-free, a great bargain!

Remember, you can contact us to make changes to your online listing (www.sources.com) at any time. Make sure that your listing information is accurate and up-to-date.

During the last year, over 200 new individuals and organizations signed up for the *Sources* service. We welcome them and will continue to help these and all of our clients to expand their media relations profile. We are the source for Canadian journalists. Let us work for you!

It's Time To Get In Touch!

By now, you should have received your *Sources* listing package. The deadline for submitting your changed or updated information is **October 22, 1999**. Responding to us by this date will ensure that journalists have the latest information concerning your organization, something that will help you stay connected with the media. If you know that you are unable to respond by the deadline, don't despair! Give us a call and we can make accommodations to suit your organization's schedule.

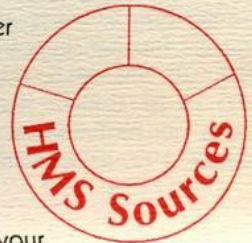
If you need help with any other aspect of your listing please give either myself or Heather Easton a call at *Sources*. We'd love to help.

Tracey Parn,
Listings Co-ordinator

P.S. If you have lost, misplaced or didn't receive your package, don't worry! Call us, a.s.a.p., and we'll fax you another one.

Help is at Hand!

Panicking over completing your listing changes? Unsure how to get the most out of your listing? *Sources* listing experts can give you a helping hand. Call Tracey or Heather at (416) 964-7799 for tips and advice on getting your listing shipshape.



**Listing
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Ten Tips for Working Faster on the Internet *Continued from Page 1*

ence questions) then point to the text file that should be automatically sent as the response. The software does the rest!

Create folders on your desktop to keep projects organized.

You can right mouse click anywhere on your empty Windows 95/NT/98 desktop and select **new**, then **folder**. Rename the folder with the name of your current project. A folder can hold any type of electronic document – word processing files, multimedia presentations, shortcuts to related web sites, even E-mail messages from software like Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express and Netscape Mail.

Keeping related items together in files enables easy access to all files on a project, so that you no longer have to fish through many different programs and directories to assemble related information. When your project is completed, you can move the folder and all its contents off your Windows desktop into a directory on your hard drive.

The paperless office is a great idea, but...

Sometimes it just makes more sense to print a copy of an important E-mail and file it so that it will be ready and available with other material in a paper file. Don't feel guilty.

Rita Vine is Vice President of IMR Internet Training (<http://www.imr.on.ca/>), a Toronto firm which teaches practical and strategic Internet skills to knowledge professionals. She can be reached at 416-928-1405 or by E-mail: rita@imr.on.ca. Her listing can be found on page 314 of the Summer 1999 issue of *Sources*.

Put Yourself In the Spotlight!

Display advertising puts your listing in the limelight every time a reader opens *Sources*. Bell Canada, 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 Michelle Hernandez at (416) 964-7799 to find out how advertising in *Sources* can get you rave reviews!

Five Common World Wide Web Site Failings

At *Sources*, we devote a large amount of time to researching on the World Wide Web. Here are five common mistakes we see on WWW sites and what you can do to avoid them.

1. Too Many/Large Images. Think of the users. Many are using 14.4 or 28.8 modems. A page with large or many graphic images can take forever to download. That's okay for an online art gallery, but for an information site it's deadly. Keep images to a minimum, or provide a high-graphics and low-graphics version.

You might consider keeping heavy graphics off the main page altogether. A well-designed Web page will have a text equivalent of each graphic. This is particularly useful for the increasing number of serious Web users navigating the Web with the images turned off.

2. Frames. Many people don't like them and never will. They often interfere with navigating with the forward and back buttons. A site with frames results in a small main window where the viewer can barely see the information. And information is why they're visiting the site. A well-designed site should have a menu bar on the top or sides, indicated by colour or shading so it stands out. Some people like frames, but if they're used on your site provide a no-frame version as well.

3. Bad Structure. On many sites the only way to get from a particular section to another desired section is to back up to the main page and then select the desired section. This is bad structural design, and is unfortunately very common. You should be able to navigate easily around a site. From any page on your site, make it possible to select any other section, or the main page, as well as the information in that specific section.

4. Browser-Specific Sites. A disturbing trend in sites recently is designing specifically for either *Netscape Navigator* or *Microsoft Explorer*, the two main Web browsers. Sites that are designed for one browser's specific capabilities can look very strange when viewed with the other browser. A few very inhospitable sites don't even allow you to visit them if you aren't browsing with *Explorer*. Give your site a common design, or provide two versions of the site, one for *Netscape Navigator* and another for *Microsoft Explorer*.

5. Uninspired Design. Use interesting backgrounds, menu bars, and colours. In the end, boring and fast to load is preferable to beautiful but glacially slow. However, speed and grace can be combined.

We welcome your suggestions for improving the *Sources* World Wide Web site at <http://www.sources.com>



The image shows a screenshot of a web browser window with a red border. The browser's menu bar includes 'File', 'Edit', 'View', 'Get', 'Bookmarks', 'Questions', and 'Directory'. The address bar shows 'http://www.sources.com'. Below the browser window, there is a large white box with a black border containing the following text:

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No more passing your single issue around until it's dog-eared. Just call 416-964-7799 or E-mail sources@sources.com and we'll start sending *HotLink* to your E-mail address.

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Backing it Up

You are in a crisis. It may be full blown or simply a confrontational interview. You saw it coming, so you went through media training, prepared your points, and practiced. Our interview is going well and you're proud of yourself – until the reporter asks, "Can you prove that?" What do you do?

Rule #1 – During a media interview, we should never make a statement unless we can back it up.

Great. So you tell the reporter that you can absolutely prove it. The reporter then says, "Okay, let's see." How do you present your documentation?

Rule #2 – Keep it brief.

If it is the Starr Report, with its juicy bits of information, lengthy is okay. But you aren't talking about the Starr Report. Your documentation should highlight the key points, just as you do during your interview. Highlight in yellow or use bullet points. A good example is a late-breaking court order. If it comes down at 4:30 pm, and the reporter wants to go live at five, you will be helping the reporter, and your message will be clearer, if you can point him/her to the real meaning.

Rule #3 – Keep it simple.

If you're talking to a business reporter and your stock price is the issue, charts come in handy. The visuals must be simple. Don't expect the reporter to use your exact visual aid, though. Most of the time it will be reworked to match the broadcast outlet or print publication's format.

Rule #4 – Don't just insist that something is right. Show them!

While researching interviews for my media training clients, I have heard more than a few times the phrases, "Cause I said so!" and "I'm telling you that's the way it is!"

This may seem like a forceful response to a cynical reporter, and you may think that it will convince the public to side with you. However, there is nothing worse than to hear such a response only to have the reporter say, "We checked, and found just the opposite is true." Your forceful response has made you look bad.

Rule #5 – "May I see that, please?"

There have been instances when reporters will tell you, during an interview, that they have in their hand a document that proves something. Always ask to see it! After all, if you should back it up, so should they.

As I preach to my clients, no matter who is talking, if it can't be backed up, it shouldn't be said.

Contact Al Rothstein for spokesperson training, media relations, and crisis communication.

Al Rothstein Media Services, Inc.

E-mail:
mediabrain@rothsteinmedia.com

Toll-Free Phone: 1-800-453-6352.

See case histories at
www.rothsteinmedia.com.

Remember

1. Document it.
2. Keep it brief.
3. Keep it simple.
4. Don't just insist.
5. Ask the reporter to show you.

Media Relations – The 10 Commandments

1. Respond as promptly as possible to media requests and try to respect their deadlines.
2. Make it clear at the outset whether you're speaking for yourself or on behalf of the university.
3. Try to be frank and open during an interview.
4. Practice making your points in 20 to 30 seconds.
5. Use uncomplicated language and avoid jargon.
6. Rephrase questions in your responses to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.
7. Don't try to cover up bad news. Often, the impact of bad news can be reduced by being first to bring it to public attention.
8. Avoid emotionalism, unsubstantiated statements and off-the-record comments.
9. Take some time to collect your thoughts before answering difficult questions. If necessary, tell the reporter you'll get back to him or her with your response after the interview.
10. Say nothing within earshot of a reporter, or within range of a microphone, that you don't want your mother – and the rest of the public – to hear you say

Reprinted with permission from the Simon Fraser University World Wide Web site at: <http://www.sfu.ca/mediapr/>. The SFU listing is on page 303 of the Summer 1999 edition of Sources.

The Power of Public Relations

BY CAROL LEVINE, APR

Why is it that PR practitioners have such a difficult time seeing their outstanding programs reach fruition? Why do budgets for public relations pale in comparison to those allocated for traditional advertising or transaction based marketing? Or that public relations expertise is excluded from the strategic planning process?

For the legions of public relations professionals who work as consultants or as in-house staff for small, medium and, surprisingly many large size private and publicly held corporations, advancing the case for strategic PR often feels like pushing water uphill. I am continually amazed at the general lack of understanding regarding the definition, expectations and benchmarks for evaluation for the work that we do. Except for the most recognizable companies there remains a sea of businesses and not-for-profit organizations who have yet to come to grips with the power of public relations and then earmark the necessary human and financial resources to the task.

The tenacity of the public relations professional is such that we are exceedingly resourceful. I believe that in an effort to demonstrate the value of public relations in any number of areas: reputation management, crisis intervention, product introduction, the PR manager has developed strong skills in doing more for less. Producing results that outpace

expectations allows us to build a greater appreciation for the power of public relations and to slowly gain acceptance from the highest levels of management.

We know the drill of arguments to advance our case. The credibility of third party endorsement and cost efficiency are two key selling features. Add to this more effective means of measuring the impact of our programs from a qualitative and quantitative point of view and outstanding cases that can be leveraged in order to state, "look what PR achieved for the Body Shop, Viagra and Tickle Me Elmo". As reported in a recent issue of Sales and Marketing, all of these brands were built with little or no advertising.

Still, our field remains misunderstood, often maligned and certainly challenging to define in a 30 second sound bite. To dispel the myths public relations professionals must take on an expanded role. In addition to our function as corporate counsel we must continually seek to inform and educate our employers, colleagues and clients about PR. This is clearly the only way to gain acceptance from where all of the management decisions are made. At the top!

Does this seemingly sad portrayal of the lot of public relations suggest bitterness, envy or negativity. Absolutely not! Public Relations is quickly surpassing advertising in terms of power and influence, according to the article in *Sales Promotion* magazine and the trend is likely to continue. Consumers, and here I mean consumers of products and services of all kinds have become increasingly more sophisticated and adept in how and where they search for information. The credibility of third party endorsements adds a powerful dimension to their behavior and ultimately to their "buying" decisions.

Good PR work is produced with winning conditions starting with buy-in from the CEO. Make no mistake, public relations is a management function that must be seen as part of the overall strategic planning process. The impact of PR can and will be felt in building customer loyalty, in the success of a fundraising campaign, in attracting investors and in sensitizing patients to a new drug. The goal

of PR is not to launch a product, create publicity for a plant opening or minimize the fallout from a crisis. The goal of PR is to help an organization realize its business objectives.

How can we effect change?

- ◆ Clearly identify the role of the PR professional in your organization as a strategist and business advisor rather than as the implementor of tactics.
- ◆ Insist that PR be part of the business planning process and be in the loop as to bottom-line objectives.
- ◆ Establish performance benchmarks that are meaningful in terms of the business goals (not just in generating clips!) and that will allow the decision makers to see and appreciate return on investment in terms that relate to the practice of PR.
- ◆ Set parameters for what constitutes success that are mutually acceptable before you get into the tactics. Then work toward reaching these targets.
- ◆ Remain objective when it comes to the budget you need to produce results. While we all have stories about pulling a rabbit out of a hat, limited staff and dollars do not give us the tools to succeed.
- ◆ Do not promise what you can't deliver. Because so much of what we do is dependent on third parties over promising leads to disappointment.



Carol Levine, APR, is co-founder of *Communications Meca*, a full-service public relations consultancy based in Montreal. Carol speaks frequently on public relations and marketing communications issues to business and professional groups and is a regular presenter at *The Business World Exposition* on behalf of the Montreal Gazette. The *Communications Meca* listing is on page 234 of the Summer 1999 *Sources*. Her E-mail address is clevine@meca.ca.

Does your organization produce a publication or have a Web site worthy of praise? Let us know at (416) 964-7799, or sources@sources.com so we can tell HotLink's readers all about it.

Secrets of Power Marketing

Peter Urs Bender and
George Torok
Stoddart Publishing Co.
Ltd., 1999

REVIEWED BY
KIRSTEN COWAN

Another installment from public speaking whiz Peter Urs Bender, this time with the adept co-operation of speaker and educator George Torok. Expanding on the themes of *Secrets of Power Presentations* and *Leadership From Within*, this new release focuses on marketing your business. *Secrets of Power Marketing* seeks to apply the techniques and methods of the first two books in a practical way to the project of marketing one's business. The result is a lively book, with a streak of practicality that reveals itself in an impatience with hoity-toity notions of marketing that have little impact on the bottom line.

Of particular interest to *HotLink* readers is the comprehensive "Strategy Three" dealing with media relations. Included in this category is self-published media such as newsletters, and timely insights on getting the most out of the "New Media". Torok and Bender have a clear understanding of the effect a media spot, especially a media interview or article, can have on your marketing plan. As with all their strategies, advice is clear, no-nonsense and effective.

*The more the media talks about you, the more other media will talk about you. The more frequently you appear, the more the market notices. The more they notice, the more they see you. The more you are seen, the more they want you.*¹

A great feature of *Secrets of Power Marketing*, which it shares with Bender's previous works, is the abundance of ideas it provides, lists of them, which can be tailored to your specific needs. Appendix A; "101 Power Marketing Ideas," is an army of catch-phrases, concepts, tags, lead-ins and inspirations, ready to leap into action at the reader's behest.

The characteristic charm and accessi-

SECRETS OF P.O.W.E.R MARKETING

Peter Urs Bender
& George Torok

bility readers expect from Peter Urs Bender is here in droves, with pithy quotes, anecdotes illustrating key ideas and charts and tables depicting multi-layered concepts.

*It doesn't take a lot to establish a bond with others. When I drove my brother's van, other van drivers waved at me. When I rode a motorcycle, other motorcycle riders waved. (Well, not all of them waved; I rode a mid-size Japanese bike, so Harley riders never even acknowledged me.) When I go running, other runners say "Hi." There are exceptions, of course: When you drive a Rolls-Royce and you wave to other Rolls drivers, none will wave back.*²

Secrets of Power Marketing is not for everyone. Its brashness may not suit the more cultivated type of business, and the forthrightness of its marketing style is definitely tailored to small or individually owned businesses. The graphics, always somewhat enigmatic in Bender's books, are truly mysterious in this attempt. Nonetheless, the boundless enthusiasm and obviously field-tested wisdom of Bender and Torok make *Secrets of Power Marketing* a worthwhile investment for any organization.

¹ *Secrets of Power Marketing*, p.117

² G. Torok, *Secrets of Power Marketing*, p. 83

We want to hear your voice!

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!

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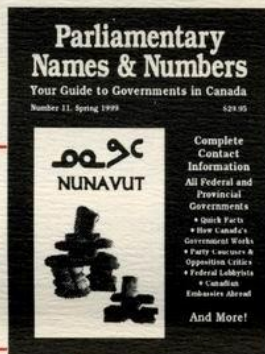
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