

The Sources *Hot*Link

Tips and Practical Ideas to Get Positive News Coverage

Number Twenty-five, Winter 2003

How to Make Your PR Photos Work

By MARK LAVIGNE, APR

One of the most effective tools for getting positive news coverage is the still photograph.

Whether aimed at community newspapers, or the larger dailies, PR photos that get picked-up by publications can powerfully convey your organization's message. But there is a real art and science to the news photo.

Ron Welch is General Manager of CPimages, (www.cpimages.ca) a division of Canadian Press, one of Canada's prime news gathering and dissemination services. Mr. Welch says "editors know the value of good pictures – they draw readers' attention, they sell papers and they can make or break your chances of getting your point across."

Welch, who has been in the photo business for 23 years, offers ten tips to help communicators get the best out of their news photo.

1. Hire a photographer with editorial experience – they understand what photo editors are looking for and will deliver them in the correct digital format, colour corrected and ready to go.
2. Good photos are new and in some way unusual.
3. A good photo shows action the instant it happens.
4. Strong photos portray people and appeal to the emotions.
5. They always relate to some important person, event or place.
6. Photos should wrap-up a story and provide an overall view of it.

7. Remember context – excellent news photos tie in with a current story, the season, the weather or a fad.
8. Large empty spaces should always be avoided in news photos – the entire frame should contain useful information.
9. Stand-up group shots, unless filled with VIPs, don't work.
10. The digital format of choice is an 8x10, 300 dpi JPEG.

PR photos can be distributed in a number of ways – through paid wire services such as CNW or CCN Mathews and directly to photo editors via E-mail. The latter distribution tactic should not be overlooked, because some community newspapers and smaller dailies do not subscribe to paid wire services, and they tend to be heavy users of photos generated by PR, especially of local events or people.

The caption that accompanies the photo should be under 50 words, and explain the photo and its context. It should not be overly commercialized, but help the photo tell the story.



Mark LaVigne, APR, is President of the Canadian Public Relations Society (Toronto) and runs a media relations and media training firm based in Aurora, Ontario. He can be reached at (905) 841-2017 or mark.lavigne@sympatico.ca.

Hot Tip #1

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"Even in this cable-ready, Internet-accessed, information-drenched age, news coverage is a finite commodity. There's only so much to go around, and if we want our fair share, someone else isn't going to get theirs."

**Michael Levine,
"Guerrilla P.R. Wired"**

From the Editor

Words and pictures.

Knowing that the mastery of both is a vital component of your on-going quest for media coverage, this issue of *HotLink* is dedicated to helping you write a commanding story pitch or place a compelling photo in the news stream.

I've spoken to some of the best in the business and gotten some great advice that is shared in these pages. I've read the books and recommend each one of them for your future reading and reference.

May everything here be of assistance to you. Good luck and enjoy.

Lynn Fenske, Editor

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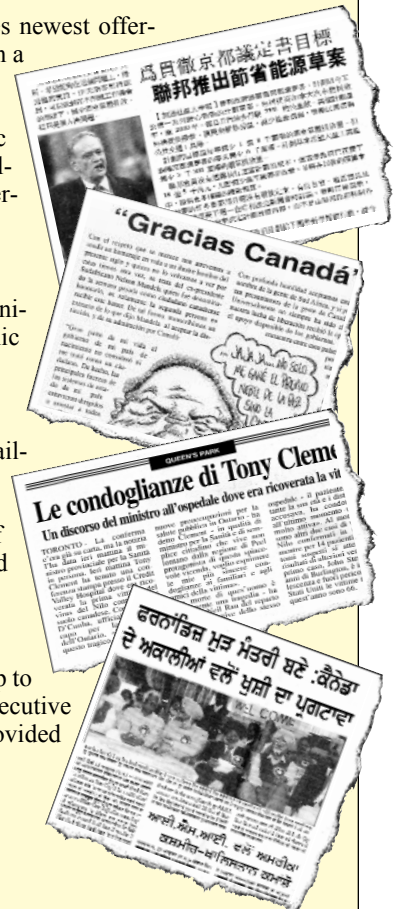
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HotLink Picks

The 8 Best Books for Publicity Seekers

BY LYNN FENSKÉ

For those of you pursuing and perfecting the fine art of getting publicity, here's a list of books you can't live without:

Guerrilla P.R. How You Can Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign ...Without Going Broke

by Michael Levine

HarperBusiness, 1993, 229 pp., ISBN 0-88730-664-0

This book is an action-packed, how-to and why-to manual that empowers anyone dealing with the media. Through his conversational style and hundreds of real-life stories, Levine actually instructs the reader on how to think like a publicist.

In the News: The Practice of Media Relations in Canada

by William Wray Carney

The University of Alberta Press, 2002, 225 pp., ISBN 0-88864-382-9

Excerpts from this book have been featured in recent editions of *The Sources HotLink* for good reason. It's an all-Canadian, comprehensive text that is research based and provides both a practical and philosophical guide to dealing with the media.

Public Relations Kit for Dummies

by Eric Yaverbaum & Bob Bly

Hungry Minds Inc., 2001, 346 pp. (including CD-ROM), ISBN 0-7645-5277-5

Bold descriptive headings, concise copy, and pertinent graphics that highlight "tips", what to "remember" and the occasional "zinger" all add to this book's readability and value as a reference for both beginners and experienced pros. Don't pass this one by just because you've been in the business a while - it's a fun read and a powerful reminder of how great campaigns get implemented and evaluated.

The Canadian Guide to Managing the Media, Revised Edition

by Ed Shiller

Prentice-Hall Canada, 1994, 189 pp., ISBN 0-13-324724-4

Media consultant and HotLink contributor, Ed Shiller, wrote and revised this book some time ago and contrary to what your local book retailer may say, it's still in print and available from the author. Every aspect of media relations is covered including crisis management, handling an interview, planting a story and mastering the tools of the trade (media kits, releases, videos, conferences).

Guerrilla PR Wired: Waging a Successful Publicity Campaign Online, Offline and Everywhere In Between

by Michael Levine

McGraw-Hill, 2002, 281 pp., ISBN 0-07-138231-3

Hollywood PR guru Michael Levine applies his Guerrilla PR strategies to the Internet with stunning results. Don't build a Web site or online campaign without reading this book. And pay attention, there may be a test on this material! (there really is a test - at the end of the book!)

The Public Relations Writer's Handbook

by Merry Aronson & Don Spetner

Lexington Books, 1993, 210 pp., ISBN 0-02-901052-7

Anyone writing material for media consumption should have a copy of this book. Buy it. Read it. Use it. It's as indispensable as a dictionary or thesaurus.

Publicity & Media Relations Checklists

by David R. Yale

NTC Business Books, 1995, 190 pp., ISBN 0-8442-3218-1

For task-oriented, list making publicists (count me in!), here is the ultimate

Hot off the Press

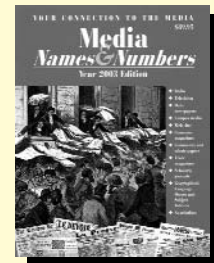
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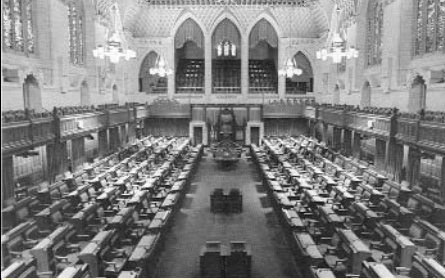
collection of checklists. Absolutely every PR activity is covered, from the initial approval process right through to hiring a clipping service to track your campaign.

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Michael Levine's Ten Commandments for Dealing with the Media

From one of Hollywood's most successful and highly respected public relations practitioners comes the following advice:

1. Never be boring. Never!
2. Know your subject thoroughly.
3. Know the media you contact. Read the paper, watch the newscast.
4. Cover your bases.
5. Don't just take "yes" for an answer. Follow up, follow through.
6. Never feel satisfied.
7. Always maintain your composure.
8. Think several moves ahead.
9. Be persistent, but move on when you're convinced you're getting nowhere.
10. Remember, this isn't brain surgery. Don't take yourself too seriously (like too many publicists I know). Have fun.



Reprinted from *Guerrilla P.R. How You Can Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign ... Without Going Broke* by Michael Levine, HarperBusiness, 1993, ISBN 0-88730-664-0.

(Thank you Mr. Levine for granting us permission to share this with our readers.)

Hot Tip #2

Don't forget to advise Sources staff of any revisions to your listing. Whenever contact information changes, let us know right away. We'll update your online listing within a week. (the print edition takes a little longer ...) Just give us a call at (416) 964-7799 or E-mail sources@sources.com.

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