



The 24/7 Newsroom

Insights Paper Stakeholder Engagement 2018

The following insights look to address challenges faced by companies that seek to get their story on television news. With growing competition and the need to be first, pressures are placed on the newsroom to provide the most accurate, up to date news to audiences. These insights are a guide on how to communicate, form relationships, and work with the newsroom to provide your company with the best opportunity to go to air.

The newsroom today

Each day, TV newsrooms receive 400 - 500 pitches. These are generally filtered through the Chief of Staff, who works in one of the newsroom's busiest roles, from 4:30am to the end of the news day.

The COS has a strong network of contacts in the community and they hold considerable power when it comes to progressing stories. Building a good relationship with the COS at each network will therefore prove invaluable.

Journalists are also busier than ever – whereas in the past, TV journalists would have worked towards the 6pm news as their deadline, they are now routinely filing for other bulletins, such as the afternoon news, and doing multiple live crosses. The role of a TV journalist becomes busier when there is breaking news and the stations switch to 'rolling coverage'.

Therefore, the more information organisations can provide, the better this will be received and the more likely a story will play out in the way the organization envisaged.

Getting your story on the air

When contacting the newsroom with your story, there are key steps to follow to boost your chances of getting your story on air. First, emails are the preferred method of communication between your company and the newsroom; second, send in the story pitch two days in advance; and finally, make sure when sending your email you cover in the subject line what it is,



when it is, and what time.

Pitching for news

Every email that is sent to the newsroom should include the following:

- A short pitch
- The vision/picture opportunities and background information
- Any relevant images
- Contact details
- Fast facts (especially for live cross).

The chief-of-staff is busy and there is no need to call a newsroom to confirm whether they have received a media release. Instead, organisations may wish to check whether the story is 'in the diary' and a crew allocated, closer to the event day.

However, many news crews do not start work in the morning until 9am. Therefore, if a media opportunity is scheduled to start before this time, it is best to call the evening before (avoid the lead up to 6pm) to confirm whether media are likely to be in attendance. If an event starts after 9am, this call can be made around 8.15am on the day.

It may seem obvious, but where a media call is not scheduled, it is important that the relevant spokespeople are available to be interviewed for the story at short notice.

Organisations should also consider pitching their stories to the afternoon news teams, rather than for the main bulletin at 6pm. Once stories have gone to air, they are likely to appear on the network's Facebook page, which increases its reach and engagement.

Social Media and Multi-Channels

Facebook is becoming the primary channel for sharing and appealing to audiences. Technology has allowed greater coverage across metropolitan, regional and international locations using Facebook Live, iPhones for coverage, and Skype for interviews.

News you can use

There has been a significant increase in consumer news, which is branded by one network as 'news you can use'. Key topics are those which:

- Save people money
- Help people budget
- Make people healthier
- Give people an insight that they won't get anywhere else

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- Show how someone has beat the system (speeding fines etc.).

The increasing importance of consumer news has a significant benefit for companies, as stories that previously would have been dismissed for being 'too commercial' are now packaged and promoted by networks, for their ratings popularity.

Breakfast TV

Breakfast television can provide a company with an opportunity for significant exposure. Key stories appearing on programs such as Sunrise are promoted throughout the show and 'segments' are generally longer in length than traditional news stories.

Opportunities also exist in regards to weather crosses. The weather team includes the presenter, a dedicated producer and camera and audio operators and they are often able to schedule activities months in advance.

Where an organization can secure coverage of this nature, it is a very valuable opportunity, as the weather location / activity features at least six times throughout the morning.

Producing Video Content

Time lapses, security vision, animations and graphics are all sought after by newsrooms. However, despite the advances in technology, supplying video content to a newsroom remains a challenge, due to the various formats available.

Where a story is being pitched, with video content available, the preferred format for this content should be discussed well in advance with a news room, to help ensure the vision makes it to air. However, in the context of breaking news, media outlets will be focused on obtaining whatever vision



they can – this means that even lower quality vision will be used, including from a mobile phone. Lower quality vision may also be acceptable for geographically remote stories, where it is not possible for a news crew to attend. If filming on a mobile, the user should film with the phone in a horizontal position.

There is a word of warning, however, on supplying vision. An organization should keep in mind that it can remain in a TV station's 'news library' for an extended period of time and used as file pictures for a range of stories.



The importance of forming strong relationships

Developing strong relationships with key journalists has never been more important. This is because news bulletins now feature throughout the day and they are longer in length, while at the same time, there is increasing pressure on journalists to pitch their own story ideas.

A well-connected public relations professional has better access to media outlets to discuss story opportunities, they understand what stories may be on the horizon, and they can obtain feedback on stories that may need further development.



17, 100 Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
GPO Box 1564, Brisbane 4001

 +61 7 3230 5000
 www.phillipsgroup.com.au