



Media Guide

An introduction to working with journalists and the media

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300 | Martyn James Media

Workplace by Facebook Partners

www.the300.co

00 44 (0)7946 524 304

Why talk to a journalist?



- To get your company message across
- To create awareness of your company
- To get your company stories in the media
- To correct inaccurate reports about your company, should they appear

But there are no guarantees you'll achieve any of the above.

This guide is intended to help you make the most of any encounters you may have with the media.

- Journalists are...
- Sceptical, especially of business
- Anxious not to be biddable
- Pressed for time
- On the lookout for a story
- Desperate to be first
- Always in need of a quote
- Processors rather than retainers of knowledge
- Fiercely competitive, sometimes untrustworthy, often manipulative



They will usually have their own agenda for covering a story and it probably won't be the same as yours.

It's a competitive market

Please remember...

You are competing with loads... and loads... and loads... and loads of stories that a TV or radio station, online publisher, magazine or newspaper can choose to cover. Which means yours will only be printed if the magazine or newspaper thinks it is interesting.

So **YOU** need to make it as **interesting, relevant** and **news-worthy** as you can

And even if it is newsworthy...

There is never... ever... a guarantee your story will be printed

Even if a journalist comes to interview you.



And even if your story IS published...

There is never... ever... a guarantee that it will be written the way you would like it to be.

Preparation is key

Never ...



...do an interview without preparing for it

P	PRACTISE what you want to say
R	Work out how it's RELEVANT to the reader,
E	Get yourself ENTHUSIASTIC before you start
P	Plan some PERSONAL stories to illustrate your points
A	ASSUME the journalist knows very little, but will ask AWKWARD questions, so have ANSWERS to those questions in ADVANCE
R	Be RELAXED so you don't seem to be hiding anything
E	ENJOY it - it's much more likely to go well if you do

How to take control in an interview

This is very important. You need to take control from the start.

Try to...

- Be friendly but assertive with the journalist from the outset
- Show that you know something about them and their publication when you first meet them
- Find out what they are looking for from the interview before you begin
- Tell them what YOU are looking for
- Start the interview yourself rather than waiting for the journalist to start. Don't save your best quote for the third answer as the interview may not last that long
- Take the interview back to your area whenever you feel it is straying to places you don't want to go



How to make a headline:

If you want to be quoted, you need to say something that journalists will want to quote directly.

N	NEWSWORTHY: it needs to be new, not old
I	INTERESTING, not to you, but to the reader of the article
C	CONCISE: there's no point saying it in twenty words if ten will do
E	EASY to understand and without jargon

Oh yes, and there's one other surefire way of getting quoted...

Say something outrageous, critical of your company or customers, or something that's simply stupid!

What to do during your interview:

- Think carefully about what you want to achieve from the interview
- Think carefully about what the journalist is likely to be looking for from the interview
- Don't view the journalist as the enemy - they are doing their job just as you are doing yours
- Take control from the start
- Don't wait to be asked for your story or quote as you may never get to give it
- Give the journalist a great quote. If you don't you probably won't get your own quote in the article
- If you don't give the journalist a good quote the journalist will have to find one themselves
- Remember that journalists rarely know more than you
- Be enthusiastic and passionate about your story and your business
- Give a human angle. Journalists, readers and viewers love the human angle
- Use examples. These bring the subject matter alive
- Have anecdotes at hand as these can help to provide context and interest
- Try not to be fazed by silences. If you have made your point, then stop
- Don't hide from difficult truths
- Don't be afraid to correct an interviewer if they say something wrong
- Stay in control. The interviewer will try to take you into areas you might not want to visit
- Don't inundate an interview with too many statistics or examples
- Don't promise something that's beyond your power or control. If guarantees aren't possible, don't be afraid to say so
- Don't say 'no comment'. It suggests you are hiding something
- Don't try and interview the journalist. It's always dangerous to turn a question back on an interviewer
- Pick your arguments. You don't have to win every point
- Don't allow a journalist to entice you into speculation
- Be yourself ! The more natural you are, the better you will come across

Remember...

An interview is an opportunity to get your message across and your company's name in the public arena.



Enjoy it!

About 300

300 helps companies get better at talking to their people.

Why we're 300

We love the Spartans legend where 300 diehards held off the might of the Persian army at a narrow mountain pass. Our philosophy is that a bit of smart thinking delivers great value.

The 300 way - why we're different

For one, we've been in your shoes – we're not 'agency' people. We are senior digital communications specialists who've worked at the coal face of communications and marketing for the past 20 years. Poacher turned gamekeeper if you like. Frustrated by agencies (big and small) who didn't get the commercial realities of our business, or who failed to deliver essentials like mobile website design, we realised we had some unique insights.

In fact, we felt so passionately that it set us on a bit of a mission to prove ourselves. And that's how 300 came to be. Now we work with a range of clients from consumer brands to professional services.

Caroline Watkin

Caroline is a communications specialist and writer with the ability to bring brands to life across social, web, email and many other mediums. She's held director positions at leading global companies.

Phil Jenkins

Phil has a Masters in IT and an art school /marketing background; spanning the technical and creative worlds. He has over 25 years' senior-level experience advising companies and delivering digital strategies that really work.

Contact

300

Workplace by Facebook Partners
www.the300.co

Martyn James

Martyn James Media

martyncjames@gmail.com

00 44 (0)7748 165 955

Phil Jenkins

Co-Founder

pj@the300.co

00 44 (0)7813 159019

Caroline Watkin

Co-Founder

caroline.watkin@the300.co

00 44 (0)7946 524304

