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# Free Publicity "Fast Track"

## Audio Seminar Transcript

**How to use the mass media to achieve record-breaking response rates, explosive sales growth and maximum profits--without spending a dime**

Hosted and Narrated by

**George McKenzie**

Veteran TV Anchor and Radio Talk Show Host

A Production of the

Academy Of Marketing  
And Advertising

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# Notes To Readers Of This Transcript

## Almost Word For Word

The transcript of the **Going Public Audio Seminar Fast Track Edition** varies slightly from the actual audio version. Some words and sentence structures that sounded logical and clear when *heard* in context, appeared disjointed and unclear when *seen* in print.

In those instances I've taken the liberty of changing the speaker's words but not their meaning.

Most of the copy that follows is transcribed from interviews I conducted in the summer of 2001 and edited for the six-hour version of the seminar.

However, I've included some narration to make the transition from one topic to another smoother. Those "segues" are designated by the heading.

### **George Narration**

The one hour "Fast Track" edition is roughly structured to follow the table of contents from the **Going Public** ebook, which is the companion volume to the six hour audio seminar.

### **Links Have Been Added**

There's one more major difference in the transcript. Where appropriate, I've added links to web sites and products the reader might find helpful. The list is *not* comprehensive, but it definitely *is* representative of the growing number of internet resources available on the topic of publicity and free-or-extremely-cheap advertising.

I'm personally familiar with most of the sites and products mentioned, either because I've bought and used them myself, or because they come highly recommended by colleagues I respect.

## **Bonus Articles**

As a bonus to those who purchase this transcript, I've included some material not in the audio cassette.

There are a number of articles that will provide additional depth and context.

Most of the articles are mine. Some have been authored by others and reprinted with their permission.

## **Final Note**

This production of this seminar was actually completed and put on the market September 1, 2001. Therefore, there's no reference to the events that occurred on September 11th

Thanks, and best wishes in all your endeavors

George McKenzie  
President, The Academy of Marketing and Advertising

# Introduction

## GEORGE NARRATION

Thanks for buying what we at The Academy of Marketing and Advertising call the "streamlined" or fast-track version of our six hour audio series...**Going Public**...

This version is designed for those who are "leaning forward in the saddle" so to speak...and want to start getting free publicity--and the profits that come with it--as quickly as possible.

I still recommend you take advantage of a special offer I'll make later in this program, so that you can develop a long term, in-depth media marketing strategy.

Because getting thousands of dollars worth of free publicity, in essence, is like an advertising campaign.

Think about it. How many times have you seen a commercial and said to yourself immediately..."I've got to run out and buy that product right away?"

I know I don't.

Those who are the most successful at getting free publicity are those who work at it: those who put the long term strategies and techniques you'll hear in this program to work as often as they can, on a regular basis, over an extended period of time.

But with that said, we'll also tell you about some one-time, lightning bolt success stories that resulted in thousands of dollars worth of sales in a single day - not for big corporations either - but for individuals and small time entrepreneurs who simply knew how to use the media. They succeeded because they positioned themselves to be in the right place at the right time with the right approach...

Two such stories jump to my mind right away.

First you'll hear from Tom Antion...a successful professional speaker and seminar leader who teaches presentation...or public speaking skills...

### **GEORGE TO TOM ANTION (on telephone)**

You mention that you drop everything when the media calls, and I think there's a story behind that people need to know as well, and it has to do with CBS—how you became the spokesperson for one of the CBS websites. Right?

### **TOM**

Absolutely. One of my three electronic magazines –it's called an ezine, which is short for electronic magazine...Great Speaking. After you get thousands of subscribers, you don't really know who's on your list...there's just lots of people who are on your list.

Well, a lady was a columnist for a major newspaper in Miami...I forget which one, I think it was the Sun-Sentinel...and she was on my list. She got a question from one of her readers about the Internet. She knows I talk about that a lot in my magazine, so she calls me up and interviews me no more than five minutes, and I forgot all about it.

Well, apparently, she printed the answer and in the meantime, CBS was looking for a spokesperson. They're the owner of one of the largest websites in the world, called Switchboard.com. They had a PR firm looking for a spokesperson looking for small business people get on the Internet. I'm sure they had thousands of people trying for this slot, but I was the one who could speak, because they wanted me to speak to small business people, and I was credible because I really did sell on the Internet...I wasn't just reading it out of a book.

So the circle came right around from a free magazine...somebody read something about me. They called...I answered. I know I went out of my way to grab that phone call and dropped everything just to help that lady out once and it turned into a contract worth over \$100,000 for only three months. So it can be very, very lucrative!

To check out Tom Antion's "Speaker Shop" a resource center for anyone who wants to present themselves to the media, or to audiences of any size, visit

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/speakershop.htm>

To subscribe to Tom's ezine, "Great Speaking," click on

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/antionsubscribe.html>

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

You may have seen Tom Recently on MSNBC. Because of his media marketing skills...and because he's worked hard to become known as a "hot interview on the media circuit" he was chosen to critique President Bush's skills as a professional speaker. His single appearance on MSNBC resulted in thousands of dollars worth of product sales in just a few days, and also resulted in hundreds of new subscribers to his electronic magazine "Great Speaking."

You can hear more of that story in the longer version of this program...but for now, let me move on to another media success story...

Bart Baggett is also a professional speaker...but he's best known as one of the foremost authorities on handwriting in the world...he's a frequent guest on news programs and cable networks who call on him to analyze handwriting of both the famous and the infamous...

Bart estimates that he's been a guest on about 1500 radio programs during his career...but none had the impact of a single program with New York Shock Jock Howard Stern...

### **BART (On Telephone)**

Howard Stern is one of the biggest radio shows I've ever been on as a guest. And by the time I did his show, I'd been on about 700 shows, so I knew what I was doing. But you never know what Howard Stern is going to say because they're not being nice like you are when they interview you. That show is basically done by telephone...

He didn't let me do "my" show. He didn't let me say my normal jokes and my normal show. He gave me writing samples of show members and didn't tell me who was who and they guessed who was who. Long story short, after thirty minutes, he actually gave my 800 number for me. He liked me so much, he said, "Bart, what's that 800 number again? How can they get hold of you?" I said...1-800...whatever the number was. Sure enough, we made about \$25,000 that morning. That's a nice number for a small business.

That was probably our best day ever as far as radio sales. We've had good days since then, but you're talking 3,000,000 listeners. There's really nothing comparable to that.

Links To Bart Baggett's products & services:

Handwriting Analysis Course

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/handwriting.html>

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

There will be an entire volume of similar success stories available soon as one of the bonuses we offer with the longer version of this program...but for now let's move on and talk about the 10 strategies you can use to get thousands of dollars worth of free advertising and publicity, by "Going Public..."

## Our Panel

**Frank Guerra.** When I arrived in San Antonio in 1980, Frank was a 19-year-old intern at the station where I worked. He later moved on to KENS-TV in San Antonio, where he was a reporter, assignment editor, and eventually executive producer. In 1996, Frank founded a media/public relations/advertising agency, which has grown from three employees to nearly thirty.

**Sonny Melendrez.** Remember the cockatoo on the 1970's show Baretta? And you've certainly seen the commercial where a doomed six-legged critter screams out "RAID!!!!" And the Parkay commercial where someone opens a container and the container says "Butter."

All of these voices come from the multi-talented Sonny Melendrez, a San Antonio native who is possibly the most beloved and popular morning drive radio host in South Texas history. Sonny's morning music/talk programs often featured business owners, professionals, and anyone with a charity event to promote or an interesting story to tell.

**Pat Rodgers.** Pat Rodgers likes to say that today's nostalgia tunes were top 40 hits when he started in the radio business more than 35 years ago. During most of his career, he worked at WOAI Radio in San Antonio, as talk show host and program director.

**Joan Stewart.** I met Joan through my friend and mentor Tom Antion. Joan is known as "The Publicity Hound." She's a former newspaper reporter and editor with more than twenty years experience in the print business. She and Tom have authored a book, *How To Be A Kickbutt Publicity Hound*, and Joan has also produced a series of in-depth Special Reports which can be found at

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html>

# Sell The Story...

## GEORGE NARRATION

To start, let's agree on a definition of what we're here to talk about...publicity...

And believe me, there's a difference between publicity and advertising...even though a lot of people use them interchangeably...

As one of my friends likes to say...advertising is what you pay for...publicity is what you pray for...

In other words, Advertising is radio and TV commercials...print ads...billboards on the highway...anyone in the media will be happy to sell you advertising...

Publicity on the other hand...is free...you get it by persuading someone in the media to give you free airtime or print space...

How you persuade them to do that is what we'll focus on in this program...before we do that however...let's take a moment to talk about what publicity IS NOT...

Here's a clip from a conversation with former **Frank Guerra**...co-founder of the Texas media marketing powerhouse...Guerra Deberry Coody and Company...

## GEORGE TO FRANK

We all remember...those of us who are old enough, anyway...the WKRP in Cincinnati program where they threw the turkey out of the helicopter thinking it was going to fly and they bombed out.

## FRANK

Classic.

## **GEORGE**

Turkeys don't fly. Something like that is a publicity stunt, and in some people's minds, that's what publicity is. It's coming up with a stunt, when in fact publicity is coming up with a whole different approach. You're the publicity pro, so maybe you can talk about that a little bit.

## **FRANK**

Publicity, really, from the standpoint, the viewpoint, of the television reporter is something that is of interest to the viewer. Keep in mind that this is a group of people, whose job every day is to capture and maintain the interest of their audience.

Let me give you an example of a small business that I thought did a very good job of pitching a story to me on an assignments desk. They called and they wanted some coverage on the tenth anniversary of their being in business. The gentleman owned a fleet of small trucks and did electrical repairs at home...not very sexy, not very interesting...but his approach was really interesting.

He said, "When I was in high school, I was voted most likely to fail. I was the class geek. No one ever gave me a chance of doing anything successful in my life. I'm about to go to my twentieth high school reunion, and I'll be able to tell them how successful I've been. I've had a business now for ten years."

It was right around graduation time, and it made the perfect story...Here's what it's like...one man's story of going to his twentieth high school reunion and what a great story he had to tell on the tenth anniversary of his company. So he took a very interesting approach. That's not a publicity stunt. He got the publicity because he took the time to figure out what would be a really good human-interest story that would be of interest to the media and to the public. And it worked.

## **GEORGE NARRATION**

Former Newspaper editor Joan Stewart would agree...Joan now does business as "The Publicity Hound..." She's a professional speaker and consultant who uses her twenty-plus-years of print experience to help

people get coverage for themselves or the story they want to tell...and Joan echoes Frank Guerra's thinking when she says...telling a story is critical to getting the media's attention...

### **JOAN**

I used to have people call me on the phone and say, "Did you know you've covered eight of my competitors but you haven't covered me?" And I'd ask them, "What have you done lately that deserves coverage?" And they'd be tongue-tied. And that's the wrong approach.

### **GEORGE TO FRANK GUERRA**

Having been on the assignment desk, what would say are some of the approaches people can use to get them off on the right foot with you?

### **FRANK**

They need to be sure to pitch the story. That's what we call it... pitching a story. They need to pitch it in such a way that it's automatically going to appeal to me because it will automatically appeal to a broad audience. If you call and say, "There's this great Little League team and it's the final game. Our kids have played real hard and they deserve to be on the air.

### **GEORGE**

They deserve publicity. That's what I used to hear: "These kids have worked so hard." You don't want to say that's not important, but at the same time you're thinking to yourself...why is that interesting to all of the other people who might be watching out there? And not only that...the thing I had to consider when I was doing a story about a Little League team...I would get phone calls after I featured one Little League team from every other Little League in the city saying, "You showed them; why won't you show us?" That's one of the approaches that I call a bootless argument.

Don't call up somebody and say, "We deserve publicity just because we've worked hard." That's not a reason why people watch the news.

## FRANK

It's not a reason. You've got to give them a better reason to come out...because if you don't they'll be very gracious...or sometimes not so gracious on the phone...and you will never see the coverage. You've got to think of something that will attract the audience.

Let me give you a really good example. I wasn't on the news end. This is when I was on the pitching end.

We were working for a political candidate, and we had laid out this very comprehensive anti-crime program. Two weeks before, the candidate in another campaign released his crime plan, and it got decent coverage. The next week, another candidate in another race released his crime plan, and it got virtually no coverage. I knew that we would get no coverage whatsoever. So what we did was we spoon-fed this story, and we made it newsworthy.

We found a one block area in that precinct that had had an unbelievable amount of crime. The press release said "All of the following crimes were committed in one 30-day period on one block." We listed it, and it was a battery of crimes that you could not imagine happening all on one block. We did our homework, and we said we were going to have the former District Attorney there to talk about crime. It was going to be hosted by the president of the neighborhood association, who was tired of it. We were going to provide additional crime statistics for that one block and a victim of crime. We had every single radio station, television station, and newspaper cover that press conference. Two of the television stations did it live.

It's not enough to say...our candidate has worked hard and has come up with a great crime plan...to get coverage. We had to give the news a reason to be there.

You talk about the elements of a news story that were incorporated in that: It affects a large number of people; everyone's concerned about crime, obviously. We had the neighborhood association involved in it; we had the former District Attorney, law enforcement officers...we had all the elements of a good story. And you got the message out in a unique way.

And we followed up. And we pointed out there was a lot of graffiti on that block, so that told the television stations...we have a visual beyond the press conference.

## **GEORGE NARRATION**

For more information on this topic...which is critical to understand if you hope to get free publicity from the media...see Chapter Three of my electronic book **Going Public**: "Sell the Story, Not the Store,"

For more information on how to get my book...just go to the Academy Of Marketing and Advertising website at

**[www.get-free-publicity.com](http://www.get-free-publicity.com)**

**and click on the "Resources/Catalog" link**

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## **Bonus Article**

### **Get Free Media Publicity by "Talking the Talk" by George McKenzie**

When you're trying to persuade a reporter to do a story about you or your business, you're much more likely to succeed if you know how to "talk the talk"

No reporter will expect you to act like an insider, but you'll get a lot more respect -and attention - if you can speak the language of the newsroom.

It's not like learning Mandarin. In fact, all you need to do is sprinkle your pitch with a couple of catchwords and phrases. For instance:

**Newshook** - Connecting a story to something that's already in the news makes it more interesting. For instance: a hot topic right now is airline security. A story about a company that's developing a retinal scan or a handprint identification device would automatically appeal to news decision-makers.

**Local Angle** - Events happening on a national or even international stage still can have local impact. Most obvious example: when the U.S recently began bombing Afghanistan, many local reserve units were called up. That offered a variety of possibilities, including:

**Human Interest Stories** - We all saw video of the destruction at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Somerset, Pennsylvania. Stories that followed about the impact on families who lost loved ones in the attacks were human interest stories.

Such stories appeal to everyone because - among other reasons - we all ask ourselves, "What if it were me?"

Follow-ups - If you're disappointed because a reporter talked to your competitor about something, but not to you, you can probably get your turn by offering a follow up.

Future File - Generic name for any system that collects news releases, notes, or any information related to future events.

Evergreen - A story that isn't necessarily tied to a newshook. Evergreens are stories the media pull "out of the can" to use on slow news days when there's not much going on and they have a lot of time to fill.

Kicker - This one relates TV only. The "kicker" is a short, generally amusing story just before the end of a newscast. It's supposed to leave you smiling even if you've just watched nearly thirty minutes of mayhem.

If you want to portray yourself as knowledgeable and savvy, just tell an assignment editor you've got something you think will make a good kicker. They'll pay attention, since good local kickers aren't always easy to find. Plus, if you've got interesting video, they'll "tease" the kicker all the way through the newscast - which means you get even more exposure.

Sprinkling your pitch to the media with these words and phrases will greatly improve your chances of getting free publicity.

And that reminds me of one last thing.

Never use the word "publicity" when pitching a reporter. Always call it "coverage."

When you "talk the talk" of the newsroom, "publicity" is one word you never want to say.

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## **Bonus Article**

### **Avoid Canned Pitches**

By George McKenzie

Since I do several weekly radio talk shows in San Antonio, Texas, I often find myself on the receiving end of pitches from people who want to be a guest on my programs.

Most pitches from PR firms are professional and brief... something any talk show producer/host appreciates.

But I got one recently from a firm--in New York City, no less--which was a great example of how NOT to pitch.

After I answered the call and identified myself, the PR person launched into a non-stop, rapid fire description of the book and the author she represented. I doubt she took a breath for close to a minute.

Worst of all, she was obviously reading from a script--and she SOUNDED like she was reading from a script.

Fortunately, the book dealt with subject matter that would have little appeal to our show's audience, which is generally made up of seniors. So it was easy for me to say "No thanks."

If you're an author, a speaker, or just someone trying to get free airtime on radio or TV, here are some rules to follow that increase your chances of success.

\*Ask if you can have a minute of the person's time. Most media people work under deadline pressure, and they appreciate someone who knows it.

\*If possible (and it isn't always possible), know something about the content of the show you're pitching.

\*If you don't know anything about the show you're pitching,

say "I have something here that might be of interest to your audience. Can I tell you a little about it?"

\*Keep a list of "bullet points" or "talking points" in front of you, but don't use a script (see above). Keep your pitch down to 30 seconds.

\*Be gracious if your pitch fails. Ask if your topic might be of interest to someone else at that station, or at another station owned by the same company. Some companies own half-a-dozen stations in the same city, and the producer will feel comfortable referring you to someone "down the hall."

Above all, remember that in the broadcasting business, the word "NO" does NOT necessarily mean "Never." It probably just means "Not now." Circumstances could change at any time, and the same person who turned you down this time around may actually be looking for you someday.

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For more tips on how to pitch your ideas to reporters, producers and editors, see Joan Stewart's Special Report #25: "How to Pitch Reporters Over the Phone and Make Every Second Count" On our website at

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html>

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# Who Are Those Guys?

## GEORGE NARRATION

Remember the Robert Redford-Paul Newman movie...Butch Cassidy and the Sundance kid...When they were being chased by a persistent posse, they kept looking back and asking...who are those guys...

That's a question that often comes up when people who have never dealt with the media before start trying to get coverage...the most frequent lament I hear is...I don't know who to talk to...who really makes the decisions anyway...about what gets on the air or in print...and what doesn't...

That's what the next part of our program is about...

If you're in sales...you know that you want to get to the decision maker as soon as possible...most people don't know the decision-making hierarchy...

So let's talk first of all about one of the easiest and most effective ways to get free publicity...talk radio...

Talk radio has huge chunks of airtime to fill...and disc jockeys and talk show hosts want to fill it with the most interesting and informative guests possible...here's our talk radio expert...Pat Rodgers with some insights about his experience as operations manager and talk show host at the 50- thousand watt news giant...WOAI in San Antonio...

Pat says it's not usually the talk show host...but rather the behind the scenes person...the producer...who is the first person you should get to know.

## PAT

A talk show producer works closely with the talk show host, and together they try to identify topics and resources...meaning guests and interviews...that may be dealing with topics that they think are of interest to the listening audience. The producer finds them, calls them, schedules them, and puts them on the air.

## **GEORGE**

And in a lot of instances, pre-interviews them.

## **PAT**

In many cases, that happens.

**See "How To Get Booked On Oprah" by Susan Harrow**  
<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/oprah.html>

## **GEORGE**

Now, in TV, there are also producers...but in TV there's another person you need to get to know: the assignment editor.

Before a story ever gets to a producer...then onto a TV talk show or a newscast...it very often goes through the assignment editor...and assignment editor is one of the jobs Frank Guerra held during his TV career...

## **FRANK**

The assignment editor really is the central person in the newsroom. This is the person that receives all the press releases, for the most part receives all the phone calls, and evaluates all the pitches that come from individuals or organizations or public relations firms. This is the person who actually assigns those stories out to individual reporters.

This is also the individual who makes the decision about how much the story is going to get covered. Is it something the anchor will just read? Is it something the anchor will read but it will be accompanied by videotape? Are they going to incorporate an interview? Is there going to be a full-blown George McKenzie Reports kind of story? They call that a package.

They make a wide array of decisions on the front end. On the back end, that's when it gets to the executive producer, who makes

decisions about the size and the length and the importance of the story...whether it makes it on the air or not...because they control the editorial content of the show. Those are the two primary decision-makers on getting it onto the air.

As you said in the beginning, the misconception is that you call the anchorman, send it to the anchorman, and it gets covered. Chances are...you send it to the anchorman, it'll get lost on his or her desk.

### **GEORGE**

Joan Stewart says there were similar misconceptions when people contacted the newspapers she worked for over the years...

### **GEORGE TO JOAN**

A lot of folks make the mistake of just calling up a newspaper and saying, "I need to talk to the editor."

### **JOAN**

That's a question I get a lot when I do workshops. They'll say, "I tried calling an editor, Sally Smith, and every time I called, her secretary said she was unavailable." Well guess what Sally Smith is doing. Sally Smith is fighting with a union steward. Sally Smith is arguing with the publisher. And Sally Smith has nine performance reviews due.

But guess what. There's a new reporter over on the other side of the newsroom who just started two weeks ago, and he's got to prove himself real quickly. And he's got to hit the pavement this afternoon to go out and find two new ideas for stories to write about for tomorrow's paper. I tell people...aim low on the totem pole when you're trying to establish new relationships. Don't try to go to the person at the top. You're not going to get them; you'll get frustrated; and you'll give up too soon. So shoot low.

See Joan Stewart Special Reports:

Click on <http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html>

Other helpful links. These resources will help you grow a base of media contacts.

**[Bacon's Directory Of Publications](#)**

**[Burrelle's Media Directories](#)**

**[College Media Directory](#)**

**[Directory Of Small Magazine Editors And Publishers](#)**

**[Gebbie Press](#)**

**<http://www.rtir.com/toptvbk.htm>**. If you need a resource guide that lists who to contact at various talk shows, check the Bradley's Guide to the National TV Talk and Interview Shows at

**[Joe Sabah's Radio Talk Show System](#)**

Database of 980+ Radio Talk Shows Who Interview Guests By Telephone Includes:

**[http://www.copydesk.net/nf\\_home.html](http://www.copydesk.net/nf_home.html)**

**<http://www.workinpr.com>**

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## Bonus Article

### Top Media Sources By Kelle Campbell [www.kcwriter.com](http://www.kcwriter.com)

Writing attention-getting material is the goal of every communications professional, but distribution plans or channels are essential if you're going to reach your audience. I recently had the opportunity to research some distribution options, and I'd like to share them with you.

#### 1. Media Directories

This is the traditional method of finding media outlets. Directories contain the names and contact information of thousands of editors and producers. The disadvantage is that they are usually published annually, but journalists tend to have a high turnover rate. So your directory may become inaccurate very quickly.

Many directory publishers supplement their print publication with CD-ROMs containing updates. Updates can also be provided via e-mail or regular downloads from the vendor's Web site.

#### 2. Online Media Lists and Distribution Services

Practitioners are now able create their own media lists from online databases. You can select contacts by beat, circulation, media type, geographical location, etc.

These databases are updated very frequently so you're more likely to be targeting the proper contact. These online vendors often offer an array of additional services. Please note that I found no vendor that offered all the services listed below:

- \* Media list experts to build customized lists
- \* Writing, editing, printing and assembling press materials
- \* Distribution services
- \* Searchable press release archives
- \* Monitoring and clipping
- \* Translation

### 3. Software

Many of the vendors providing online databases also offer software that lets you access and manage information from the entire database whenever you wish. Some of these are Internet-based while others are on CD-ROM. Vendors offer some or all of the following:

- \* Editor profiles
- \* Editorial calendars
- \* Access to articles written by journalists
- \* Contact tracking and project management features

Many software selections also allow you to delegate distribution to the vendors. Usually you complete and send in an order form along with originals of the press materials, and the vendors will handle distribution for you.

The high-end of public relations software is automation software, which allows you to manage practically every aspect of your media relations online. Not only can you access databases with detailed profiles of media contacts, this software also helps you manage and track distribution of material and identify future publicity opportunities.

In addition to the features mentioned above, this type of software typically includes combinations of tools for the following:

- \* Managing press clips
- \* Recording notes on conversations and correspondence
- \* Reporting and analyzing activities

Prices range from \$70 for simple media lists to a few thousand for automation software. But that means that there's something for every budget size. If you're losing precious writing time researching and updating media contacts, investigate these options for yourself.

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#### Links of Interest

I've assembled a few of the media list sources available. This list is nowhere near comprehensive, and I'm not personally endorsing any of these vendors. However, they are good places to start evaluating your options.

Bacon's

<http://www.bacons.com>

Bacon's offers print directories, an online database and software.

Bulldog Reporter's MediaBase

<http://www.infocomgroup.com>

This new service offers media lists that are guaranteed to be accurate.

MDS Connect

<http://www.mdsconnect.com>

Media Distribution Services provides a database, software and full distribution services.

Press Access

<http://www.pressaccess.com>

A member of the Lexis-Nexis group, Press Access provides a variety of software (including automation software) for media relations.

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Kelle Campbell is a freelance public relations and marketing writer. Visit her Web site at <http://www.kcwriter.com> to learn about her and to see more articles.

# **Please (Press) Release Me...**

## **GEORGE NARRATION**

We'll talk more about how to work reporters a little later...we'll even tell you how you can build a relationship with reporters so that they start calling you for ideas...but first...let's touch on the single most mysterious aspect of getting free publicity...the press release...

I cover this subject in considerable depth in my ebook...and we spend a lot of time talking about it in our six hour series...here are some general rules and basics contributed by our media panel...

## **FRANK**

First of all, it's got to be clean and simple. When I'm sitting on the desk, imagine what I'm balancing...I've got a reporter on the phone who's telling me a story has basically died, and I've got to find a way to resurrect it because it's got to be the lead at 5:00. I've got the police scanner...

## **GEORGE**

...the sports guy coming asking for extra time...

## **FRANK**

Begging for more time...I've got a news van that's broken down...I've got the radio going. I don't mean listening to the top 40...I mean listening to the police scanner, the fire scanner, the public safety scanner...the producer is barking in my ear...all of these things going on at once. The phone is ringing off the hook...you really juggle a lot of things at once. Imagine in that environment you get a press release, a news release, whatever you want to call it, that is just chock-full of information and it looks like a textbook. I will toss that...it will go in the trashcan so quickly because I don't have the time.

The best release that lands on an assignment editor's desk is one that is very simple and very easy to read. It's got to have a good, catchy headline that captures my attention. It's got to tell me *who's* going to be there, *what* it's going to be about, some of the visuals that will be supported there...in other words, we're going to have this press

conference, but here's some of the visuals that we're also going to have. You might want to put *why* in there, and you want to put *where*. Very simple, bulleted information.

You always have to have a contact name and phone number. Make sure it's a phone number that's going to work at the time of the event. A lot of people make the mistake that they send it out on Thursday or Friday for a weekend event and they give the phone number to the office...they're not at the office; they're at the event. So make sure it's a phone number that works on the day and the time of the event.

Also be sure to include a phone number and a contact name if people want to get information in advance.

So those very basic elements in a very clean format...it goes so much further than some dissertation that someone writes. People somehow think it's the other way around...the more I write, the better the chance I'll get coverage. That is not the case.

### **GEORGE**

You really have to get focused, and if you're dealing with, not necessarily a celebrity, but an authority on something that you're inviting the news media out to listen to...one of the things that people tend to do is that they put all the CV...a list of all the academic credentials and everything you've ever done in life. People don't care...it's only what relates to that story and what people would care about.

### **FRANK**

What really makes a good press release is a headline that captures my attention...something that just stands out, and I think...oh, that's interesting...I've got to read a little bit further.

And then very bulleted information: what is the event, who is going to be there, when is it going to be...be sure you give the specific time, and where...with very specific instructions if it's a difficult place to get to. You also to be sure you include contact name and numbers. Make sure it's information that's relevant on the day that you're having the event.

So many times I would get a press release on a Wednesday or a Thursday for a weekend event, but they would give a phone number

that didn't work. It was ringing at the guy's office while he was out at the ballpark. And, finally, be sure to offer information about visuals that be available; that will really capture the attention of a TV news assignment editor.

**GEORGE**

It all goes back to what I call people, color, and motion. If you can put a lot of people, a lot of color, and a lot of motion in an event, you've got a winner.

**JOAN**

I'm going to say something that a lot of publicists might disagree with, and something that might be very surprising to people who are listening to this. I think there is so much attention, and worry, and sweat, and bloodshed over how the news release needs to be written. People spend hours on these things, and they don't need to. You know, George...how many news releases have you ever seen that showed up on the air exactly the way they were written?

**GEORGE**

In my case, none.

**JOAN**

In my case, none too. So don't sweat bullets over the wording of the news releases. If you can tell the media up front clearly, concisely, and quickly, *what* the event is, *where* it's being held, *what time* and most importantly, *why* their readers should care...they'll pick up on it.

If you sent the same release to eight different newspapers, that release would be written eight different ways.

One of the things that I think is more important that you can do is when you write a news release for five different media outlets in your community and you can send that release to each outlet accompanied by a cover letter that suggests a specific angle or somebody interesting that they might want to cover and make those cover letters different for each of those five media outlets...let each of them get something a little bit different about the story, so they all don't end up the same story. You know, the media hate that.

**GEORGE**

One of the other things that happens, sometimes you might think about...I know this isn't always possible...a slightly different slanted news release for radio versus TV versus print. TV is going to know what the video opportunity is. In radio, they might think what is the guest opportunity here. What would print be thinking.

**JOAN**

They'd be looking for depth...they'd be looking for a level of depth that television and radio wouldn't be looking for. You can explain more in print than you can in broadcast.

**GEORGE**

That doesn't mean that the news release itself has to be voluminous.

**JOAN**

Correct. If your news release is more than two pages, you're writing way more than you need to.

**GEORGE**

The broadcast people I've talked to generally say one page; in fact half a page in many cases is all they're going to read anyway.

**JOAN**

Do you know what the scientific research shows on how long reporters spend with a news release before they decide whether or not to pitch it?

**GEORGE**

No, but I think I'm about to find out.

**JOAN**

Five seconds. Approximately five seconds per release. They're not even going to make it to page two. They'll be lucky if they get halfway into page one.

## **PAT**

The most effective attention-getter for me came from a software company. The software was supposed to teach you about your anatomy. Instead of just sending a press release, they sent me an actual X-ray in a large envelope of a body. On it they had their logo and in it they had a short press release, telling me a) what the program was about, and b) how to get hold of them. And that's all I wanted to know anyway. Guess who got on the air. Because it stuck out in the stack. It was simple. It was clever. I thought it should be rewarded...and it met my needs, obviously.

One of the things you want to do is you want to catch their attention with something that has a little bit of imagination. If you can be, be creative about what you send...that thing that gets into the hands of the producer, the thing that gets into the hands of the talk show host...whatever it might be. If it's clever enough and has a connection with what it is you're about to talk about, it really does make a difference in whether or not I'll go to the next stage to see what this is all about.

You have to realize that we're working always under a tight schedule. When I get that piece of mail or that fax...and now an email...there's so many different ways they can get to us now, I'm only going to look at the first paragraph. If you haven't interested me in the headline or the first paragraph or two, if I don't understand what it is you want from me and who you are, and what you can give me...not necessarily in that order...I may not pay attention. If you bury that information on page 2 or somewhere down at the bottom of the page, I'm never going to figure out who you are. So give me the basics—the who, what, when, where, and why kind of thing. If you can do it in bullet point to start with, that's even better. I look at a page and you have twenty seconds to distill who you are and what you have and whether I want you.

## **GEORGE**

The way the bullet points are written can be really helpful too. I can remember...I think I've mentioned this a couple of times on the tape series...a consultant I dealt with once, said, "There are no dull stories. There are only dull approaches to interesting stories." What you put into your news release and the bullet points...and the way you phrase it...always keeping in mind that this stuff has to be interesting in some

way to the people who are out there listening. Wouldn't you agree that's critical?

### **PAT**

Absolutely. It should be good, concrete writing that if I read it off the page it would make sense. The news release is important, and I agree it should be part of the package. But I think leading what I call the one-sheet, that one sheet that in the simplest of forms gives me the best view of what you have and who you are. A news release that I could read right off the page. A lot of news releases...if you're writing to the Wall Street Journal, and they need 40 pages about you, that's one thing. But if you're writing to a radio station, for instance, or a broadcast outlet...we tend to work in 20-second to 40-second increments. So don't give us something where we have to edit down three pages of stuff in order to find what you have usable.

### **GEORGE**

At the Academy of Marketing and Advertising, we're working on an ebook about news releases...in this book we'll actually use a panel of media experts to analyze and critique some real news releases...the good, the bad, and the in-between...

Check our website at [www.get-free-publicity.com](http://www.get-free-publicity.com) ...we'll announce when that ebook is ready...

***(Editor's note: This ebook has been published and is now available as part of the Instant Press Release Toolkit. For more information, visit <http://www.pressreleasetoolkit.com>)***

And lest we forget...a news release isn't the only way to communicate with decision makers...there's also the media kit...which is a whole different animal. Now, you're likely to need a news release more often than a media kit...so I'm just going to mention it here. We cover media kits in more depth in the longer version of the program...

See Joan Stewart's

Special Report #8 Media Kits On A Shoestring, and

Special Report #12 Kick Butt News Releases

[www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html](http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html)

Also see "The Instant Press Release Toolkit"

[www.pressreleasetoolkit.com](http://www.pressreleasetoolkit.com)

For help writing and distributing news releases, see

[Joe Vitale](#) "*Mr. Fire*" Premier copywriter and consultant

[Onlinepressreleases.com](http://Onlinepressreleases.com) recently got this fantastic review from [tucows.com](http://tucows.com). They offer a media software contact program called "Media Magnet"

"Media Magnet is a promotional dream. With four easy steps you can create and send out to over 28,000 media contacts a press release. You can submit and resubmit your site as often as you like. You can also create your own list from your contacts. This is definitely helpful for newsletter generators." Review by [www.Tucows.com](http://www.Tucows.com)

<http://www.assignmenteditor.com> Vast resource used by media pros.

<http://www.newswriting.com/groaners.htm> Terrific site for helping you keep your copy fresh. Includes a list of hackneyed and over-used phrases to avoid.

[Kelle Campbell](#) Offers professionally written material and peace of mind through a process designed to keep you involved and informed. Call Kelle when you're overworked, understaffed, or simply want fresh, high-quality copy that reaches out and grabs attention

# Positioning Yourself As An Expert

## GEORGE NARRATION

So far, we've given you some basics about who the media are, what they want, and how to get their attention...now we're going to turn out attention to specific strategies and techniques you can use to get on the air or in print...not just once...but over and over and over again...

Pat Rodgers shares this success story on how media attention...and the publicity it brings with it...can have such a huge impact on your bottom line...

## PAT

Let me give you an example of a handyman, a regular handyman, who owned a very, very small...two or three stores...independent lumberyards. It was back in the mid-70's when talk radio was kind of new, fresh, and green, and the radio station needed an expert handyman. The big guys didn't want to mess with it...we can't afford the time and yada yada yada...but suddenly this guy comes forward. He was a fairly consistent advertiser, but no big money. But he became known as THE handyman, just by being on the air once a week. That's it. He was on an hour a week, then he was on the air for an hour and a half a week, and before you know it...and I do mean before you know it...it took a couple of years, I guess, he became known as THE handyman in the community.

He had to confront a war of two home centers in this city...there's one other handyman on the air. He still only owns two or three of these little stores...a little lumber, a little hardware...and all of sudden millions of advertising dollars are being poured into this city between these two behemoths to battle it out for the homes market. He just keeps going on the air...the happy handyman.

## GEORGE

Brings his daughter on...

## **PAT**

When it finally comes down to it and the dust settles, one of the big guys is out of business. I mean there are a lot of empty buildings around the city with their name on them. Guess who survived? The winner -- with the millions and millions of dollars. But so did this radio handyman. I believe he did it because he established himself as the expert of trust and he commercially backed it up with intelligent marketing. The guy is still doing it.

## **GEORGE**

I talk about being a resource for the person who is at the microphone. The more ways you can help them...take that perspective...I'm here to be the resource for you, even if I don't get air time for it. If I can help you out, give me a call whenever I can give you a little insight on something. That's a huge thing.

## **PAT**

I think if you can get on a talk show producer's Rolodex and if you can win the trust of the talk show host. If they like you - even if they don't agree with you - if they just like engaging you...if they like what happened when you were on the air (you'll get a lot of air time).

This used to happen all the time with people who were stock market experts particularly. That (the stock market) tends to be out of the sphere of understanding of most talk show hosts.

Also, anything dealing with psychological problems. When there's a major story in the news where tragically people are emotionally troubled...do bad things. To be able to find an expert in that field. Those kind of people end up being in the Rolodex, and the first thing we'll say when we see a story is "Call So-and-So. They'll have a take on that." When you start building that kind of credibility, you're in great shape.

## **GEORGE NARRATION**

Frank Guerra and Joan Stewart have some more insights on this highly effective strategy of positioning yourself as an expert...which you may be surprised to learn...isn't always as difficult as you might think...

## **GEORGE TO FRANK**

On the subject of positioning yourself as an expert, an authority, and getting credibility and exposure, one of the things to do is get yourself into what some people call the expert's directory or a resource directory. Basically, it's a list or it might be a small book of names that they keep in newsrooms that whenever something happens on a particular topic, you have a particular person to call on who can speak with intelligence on that topic.

## **FRANK**

Those things (credentials in a media kit or news release) should be designed in a certain way. Very simple. We are experts in the following...and list them...with maybe a one-line description of what those different categories are.

(If you are an agency, university, or someone who represents a number of experts, such as authors) You can list the expert that you would make available and the phone number that they would call. The news folks are always pressed into trying to find the expert that can address a topic. If you make that easy for them, they will see you as a regular resource.

## **JOAN**

George, have you noticed why so many professors are quoted in the newspaper and on television?

## **GEORGE**

It's because the universities always send the list to the newsroom.

## **JOAN**

Exactly. Universities have written the book on how to do expert directories. Most colleges and universities send them out regularly every year. It's nothing more than a directory of college professors and staff people and administrators who are experts in different areas.

As a reporter, I have a stack of those experts directories on my desk. When I was assigned a story that would just fall out of the sky and I had to have it done in an hour and a half and I didn't know where to go to, I'd pick up an experts directory and call one of the professors and quote them. That's why they (professors) are quoted all the time.

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

We haven't heard anything so far from one of our other panelists...disk jockey Sonny Melendrez. Sonny says you don't even have to be that much of an expert to get airtime as long as you know how to make your topic interesting to a mass audience...

### **SONNY**

And that really is the key. It's all about content. What happens is that companies, whether they be non-profit or for-profit, tend to think in terms of what their needs are. And their needs are usually to get people to come to an event or to buy a particular product.

But if you think in terms of the producer and/or the program you want to be on, it kind of turns things around and you're able to work backwards from where you want to be.

In other words, if you have a product...let's say you've invented a toothbrush that has toothpaste on it...which, by the way, does exist. Let's say that you want to get people to know about this -- besides the advertising that you're going to buy.

What you do is you come up with an angle or an idea of what it is you want to say and how it is you're going to present it to the host and to the producer. Let's say it is National Brush Your Teeth Week or National Get Your Kids to Brush Before They Go to Bed Week. You look these things up on the Internet, and you find some kind of an angle...some kind of a premise...some kind of a reason for being there.

Then you call the producer and say, "My client has a product..." and explain all the different things and even go so far as to have ten to twenty questions that the host might ask you. Make them intriguing; make them fun...not just what's so great about your product. How about...what is that kids go through, what goes on in their minds, have any studies been done, are there a lot of moms out there who would

love to get their kids to brush their teeth but just don't know what to say?...Here's the top five things to say to your kids that will absolutely guarantee they will brush their teeth.

Come up with those kinds of angles...think in terms of Jay Leno, David Letterman...the fun things that they have when they read off these lists or whatever. Now you're a fun guest. When they get your telephone call, your voice mail, your email, your packet...all of a sudden they see...wow, this is great! This thing will take care of itself, and it's interesting for our listeners. That's the key—is what you're going to say interesting to the listeners of that radio station, of that radio show.

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## Bonus Article

### Why Should They Believe You?

By George McKenzie

Getting free publicity is easy if you're Tom Cruise or Julia Roberts. All you have to do is show up - anywhere.

But if you don't already have a gaggle of paparazzi following you to the dry cleaners, how do you make that important first impression with a reporter, producer, talk show host or editor?

Well, "publish or perish" has been the rule in the academic world since anyone can remember.

It's not necessarily true that you've got to have a book or audio series to gain credibility with the media, but it ABSOLUTELY helps. It certainly gives you an advantage over someone who isn't "published."

Producing books and products used to be painstakingly slow and - sometimes - prohibitively expensive.

But then along came computers.

Now you can publish an electronic book as fast as you can write it. You can produce an audio tape series in a matter of hours.

My friend Bart Baggett recorded a six-hour audio series in one weekend without leaving his home.

Tom Antion records his sold-out telephone seminars on an inexpensive tape recorder connected through a simple plug he bought at Radio Shack for less than \$20. Then he dubs the tapes and sells them.

Because I do a several radio shows, I had access to some

sophisticated equipment for my six-hour "Going Public" Audio Seminar, but believe me, you definitely don't need the kind of high-powered stuff I used.

And you certainly don't have to rent a studio or sell a book to a traditional publisher.

Do the folks in the media care that your book is self-published or that you produced your audio series on equipment you bought at a garage sale down the street?

Nope.

All they know is that you've done it. And that's what really matters.

Here are some resources that will help you become a publishing "do-it-yourselfer."

Tom Antion's "Product Development" audio cassette, available through Tom's "Speaker Shop" on his web site.

See the "Kick Series Teleseminar Audio Tapes" section at <http://www.get-free-publicity.com/speakershop.html>

Marlon Sanders explains how it's now possible to create products even if you don't have much expertise in your field and aren't good at writing. He calls his program "Create Your Own Products in a Flash"

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/createproducts.html>

Joe Vitale and Jim Edwards offer "How To Write And Publish An eBook In As Little As 7 Days." The authors say they can show you how to do it "even if you can't write, can't type and failed high school English class."

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/7dayebook.html>

Armand Morin's "eCoverGenerator" will give your ebook a three-dimensional, professional "publishing house look." Use your own graphics and artwork, or choose from over 150 templates provided with the program.

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/o/ecovergenerator.html>

If you want a customized cover at a very reasonable price, simply hand over the design work to Vaughan Davidson.  
<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/kilcovers.html>

Having a professional looking product on your website, or including a list of ebooks you've published (even self-published) with your media kit won't guarantee that you'll get the coverage (i.e. publicity") that you're looking for.

But it will certainly go a long way toward building your credibility with a media decision-makers, and removing the natural skepticism that's part of every journalist's emotional make-up.

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## **Bonus Article**

### **Use The Media To Make Your Personality Famous**

**By Kevin Nunley**

<http://www.drnunley.com>

The media and public love certain kinds of personalities. Although few of us really have those personalities, all of us can cultivate the public image that we have one of them.

This can make you a favorite of the public and a darling of the media. I don't have to tell you how good that can be for your sales.

Here are some examples of personality types the public jumps for:

**The Expert People Can Talk To.** Everyone wants to have their problems solved by an expert. Write articles, get interviewed on talk radio, put your expert tips on your site. Then invite everyone to call your expert line or send an email.

**The Techno Whiz Kid.** Everyone knows computers and techno gadgets can make life easier and earn lots of money.

Yet most of us are still a bit befuddled by computers and know little about how most technology works. If electronics, programming, or even using technology is one of your strengths, stress it to the media and public.

The Pioneer. If you are the first to do something, make sure you publicize it.

Your personality can have a lot to do with how much you sell, but your profession can as well. Consider this- most teachers have an incredible network of people they know in all walks of life and business. When you spend a semester working with the same 30 people each week, you get to know all about them and the industries they work in.

Many people who teach find the experience enriches their business. Some find a consulting business automatically grows out of it.

Teaching a class is a fine way to become known throughout the community for your knowledge and skill.

Most colleges and universities hire part-time teachers. You can teach an evening class about almost any subject. Many times the only requirement for teaching a community enrichment course is you have experience in the subject you are teaching.

While it isn't a good idea to sell directly to students, many will be happy to introduce you to managers and specialists they know or work with.

Also look for opportunities to appear on instructional TV programs and contribute to book and journals. The number of these instructional radio and TV talk programs has exploded in recent years. Just about every station has a talk show and many air nothing but talk.

Be ready to do your interview. You will want to be informed and energetic. Most interviews are short. Watch interviews on CNN these days. They rarely last more than 60 seconds.

Breath deeply. Do a few deep knee bends. You want to be warmed up and ready to go when you hit the microphone.

Have a sheet of questions and answers you can give the host or producer. The host will work from your sheet. This gives you a great shot at being asked the right questions--questions you already know the answer to. Ever wonder how experts instantly know an answer to a question during interviews? The expert gave the host the questions to ask.

Use plenty of expression in your voice. Talking the way you do in everyday life will come off as a monotone on air. Speak crisply. Get to the point quickly.

Remember that if you do decide to market yourself through an instructional program that people flock to certain kinds of personalities. Play it off, and you could really up your business.

Kevin Nunley provides marketing advice, business writing, and popular promotion packages. See his 10,000 free marketing ideas at <http://DrNunley.com> Reach Kevin **at** <mailto:kevin@drnunley.com> or 801-328-9006.

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# **All News, Like All Politics, Is Local**

## **GEORGE NARRATION**

Sonny touched on another terrific strategy in that last clip...taking something in the news and tying it...or hooking it if you will...to your area of expertise...here's more on how to do that from our other panelists...

## **JOAN**

I think trends is another real big way...letting reporters know what trends you are seeing in your industry, what is just starting to emerge. Many reporters cover 3, 4, or 5 different beats, and they don't have time to go out and constantly research which trends are coming to the forefront. If they can count on you to do it, you can position yourself as a golden source.

Remember, you're not begging them to write about you...you're simply offering your services. Once you position yourself as a great source, guess who they're going to write about on one of those slow news days...because you have proven to them to be very valuable.

I tell people...give people story ideas, even if they're not about you...story ideas about things that are happening in your industry...come forward with names of other sources they can talk to, not just you.

## **GEORGE**

Isn't it true that when trends come along, sometimes people take them for granted or they think it's not newsworthy? They see it happening in their industry, and they assume nobody would be interested in learning a little bit more about that.

One of the examples I use, Joan, is from one of my other previous lives as a Subway Sandwich Shop owner. My wife and I opened the first Subway Sandwich Shop that was opened in a gas station in south Texas. All of a sudden, (when people would stop at their neighborhood convenience store) they realized they could not only pump gas, buy a can of beer, and whatever...but you can now get a (Subway) sandwich in there too. That was the first time that was ever being done.

So I called up the business reporter for the local newspaper and said...we've got something here...you're going to see more and more of this. People will be seeing this and wondering what it's all about. So I pitched the story to him, and sure enough.....my wife and I wound up with our picture front page of the business section of a major newspaper, standing in front our Subway shop with our logo in the background.

I think a lot of folks might have overlooked that story because they just weren't sensitive to what a "story" can be. Having been in the media myself, I was a little more sensitized to it. That was a perfect opportunity to get free publicity, and it worked out. I wonder what it would have cost us to pay for that space.

### **JOAN**

A fortune. People should not think they should be expected to know what news is. What you should be willing to do, however, is to spend time with reporters on a regular basis, take them out for coffee once every few months, or take them to lunch and just sit and talk. Let them know about your observations...let them know about what's happening in your life, in your business, in your neighborhood. They (reporters) will pick out the tidbits from the things that you're telling them. When they hear something that catches their attention, they're going to focus in on that and start asking you more questions.

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

Here are some other winning ideas...and once again...you can find more details and specific examples in both my ebook...and the six hour version of this audio seminar...

### **FRANK**

There were all kinds of stories that followed the release of the movie Pearl Harbor. For example, let's say that you have a small business and it happens that you have a senior citizen that is working for you and if you were to find out that they were a survivor...that they were present at Pearl Harbor, that's an automatically pitchable thing.

I can guarantee that with all the exposure that was building around that movie, that if during that time, I was sitting on an assignments desk and I got a phone call from someone who said, "I have this ice

cream shop. I have this fellow who's worked with me for the last five years...everybody loves him here. He serves the kids; everybody always get scoops of ice cream from this guy. And guess what? He was a gunner during World War II, and he was present at Pearl Harbor."

I guarantee you I would be getting a camera down there so darn fast. That's taking a national story and giving it a local, or a human-interest, element.

Let's say there's been so new technology developed that's powerful in the treatment of a certain kind of ailment. Automatically, television stations are looking for someone who suffers from that ailment because they want to deliver that news in a way that has a very local flair to it. It's far more impactful if they can localize the story.

### **GEORGE**

I used to tell people that one of the opportunities for you is this.

Say you're watching the Today Show or Good Morning America or whatever in the morning. If you see a story and say to yourself...I know somebody who's a perfect example of what they're talking about...

You could make a phone call to the local NBC affiliate and say, "I've got a local angle." Use those words...local angle...you'll identify yourself as someone who is "in the know." You say "I've got a local angle on a story I saw on the Today Show this morning or a story I saw in the newspaper...Are you interested in talking to them?" Or maybe it's you. That's the local angle.

### **FRANK**

That's a very good point. When I was sitting on the desk, I would get phone calls from folks who would say, "This morning on the CBS station, the national morning show had this huge story about the following...and there's somebody here that's the perfect example of that. Are you interested?" I automatically was interested. I'd ask for their name and number...I wanted to talk to them...I'd also make a phone call to the network and say...whatever you had on the morning show, send me a copy of that on the afternoon feed.

Automatically as an assignments editor, I'm thinking...I've got the local interview and I'll have the national video, so I've got a good story here.

### **GEORGE**

Another thing you can do is watch what on a newscast and if you've got a response to it or you can add some additional insight to it, that might be worth a phone call, saying, "I saw the story, and here's something else that might be of interest to you...or to your viewers."

Again, keep that perspective in mind...what they're really interested in finding out is what's interesting to the viewers.

### **FRANK**

That's an important thing to know. In the news business, that's called the follow-up.

Television stations are always watching for the "second-day" story. They've run the top story...it captured a lot of attention. The next day they're thinking how they can still ride that interest today?

If you have something, call and say, "I've got a great follow-up to yesterday's story." Sometimes it's an extension of a story, something new...but sometimes it's a slightly off-center, human-interest angle. Follow-up is interesting and it's something the news people will look for.

### **JOAN**

I think that one way people can be enterprising in terms of getting their name in the paper. I remember this from my days as an editor. We want to give our readers free advice on how to solve a particular problem. How can our readers save time, save money, be healthier, look better...

If you're a source that can provide that information in what I call a tip sheet...you don't need to sit down and write a story. Supply a tip sheet, ten...not even ten...seven tips on how to make spring cleaning easier. That's a nice little list that could go into a home and garden section of a newspaper. All you need to do is put a headline on it; put your five or six tips; right down at the end you put where they came from—your company name and contact information.

The other reason the media loves those is because they're short. They fit into very small spaces.

On slow days, they're wonderful help. You can always find something in there to fill space when you need to fill space.

**GEORGE**

How about surveys?

**JOAN**

Surveys are wonderful. Surveys, polls, even white papers...

**GEORGE**

These don't have to be terribly scientific.

**JOAN**

They don't even have to be borderline scientific. I'll give you an example...

I think it's a fun survey. This isn't a small business, but it's a great example of a company that really showed some ingenuity in getting some great publicity. IAMS Pet Food Company...they sell pet food...they took a survey at their customer call center. This wasn't something they hired an agency to do...they did it right from their customer call center.

When people called the pet food company to ask questions about their dog and cat food, they asked people a series of questions regarding the relationship they had with their pets, a series of four or five questions. My local newspaper showed that the results of this survey revealed that 93% of the people surveyed admitted saying the words, "I love you," to their pet. 63% of the people surveyed said they sleep with their dogs and cats by their side.

What was wonderful about this story were that the results of the survey were released in time to be printed in the paper so that it dovetailed with...guess which national holiday that we celebrate love?

**GEORGE**

Valentine's Day?

**JOAN**

That's when I saw the story. Beautiful tie-in. If you're going to take a poll or survey...it can be something simple.

If you're manager of a store poll the people with a simple paper ballot at your cash register when they pay their bills. It doesn't have to be fancy or scientific. Simply report results to the media and see if they pick up on it. Keep it fun...do some fun surveys...do some controversial surveys. Those are the ones that will really get attention.

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## **Bonus Article**

### **Create Fun for Reporters**

**by Joan Stewart**

<http://www.publicityhound.com>

If you involve reporters in your story, you sometimes stand a far better chance of being covered than if the reporter simply observed from the sidelines. I call this "creating fun" for reporters.

During my program last week for the Alabama Health Care Public Relations and Marketing Society, Dave Smitherman of Carraway hospital system told the audience about how the hospital has gotten phenomenal media coverage for its emergency flight helicopter--all because he invites reporters to go for a ride.

"We take the news media along with us when we go to the scenes of wrecks and industrial accidents," he said.  
"Reporters think the helicopter is real sexy."

If you can create the promise of fun in your pitch--whether it's by phone, letter or e-mail--you can attract attention far better than if you were simply inviting reporters to observe from the sidelines. Here are a few other ways to create fun for reporters:

--Invite them to participate in a contest or competition. It will give them a chance to do a first-person story.

--Issue a challenge. During a flood of stories about online security, a brazen computer consultant called a local TV station and bragged to a news producer that he could hack into the station's computer system. He did--and altered the newscaster's photos to prove he was there. Not only did he appear on the news, he became their "computer guy" and is on all the time.

--Invite them to test a new product you have created and compare it with similar products.

--Offer to let them participate in a special event. When I worked as a reporter, I covered a hypnotist who hypnotized an audience of 150 people so they would lose weight. I agreed to be hypnotized, lost 15 pounds, and wrote a great story.

Need more tips on how to pitch by letter, phone or e-mail? Each method of pitching has its own problems and benefits. For more help, check out these three special reports:

#7: How to Write the Perfect Pitch Letter That Convinces an Editor to Write About You"

#16 How to Write Tip Sheets That Catch the Media's Attention

#18 Clever Contests That Will Tempt Reporters to Call

#19 How to Use Polls, Surveys and White Papers That Brand You as an Expert

#26: How to Make Your Story Pitch Stand Out in the E-mail Jungle

Dozens of tips for only \$7 each. Order at

<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/specialreports.htm>

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# Evergreens

## GEORGE NARRATION

Tip sheets, fact sheets, contests and fillers comprise something that--in the news business--is generically called an evergreen...

An evergreen is a story that can run almost anytime...a story media decision makers love to have on those inevitable days days when there's not much else going on...

## FRANK

Oh, my evergreen file was my best friend. Let me tell you that file was worn out. I can't tell you how many times we had a slow news day. I'd reach over and open that file, pull it out, and say...thank goodness, I've got this.

A really good example of this would be health science centers. They would send out tip sheets or fact sheets that would say:

Did you know the following...? They would have five factoids. Any one of them, if I were to call them, would say, "I can give you so much more information on that. I've got a spokesman; we've got some video that we've already shot we can make available to you." What was really interesting was although there was only four little quick snapshots, four little bulleted pointers, every one of them was very carefully thought out. Every one of them was prepackaged so all I had to do was call that source, schedule a time, and I had a story.

## **Do Well By Doing Good**

**GEORGE**

Another lifesaver on a slow news day is anything related to charity...all news organizations love to portray themselves as good citizens...and they're especially sensitive to criticism that they only want to show bad news...

So if you're looking for free publicity...charity events are a great way to get it...they'll be happy to come out simply because...it's a good cause...but you greatly improve your chances if you can use some other--let's call them--enticements...

**PAT**

At least I always tell people, feed us. If you bring food, we'll put you on the air...it doesn't matter what you have to say.

**GEORGE**

The more you bring, the more you sing.

**PAT**

I remember the Strawberry Festival. It probably got exposure from its inception far beyond anything it may have deserved at the beginning...it's grown into an event that deserves a lot of coverage now, but back then they just used to bring a crate of strawberries to every air talent.

You get used to that idea. They would bring in food from a carnival they have coming. We used to say...bring food and we'll talk about you. I kid about that, but it works. It works over and over.

There's a thing called a Cowboy Breakfast, where all they do is serve free tacos. You're talking about an eighty-nine cent taco, for crying out loud, and yet people give thousands of dollars of free advertising because somebody showed up to their morning show with a handful of eighty-nine cent tacos. What do you think that was worth?

If you have a charity and can feed us, you're in great shape. Tell us you're coming and make sure you have enough for the whole morning crew...and that tends to be a lot.

### **GEORGE**

One quick disclaimer here...and I treat it in more depth in the longer program and in my ebook.

Bringing food is okay for most radio and TV stations, but newspapers may be another story. Check with your newspaper contacts before trying to load them up with goodies. Print operations tend to be very sensitive to anything that may even hint of an inducement to get coverage...

Here's a strategy, though, where you can't go wrong no matter what media you're talking to.

If you can enlist a celebrity to attend your event, you're almost guaranteed to get some coverage...and you'll get premier coverage from a TV station if you can get their news personnel on the scene...

### **FRANK**

The television stations live and die by their ability to build celebrity around their news product. They want their anchorperson to walk down the street and have everyone recognize them..."Oh, that's the ten o'clock news anchor."

There's value in that. There's viewership in that. There's loyalty in that. There are ratings in that.

So if they invest a reporter's, a weatherman's, an anchor's time in going out into the community to do something, chances are the camera is going to follow.

If you have an organization or if you have a business that's getting involved in something that has some real merit within the community...you're doing something good for the community...if you can marry that with engaging a news personality, you really enhance your chances of getting success. You really enhance your chances of getting coverage.

The only downside is that if you have a newscaster, you'll only get coverage from that station. But chances are, you'll get better placement within the newscast.

### **GEORGE**

You can also if you can involve other kinds of celebrities. I remember one event that took place in Austin, Texas a couple years ago that I use as an example in some of the training that I do...a story that had everything.

It was a morning newscast, and they had a spokesperson come in. It was a Texas Wildlife Exposition or something like that, but it was a morning interview situation.

They had, first of all, an articulate spokesperson, which is always a big help. The spokesperson brought videotape from last year's event...people doing things...lots of motion, lots of color, again. They had Ted Nugent at last year's event, and they had a sound bit of Ted Nugent talking about how much fun he had; they had a clip with him.

They covered just about all the bases for this particular event...they did everything right. I use that as an example of how to get coverage...make it so easy for the station to put it on the air because you give them all the elements they're looking for.

Publicizing a charity event on radio offers some special opportunities...but also some special challenges.

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## **Bonus Article**

### **Co-op With A Media Sponsor To Guarantee Coverage Of An Event.**

**By George McKenzie**

**Originally published in "Get Free Publicity" Ezine  
To subscribe, go to**

**<http://www.get-free-publicity.com>**

**and fill in the information box (just two lines)**

I've often written in this news letter that you can generate a ton of free publicity for yourself or your organization by sponsoring a charity event.

You can guarantee some enthusiastic coverage for that event if you can work a "co-op" or even find a media backer.

Many TV stations, radio stations and newspapers will actually agree to help you by being a sponsor. Sometimes they offer free advertising, but they might even offer cash to help cover the sponsoring organization's expenses.

Keep in mind, they're besieged each year with sponsorship requests. The key to getting exposure is to offer them a lot of exposure in return. That might mean a huge banner or big signs at your event.

If you can give the names and addresses of everyone who buys a ticket to the newspaper's circulation department (for telemarketing), you make yourself more attractive to them.

I know some organizations won't be comfortable with that technique, but I'll let you be the judge on that.

You can also attract media backing by making sure their logo and/or marketing slogan is included on every piece of your marketing material.

Understand up front that in most cases, you shouldn't expect much help, if any, with the actual event planning. And don't assume you'll get more publicity from that media outlet than you might get otherwise.

As I explain in Chapter 10 of my ebook, "Going Public," news operations safeguard their independence and are particularly sensitive to getting a "push" from other departments.

Nonetheless, it's a good thing to get any help you can from someone who already has a pool of viewers, listeners, or readers who might attend your event.

For more ideas on how to use charity events to get free publicity, see chapter 7 of "**Going Public.**"

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## **George Narration**

Hundreds of charity events go on every month...how do you make yours more worthy of attention than all the others...Here's Sonny Melendrez with the answer...

### **SONNY**

I want to give you an example of something that is really very, very basic and very plain as opposed to having a product. When you have a product you have so many different ways to go.

But let's say you're a charity and you have an event, and let's say that event is a spaghetti dinner. Let's go down to a very, very basic thing. How are you going to get on a drive time radio or a lifestyle television or a calendar of events type story in the newspaper? How are you going to get the attention of that producer, of that person in charge?

Well, you go beyond the event and go to what it is that the event is about. In this case, it's a spaghetti dinner.

How about the history of spaghetti? Actually go and say, "I've got the top five things...(about something related to spaghetti)"

Lists are great...when you come up with a list, when you come up with a topic...that gives the host a carrot to hold out there. Especially if you put humor in the list, you can come up with these different things.

(For instance you can say facetiously) "Did you know that spaghetti was served at the first Thanksgiving dinner? That's right...Christopher Columbus didn't forget where he came from."

You do these kind of things, and all of a sudden, you make what would normally be a mundane type of interview where you'd say... "Yes, we are having a spaghetti dinner...it will be this Friday...the tickets are \$5.00 per person...we open at 6...it's for a good cause. First of all, you're not going to get on the air to do that, but if you have that other angle and that other way of getting to the producer, you have a much better chance of getting on."

## **Day Tripping—Timing Is Everything**

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

And speaking of improving your chances of getting on the air or in print...another question that baffles most media marketing novices is...

"When should I contact media decision makers if I want to get something covered? How far in advance? Are there good days and bad days? Are some times of the day better than others?"

Here are some suggestions from our panel...keeping in mind that there often is no universal right answer to those questions...

### **FRANK:**

For TV news, what they'll tell you is...send it a couple weeks in advance. Or they'll say...send it a week in advance. You want to know the truth? Generally, the assignments editor doesn't even look at that file until the day before.

### **GEORGE**

It's called the "future file." Maybe it should be called the "day-before file."

### **FRANK**

That's right. These folks are so caught up in getting the news on every single day that it's very rare that you get the opportunity to look two or three days ahead of schedule. Generally, the assignments editor is going to look at it the day before. I've seen cases where they look at it that morning. That's a bad thing for the news department, but sometimes it does happen.

It's a good idea to send it a week in advance so that it can make its way through all the different hands that touch it...so that it does make it into the assignment editor's file. It's a good idea to send it out a week in advance, and it's a good idea to call the day before to make sure that they have received it...to make sure that it's in the files.

And if it's a weekend event, generally the weekend assignments editor will be assigned to work Friday, Saturday, and Sunday so they can begin planning their schedule. It's a good idea to call the assignments editor for the weekend on a Friday to see if he or she is in, and, if not, make sure you follow-up that morning.

### **GEORGE**

Are there are generalities...painting with a broad brush here...generally is there a good time and a bad time?

### **FRANK**

A bad time is real early in the morning because the assignments editor is generally trying to get things going. Obviously, if you've got a morning event, you've got to call that morning, but if you're calling for something tomorrow or next week, generally don't call early in the morning...they're trying to get their news crews out the door. The sooner they get them out the door, the better.

So if you can hold off until around 10:00, 10:15, they've got most of their crews out.

Later in the morning, when it gets near the noon newscast, it gets crazier for them all over again because they're trying to bring some of the stories back for the noon show. Once the show is on the air...if they're not at lunch, that's also a good time to catch them.

They have shift change around 1:30 or 2:00, and that's sort of a rough time as well. You can call them between 12:30 and 1:30...not between 1:30 and 2:30. There's a small window between 2:30 and 3:30 that an okay time to call. After that, they're working on their 5:00 and 6:00 deadlines. It's tricky.

## **“That’s A Wrap...”**

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

There's one thing all of our panelists agree on...patience and persistence will pay dividends....

### **PAT**

I do believe that...I think frequency is important. Especially in today’s world where everybody is dealing with email...it doesn’t even cost you a stamp.

Go to the website...you have access to all these people’s emails...it’s not a secret how to get hold of them. But even if were a letter, a traditional press release, a fax...whatever you use to communicate...whenever something comes up, if it’s relevant

Eventually, they’re going to say...wonder who this guy is?

Remember, you have to look good. It’s not simply to just have the information...your piece ought to look good. It ought to be concise; it ought to be well-written, without a lot of misspellings. Don’t look like you’re working out of the trunk of your car...even if you are working out of the trunk of your car. Don’t look like that.

Be consistent...be frequent. No one really cares how often your material shows up. If I’m going to ignore you, I can ignore you ten times just as easily as I can ignore you five. So you might as well send me ten of them...that would be my advice.

### **JOAN**

Number one, most important: you must be helpful to the media.

### **GEORGE**

Be a resource.

### **JOAN**

Absolutely. That's where most people fall short. As an editor, I can remember many times...and I'm sure this happened to you in radio...you hear this constant chorus of people. They come into your office; they're all screaming, "Cover me! Write about me! Give me publicity! Promote me!" That's the wrong approach to take.

I tell people...if you want to catch the media's attention, the five most important words you can say are...how can I help you?

### **GEORGE NARRATION**

There are two more words that will help you get more publicity than you ever dreamed possible...and this will serve as our final strategy for this audio program...here's Frank Guerra...to explain why the words...thank you...go a long way.

### **FRANK**

Keep in mind that these reporters work in a very fast-paced environment. More often than not, there's nobody around that's going to tell them they did a good job. Keep in mind these are people who work very hard to get the product out on the air and it goes off in the air somewhere...into the atmosphere...sometimes I'd sit there and think...Did anybody hear it? Did anybody see it? Did it make any difference whatsoever? To get a phone call, to get a note of thanks...really is huge. We really do appreciate it. I would always call that person and thank them for the thank-you note.

### **GEORGE**

That will endear you in such a way that it makes it a little easier to propose follow-up stories or other stories in the future, doesn't it?

### **FRANK**

Well, don't you like being around people who appreciate what you're doing?

### **GEORGE**

Sure!

## FRANK

There's a lot of positive reinforcement in that. Certainly if you get a nice note from someone, and then...maybe 30 days...a month, two months, a year later, you get a phone call and they've got something else for you, there's a much greater chance you're going to return that phone call.

## GEORGE NARRATION

Thank YOU for listening.

As we say in the broadcasting business...that's a wrap for this program...

Once again, this is the streamlined version of our six hour "Going Public" audio series...the companion to my ebook of the same name.

The idea here was to give you some basics...if you really want to enjoy the profit-producing benefits of an organized media marketing campaign...if you really want to get free publicity that's more believable, powerful, productive, and profitable than any advertising you can buy at any price...there's plenty more to learn in the ebook and audio series I just mentioned...

And because you've already bought this cassette...I want to make a special offer...

The **Going Public** ebook and the entire 6-hour, in depth audio series for \$77.

This will also include the news release critique ebook, and our selection of success stories when they're published...

To take advantage of this offer...go to a special page on our website...remember, this page is only for those who have already purchased this cassette...and get both the ebook and the audio series for only \$77 dollars. That's almost half off the normal retail price.

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Again that's [www.get-free-publicity.com/special.html](http://www.get-free-publicity.com/special.html)

Thanks again for listening, and on behalf of the Academy of Marketing and Advertising and our panel of media experts...this is George McKenzie wishing you the best of success...Going Public...

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