

Building rapport with the media

Do:

1. Learn the ins and outs of the various media. The best way to do this is by making contact with editors, reporters and on-air personalities. Telephone key individuals and suggest meetings.
2. Never waste an editor's time. When you call or visit, make sure you have something to say or offer. Respect their deadlines.
3. Do your homework. Research facts and understand them from all perspectives.
4. Provide media with your spokesperson's phone number. Let them know what topics he or she would be prepared to offer comment on (in addition to your office activities).
5. Provide information to the right people, in the right format.
6. Be patient. Take the time to explain things fully. Remember that decisions to run stories in local media may take some time. Always follow up after you've suggested a story proposal or if you've sent a news release.
7. Be open, honest and forthright.
8. Phone if there are any new or exiting developments to your proposed story.

Don't:

1. Issue news releases randomly. Be selective. Major news media can get between 100 and 200 news releases a day!
2. Call reporters when their deadlines are looming.
3. Try to do the reporter's job. There's a fine line between being a help and being a hindrance. For example, don't ask to see a draft of the article before it is printed.
4. Talk to the media if you're unprepared. Explain politely that you need to gather information. Call back promptly.
5. Be brusque or impatient.

Source: Western Economic Diversification Canada's Promotions Toolbox