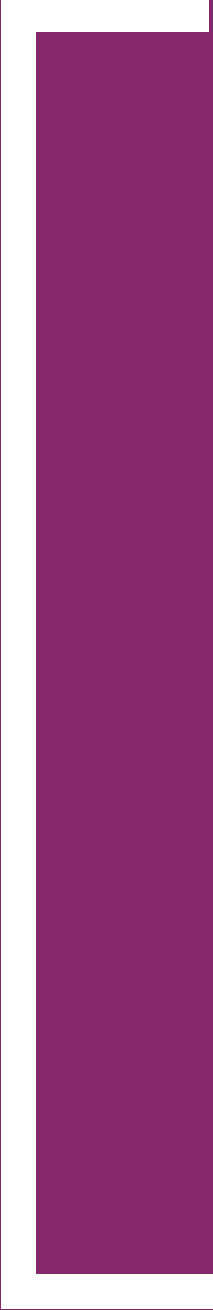


MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDE

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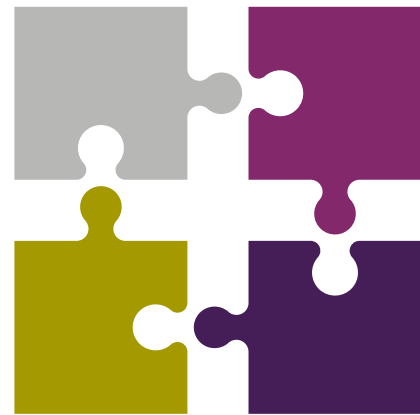
WHY YOU NEED A MEDIA RELATIONS STRATEGY

There's a common misconception that media relations and PR are one in the same—and, as a result, these terms are often used interchangeably.

This couldn't be further from the truth.

In simple terms, media relations is actually just a piece of the puzzle that makes up a solid PR strategy. It focuses solely on the relationship between a brand and the media. Media relations strategically tells a brand's story through earned media, as opposed to directly engaging with the public, customers and other key stakeholders.

That said, media relations is a key element of nearly every successful PR strategy. Contrary to popular belief, there is far more involved than simply distributing the occasional news release. It's an ongoing process that requires a lot of planning, a solid strategy and succinct storytelling.



The main goal of media relations is to communicate an organization's newsworthy message, story or information via the appropriate media outlets. By serving as a credible, third-party endorsement, media relations is a powerful tool that can enhance your brand's reputation and, ultimately, influence the perceptions and behavior of your target audience. In addition, earned media can help achieve specific business goals, such as:

- Building greater brand awareness
- Positioning your organization and its experts as thought leaders
- Growing the online presence of your brand
- Attracting more business leads

However, media relations is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It looks different for every organization.

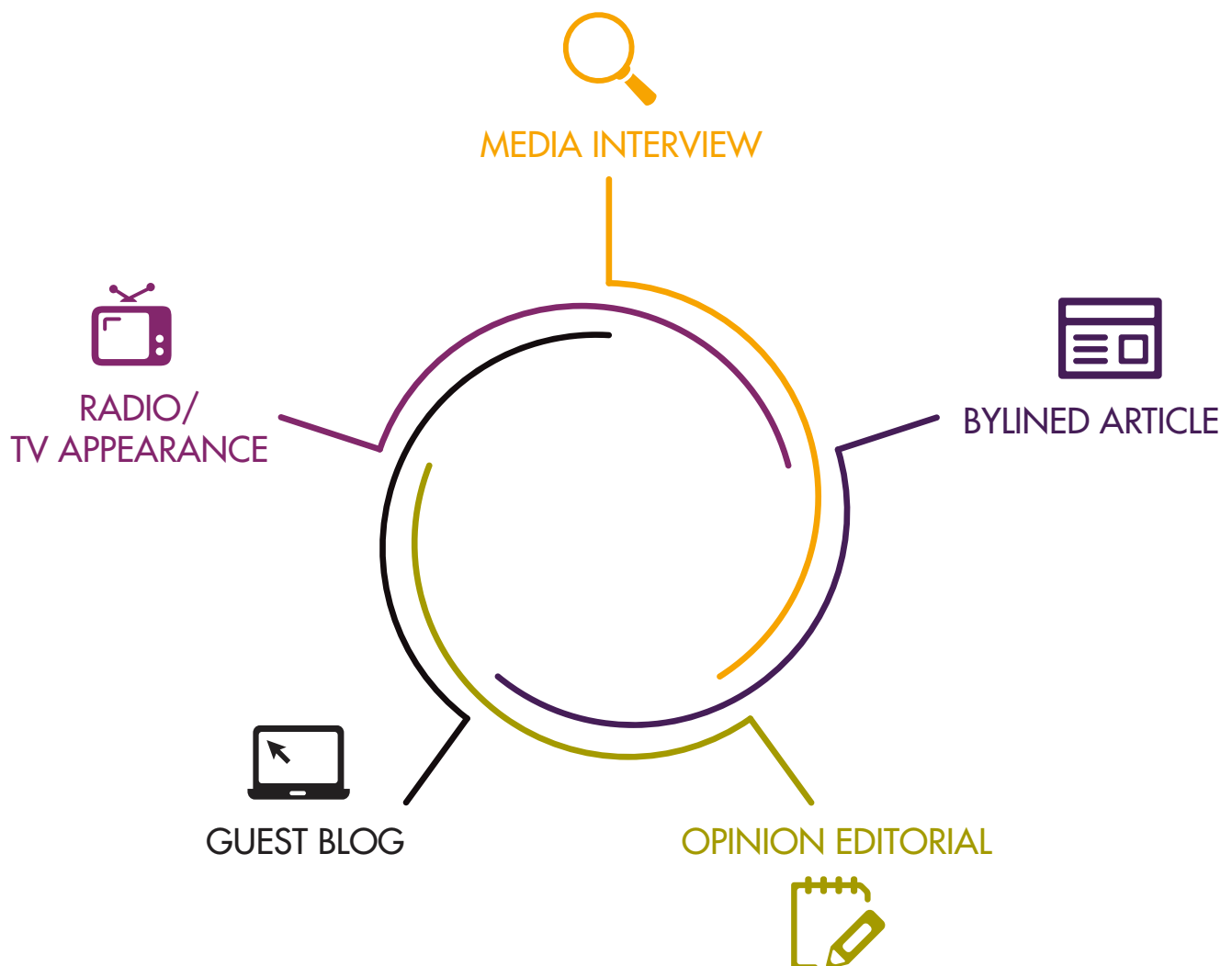
Media outreach for your brand should be targeted specifically to its unique goals and objectives. That's why it's important to understand the bigger picture of how media relations, as a tactic, fits into your overarching PR strategy.

In this e-book, we will share how you can develop an effective media relations strategy that will drive measurable results for your organization.

WHAT IS MEDIA RELATIONS?

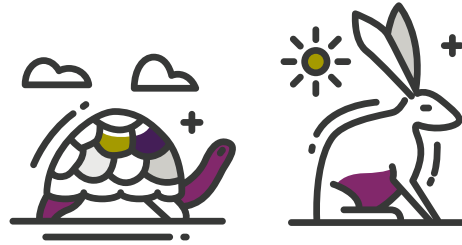
MEDIA RELATIONS IS A TACTIC FOR BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE AN ORGANIZATION'S MESSAGE AND MANAGE ITS REPUTATION IN A CONSISTENT, CREDIBLE WAY.

5 TYPES OF MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:





6 ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS PLAN



1. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

As the saying goes, “Life is a marathon, not a sprint” – and that same principal rings particularly true when it comes to media relations. In an increasingly noisy media landscape, taking the time to cultivate long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with the media – reporters, editors, producers and the like – is a crucial element of securing meaningful, consistent media coverage for your brand.

TAKE THE TIME TO CULTIVATE LONG-TERM, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA.

There are three key ways that you can achieve this:

DEVELOP GOOD RAPPORT

Although it can be easy for brands to view the media as a means to an end – that is, a favorable story – a much better long-term approach is to develop a strategic partnership with the reporters who cover beats relevant to your business and/or industry. Media relations is not a one-sided game—and, yet, that’s the very mistake many brands make when pitching the media. Instead, consider how both your brand and the reporter can benefit from your story.

Another way to develop good rapport is by making an effort to get to know your media contacts on a deeper level. This can go a long way toward facilitating more effective media relations on both sides of the equation.



Go out of your way to build a more personal connection than can be achieved through an email or phone call. Engage with them on their social media channels. Arrange for a time to meet up in person for a coffee date or at a local event to introduce yourself. Do a little digging to find out the types of stories they cover, what they need from their sources and how you can help. Ultimately, building this rapport with the media can help your brand get on their radar and become a go-to source in your area of expertise.

BE PROACTIVE

In this new era of journalism, reporters are often a very busy, one-man operation. Many conduct research, shoot their own video, take photos, report the story and even edit it—all on a tight deadline, with very few resources. That's why taking a proactive approach that goes above and beyond the call of duty can make a huge impact when it comes to landing media coverage for your brand.



Before you pitch a story angle, take the time to do some research. Gather supporting facts and/or statistics to back up your story. Anticipate any questions that may be asked by the media, and have answers already prepared. In addition, there may be digital content – such as infographics, video, images or other visual aids – that you can provide to accompany the story.

Once you secure media interest, take that extra step to provide whatever the reporter may need for his or her story. Oftentimes, this will include an author byline, high-resolution headshot and contact information for any expert sources.

Believe us when we say that reporters, by and large, will be eternally grateful if you simply take the time to be responsive, organized and thorough in your communications—plus, you'll be more likely to land media coverage in the future!

BECOME AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE

There are many ways you can position your brand as an invaluable, “go-to” resource in the eyes of the media. Above all else, it’s important to establish a consistent touchpoint with targeted reporters by providing fresh, compelling story ideas on a regular basis.



With today’s rapid-fire news cycle and the growing public mistrust of the media, reporters are facing far more pressure than ever before to quickly find credible and reliable sources. The good news: this presents an opportunity for brands to position their organization and its experts as a go-to resource that can provide relevant insights on timely issues or trends.

Another way to get in the media’s good graces is to be cognizant of their time and deadlines. Remember—reporters are busy. So, do your best to stick to the deadline provided and, if you need an extension, give plenty of notice. Make it a priority to supply any requested information in a prompt manner. And, although it’s certainly important to follow up on your pitch, don’t bombard the media with emails and phone calls. Typically, a good rule of thumb is to check in via email after a few days to a week, followed up by a quick phone call. If you’re still hearing crickets after this, it’s probably time to move on.

THE KEY TO SECURING MEANINGFUL MEDIA COVERAGE IS CRAFTING A COMPELLING STORY ANGLE.

2. FINDING YOUR STORY ANGLE

Think you're ready to start pitching the media? Not so fast.

If you want to land media coverage for your brand, you first need to come up with a compelling story angle. This may sound like common sense, but all too often brands pitch a topic without first figuring out why – or even if – it would be of interest to the media. In other words, unless you can tie your topic to a newsworthy angle, the media will be hard-pressed to pick it up.



The key to successfully engaging the media and securing meaningful coverage is crafting a compelling story that educates and entertains readers while properly positioning your brand. Identifying an angle for your story will require you to think about your topic from the perspective of a journalist. Figure out what exactly makes your story newsworthy in a reporter's eyes. For instance, is the story timely? Is there a local angle? How is it relevant to his or her audience?

A great way to identify and get ahead of any upcoming media opportunities is by monitoring industry news and the editorial calendars of your targeted media outlets. By staying up to date on emerging trends or issues related to your industry, you will find ways your brand can authentically add to those conversations.

With a little creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, you can come up with a consistent stream of newsworthy stories that the media will actually want to cover.

IS YOUR STORY NEWSWORTHY?

- ☐ **PROXIMITY:** Location matters. A local story angle is more impactful than one in another city, state or country.
- ☐ **TIMELINESS:** The more recent the news, the more likely it will be of interest to readers.
- ☐ **PROMINENCE:** If your story can be tied to a well-known person, place or event, that makes for a strong angle.
- ☐ **IMPACT:** The more people impacted by your story, the more newsworthy it will be.
- ☐ **ODDITY:** Consider whether there is anything unusual, shocking or bizarre about your story.
- ☐ **RELEVANCE:** A story angle that involves a hot issue or trend will be more newsworthy.
- ☐ **CONFLICT:** If there is conflict in your story, that will add more interest for readers.



3. PITCHING THE MEDIA

A lot comes into play when pitching the media. However, there are three key aspects your organization should have nailed down before taking the plunge: building a media list, crafting the perfect media pitch and writing a news release.

BUILDING A MEDIA LIST

Before you create the perfect media pitch and begin your outreach, you need to build your media list. This will help your organization identify and target only the media outlets and reporters who will actually want to cover your story.

First, start out by determining who your target audiences are, how they prefer to consume content and where they can best be reached. Media outlets can range from print publications and blogs, to radio, television and podcasts.



A management-side labor and employment law firm, for example, might target business publications and legal trades. Taking this one step further, consider whether your media list can be segmented by vertical markets. For instance, that same law firm may serve employers in the manufacturing, healthcare and education industries.

Next, it's time to research relevant media outlets and track down the right contacts who cover those specific beats at each media outlet. Having access to a media database like Cision or Vocus can streamline this process.

As you're compiling media contacts, be sure to organize your media list so the information is easy to reference and digest. It's helpful to filter your list by category, like in the template below:

OUTLET	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE	NOTES

Each time you create a new media pitch, take a few minutes to define what it is that you're pitching—whether it's an executive interview, a new product launch or a bylined article on a trending issue.

And don't forget to consider timing. Is your story angle an evergreen topic, or is it time sensitive? A print magazine has a much longer lead time than, say, a daily newspaper or radio station. This will help you narrow your focus on the appropriate media outlets and reporters to pitch.



CRAFTING THE PERFECT MEDIA PITCH

Reporters are bombarded with hundreds of emails every day. Not surprisingly, a run-of-the-mill, blanket media pitch won't get you very far—especially if you want to secure coverage for your brand that has a meaningful impact. In fact, it will likely land your pitch in the dreaded digital trash can. That's why you need to craft a compelling media pitch that stands out from the crowd.

In order to grab media attention, your pitch should be unique, relevant and credible. Take time to personalize your pitch to each targeted media contact. Start out by doing a little homework on the reporters you will be pitching—their beats, recent stories and any other helpful details you can find.

Then, brainstorm different angles for your story that will appeal to each of these reporters. It's also a good idea to explain why you're reaching out to each reporter specifically. For instance, reference any recent stories they've published that are of similar interest.

**WITH THE EXPLOSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA
AND THE 24/7 NEWS CYCLE, IT'S BECOME
INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO GET STORY
IDEAS PICKED UP BY THE MEDIA.**

A media pitch for a new product launch, for example, might look like this:

Hey, [first name]:

Saw your recent story on [similar topic/brand] and wanted to introduce you to [organization], which [high-level background on organization].

We just released our new [product name, hyperlinked], a [brief information on product], and would love to send over a sample for you to try out. I think your readers would be interested in a story on [2-3 story ideas with product, catered to specific media outlet].

Thoughts?

Best,

[name]

When it comes to the subject line of your pitch email, a best practice is to keep it clear, concise and compelling enough to grab the attention of a busy reporter who is hurriedly sifting through emails. Avoid any “salesy” or click-bait language.

In addition, you can kick your media pitch up another notch by offering compelling visuals or supporting content pieces that are relevant to the story, such as:

- Images
- Infographics
- Video
- Case studies
- Whitepapers
- Blog posts

Keep your media pitch short and sweet, with a clear call to action. Provide enough information to convey your main points and pique interest, but be careful not to oversaturate your pitch with every last detail.

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

A steady flow of relevant, meaningful news can help your brand stand out and build mindshare with targeted reporters over time. A mainstay of any media relations strategy, the news release is an official announcement that an organization issues to the media.



Although there's no cut-and-dried formula for a news release, several best practices can be followed to ensure you get the best results.

First and foremost, keep it brief—a page or two, at most. Reporters receive dozens, if not hundreds, of news releases each day. Take time to craft a captivating headline with action verbs and clear language. If necessary, you can add a subheading to offer more detail.

The first paragraph should begin with a dateline (city, state and release date) and cover the five Ws – who, what, when, where and why – of the story. Be sure to provide enough information for media outlets to publish their own stories, but avoid any “fluff” that will detract from your announcement.

In the body of your news release, add a quote or two from key stakeholders in your organization to help shape the narrative and emphasize your main points. This is also a good place to include any supporting details, such as relevant background information, statistics or future implications.

Last but certainly not least, your news release should include a media contact and a boilerplate that provides an overview of your organization.



[ORGANIZATION LOGO]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Name]

Organization: [Company Name]

Phone: [Phone Number]

Email: [Email Address]

[MAIN HEADLINE]

[Italicized Subheading, One Line Only]

[CITY], [State] – [Release Date] – [Organization] today announced that lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Pharetra magna ac placerat vestibulum lectus mauris. Nisi est sit amet facilisis magna etiam tempor orci. Feugiat scelerisque varius morbi enim nunc faucibus.

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“Arcu bibendum at varius vel. Mi bibendum neque egestas congue quisque egestas,” said [Name], [Title] at [Organization]. “Eu feugiat pretium nibh ipsum consequat nisl vel. Pellentesque adipiscing commodo elit at imperdiet dui accumsan sit amet.”

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About [Organization]:

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A MEDIA SPOKESPERSON WILL ACT AS THE “FACE” OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.

4. PREPARING A MEDIA SPOKESPERSON

It’s always a good idea to designate a trained spokesperson – be it the CEO or a PR/marketing manager – to act as the “face” of your organization and respond to any media requests. This spokesperson should be someone who is comfortable during interviews, familiar with every aspect of your organization, and can effectively deliver critical facts and key messages in easy-to-digest soundbites.

This ensures your intended message will be communicated in a clear, concise manner, while reducing the risk of any misleading or inaccurate statements.

Below are five tips to keep in mind when preparing your media spokesperson:

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Start by researching the media outlet, reporter and any recent stories he or she has published. Find out what the interview format will be and any specific topics the reporter would like to cover.

For instance, is this a print, online, radio or television opportunity? Is it a phone or in-person interview? If it’s in person, will it be live or pre-recorded?



Also, anticipate potential questions that may be asked so you can prepare thoughtful responses. Many reporters are even willing to provide a list of questions or key topics in advance—it never hurts to ask!

And, although it may seem obvious, make sure you’re up to speed on the topic that will be discussed, as well as the latest trends or issues in your industry.

CRAFT YOUR KEY MESSAGING

Your media spokesperson should deliver key messages that are on brand, concise and memorable. No need to go overboard here—in most cases, three main points are sufficient.



Weave these key messages into each media interview. With repeated use, this ensures your brand will convey its main points in a clear, consistent and compelling way. Then, reinforce your message with a few supporting facts and/or relevant examples, such as an anecdote or statistic. This will validate your message and enhance your credibility.

STAY ON MESSAGE

Although you may have main points prepared, interviews often move in unpredictable – or, worse, undesirable – directions, particularly during a crisis. It's important to keep the interview on track by bringing the conversation back to your key messaging.

In addition, be sure to keep answers short and concise. The longer a response, the more likely it may veer off message. Aim to stay in the 30- to 45-second sweet spot. This will help prevent any long-winded rambling.



AVOID NEGATIVE LANGUAGE

Avoid repeating any negative language the reporter may use during the interview, as this can be a common baiting tactic. That said, don't gloss over negative information or evade hard questions either.



For instance, avoid saying "no comment." Not only will reporters write the story anyway with another's potentially damaging statements, it will frustrate your audience and reflect poorly on your organization.

Instead, address the negative question directly and do your best to focus on the positive whenever possible. For example, a better response might be, "I can't answer that, but what I do know is..." or "We will comment as soon as more information is available."

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Practice asking your media spokesperson any anticipated questions in a mock interview. Recording these sessions on camera or audio can be a useful way to fine-tune skills, messaging and body language before the actual interview.

Keep in mind, though, the amount of training will vary depending on the topic and type of interview. For instance, an on-camera interview for a crisis situation will require careful planning, while an email interview about a new product launch may only call for preparing a few key messages.



To learn how to master media relations during a crisis event, [download our crisis communications guide](#).



5. TRACKING & REPORTING ON MEDIA COVERAGE

At this point in the game, you've taken the time to develop relationships with key reporters. You have your compelling story angle. Your media list is on point. You've crafted a media pitch or news release that is sure to turn heads. And, you've gotten it in front of your targeted media outlets. *Phew.*

But not so fast, keyboard warrior—your job is far from over. Now, it's time to report back on any media coverage that results from all of your hard work (fingers crossed!).

Media monitoring tools like Cision or Critical Mention can help you monitor for media coverage, track key metrics such as prominence and sentiment analysis, and deliver reporting on business results. This can be augmented with Google Alerts or by scouring your targeted media to capture any earned media that may have been missed.

As you successfully land coverage for your brand, your next step will be to showcase that earned media in a report that is easy to digest and demonstrates your measurable ROI. This media coverage report should summarize key takeaways for each placement – think who, what, when and where – and any key metrics. Use these insights to evaluate the success of your PR strategy and inform your approach moving forward.

**AS YOU LAND MEDIA PLACEMENTS FOR YOUR BRAND,
DON'T FORGET TO TRACK KEY METRICS AND REPORT
BACK ON MEASURABLE RESULTS.**



6. AMPLIFYING YOUR EARNED MEDIA

When it comes to media coverage, it's not enough to simply have it published. Although there's no denying the power behind third-party validation of your brand, you still need to maximize the reach of that publicity so it doesn't fizzle out after only a few days.

Luckily, there are many ways you can extend the shelf life and value of your earned media—the most common being through your website, repurposed content, social media and email.

SHOWCASE PUBLICITY ON YOUR WEBSITE

With your website acting as the central “hub” of information about your brand, it can be a perfect place to start when maximizing the exposure of your publicity.

Whether you add a separate press page or incorporate earned media into your blog, it's a good idea to create a place where media coverage can live.



For each media placement you land, include the headline, an image, a brief summary and a link back to the original story. This can help boost your SEO and increase traffic to your website.

FIND WAYS TO REPURPOSE YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

Another great way to amplify your earned media is by finding ways it can be turned into fresh, compelling content that will be enjoyed and shared for weeks – or even months – on end.



**BY AMPLIFYING
YOUR EARNED
MEDIA, YOU CAN
EXTEND ITS SHELF
LIFE AND VALUE.**

Evergreen or trending topics, in particular, can be repurposed into valuable, long-form content like blog posts, infographics, whitepapers, video or case studies. Drive action by including a call-to-action at the end of each content piece, such as purchasing a product, attending an event or visiting your website.

Creating a regular cadence of new content can help get your message out in front of a larger audience and, in turn, serve as a powerful media magnet—ultimately attracting even more media interest over the long run.

To learn more about how to build your own content marketing strategy, [download our six-step content marketing guide](#).

SHARE YOUR STORY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

When third parties such as the media or other influencers publish stories about your brand, it's a great opportunity to share that news on social media by creating pithy, shareable posts that prompt your followers to check out the coverage.



For social platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, it's best to share links to online articles with a brief, engaging description. For Instagram, you should focus instead on visually appealing graphics, with a shortened link to earned media in your profile bio. And don't forget to tag the reporter who published the piece—shout-outs are always appreciated and often even reciprocated!

USE EMAIL MARKETING TO PROMOTE EARNED MEDIA

Email marketing is a great way to reach customers and stakeholders who have already expressed an interest in your brand. It can also be an opportunity to further promote media coverage to your email list through a monthly e-newsletter or periodic email blasts.



Depending on how significant the media coverage is, you can either incorporate it into the content of a larger email campaign or even send out a stand-alone email blast. Not only will this get your earned media in front of your loyal email subscribers—but they may even spread the word by forwarding it to their own contacts or sharing on social media!



WANT TO
DEVELOP
A MEDIA
RELATIONS
STRATEGY FOR
YOUR BRAND?





A key element of nearly every successful PR strategy, media relations is an ongoing process that requires a lot of planning, a solid strategy and succinct storytelling. It allows an organization to build positive relationships with the media in order to communicate a newsworthy message.

By serving as a credible, third-party endorsement, earned media is a powerful tool that can help your organization achieve its business goals—whether that’s building greater brand awareness, positioning your organization and its experts as thought leaders, growing the online presence of your brand or attracting more business leads.

Check out this [case study](#) to learn how implementing a media relations strategy helped one of our clients land 8-10x more media coverage and attract business leads.

READY TO DRIVE MEASURABLE RESULTS FOR YOUR BRAND?

REACH OUT TO ROOP & CO. AT
(216) 902-3800 OR
INFO@ROOPCO.COM



CONTACT ROOP & CO.

(216) 902-3800
info@roopco.com

ROOP
& Co.
Strategic
Integrated
Communication