

Published August 2007

**Don't ignore your hometown  
news publications**

Every day, clients and colleagues tell me that they want to earn Oprah's attention or have their stories told on National Public Radio or Good Morning America. I applaud these intentions and suggest that they consider their hometown media before they reach for the stars and the sky. Why? Because earning "ink and air" in the media in your own back yard is the first step toward earning the credibility to secure the national media placements.

Putting all of one's eggs in the national media placement basket is a risky strategy at best. The editors and producers at these national media outlets sift through thousands of story pitches every day in search of just the right stories to bring to their audiences. The chances of your story rising to the top of the stack without the credibility of prior hometown media coverage are slim.

Your good intentions to serve the readers and viewers, combined with all the best story pitching and follow-up in the world won't be the least bit rewarding unless you can ultimately earn the ink and the air. And that takes time, tenacity, great storytelling and patience. Some clients have earned Oprah's attention in a heartbeat, and others have toiled for five years or more to wait for their moment in the spotlight. All the while, these businesses still need to turn a profit and make magic happen in the marketplace in order to keep the doors open for business.

My best advice is to start at home while you also swing at the national media fences. Brainstorm your own "top 10" list of premier media placements in your own back yard, and begin the process of appealing to those editors and writers whose job it is to inform, inspire and serve the media consumers where you live and work.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, the major daily newspapers will pass on a particular story, despite the strength of your pitch or the remarkable story you have to tell. That is when you have to dig deeper and consider your options.

For example, while working with a local Vietnamese millionaire recently to promote a big event in Seattle, I came up empty with both the Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Undaunted, I approached the Northwest Asian Weekly about doing a story about this local entrepreneur with intentions to inspire a billion people around the world to live bold lives of contribution. And, I approached the Beacon Hill



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News and the Madison Park Times with similar story ideas because my client got his start in residential real estate working the Beacon Hill neighborhood, and he lives in the coverage area served by the Madison Park Times.

Guess what happened? We earned front-page coverage with bold, color photos in all three local newspapers, just in time to earn the interest and attendance of 1,000 event guests at my client's big event at the Seattle Westin. And, those prominent stories were persuasive and compelling in my efforts to earn three radio interviews that targeted just the right audience of potential guests to benefit from this client's message before the event took place.

Now, my client has some powerful print and broadcast support posted to the pressroom on his event Web site to lend credibility to future events. This makes it easy for future event guests and reporters to visit the site to learn more about what he offers. And when the national media come to call, he already has earned both the credibility and support of his hometown media, making it that much easier to tell his story to a national audience.

Perhaps most importantly, local media opportunities offer you the opportunity to practice sharing your message and refining your interview skills before the national cameras and reporters come to call. Those bright camera lights can be daunting to the uninitiated, and you sure don't want to make any message or performance mistakes when the national press is at your door.

Yes, please reach for the stars and the sky by intending to earn coverage in O Magazine and on National Public Radio and Good Morning America. And remember that telling your story to your hometown newspaper can be very powerful, too.

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