

# SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Knowing whom to call is key to media relations

If you've got breaking news to share or a compelling story to pitch, knowing whom to call is as important as the story you want to tell.

If you are a small-business owner with other equally pressing deals to close and operational issues to address, chances are compiling a targeted media list isn't high on your priority list. The good news is that affordable resources are close at hand to make media list-building easy and time efficient for even the most time-starved business owner.

Before you invest in media-list resources, however, remember that knowing your own "top 10" list of media outlets that represent the best potential media placements for telling your story to the right audiences is always a great place to start.

When you are familiar with the reporters who write about your business, industry or expertise, you can demonstrate familiarity with their work as you make your pitch. That is always a winning way to start a conversation, capture attention and earn editorial consideration.

For example, a story ran in the Feb. 22, 2006, Wall Street Journal that addressed the challenge working couples face when returning home after a tough day at work. They find themselves in "the dead zone" and can't reconnect.

Alice Cunningham, co-owner of Olympic Hot Tub Co. ([www.olympichottub.com](http://www.olympichottub.com)), identified the Wall Street Journal as a priority media placement for her company and products for 2007. When she read this story, she immediately invited one of her best customers to respond to the Wall Street Journal reporter to suggest a Hot Spring spa as a good solution to help spouses get together.

The reporter liked the suggestion and wrote a follow-up column a week later that offered a variety of reader ideas to solve this common lament, including buying a hot tub. This example proves that following up with reporters about current stories with supplemental ideas can be an effective way to earn the media placements that matter most to you.

If you are too time-strapped to read every local newspaper or magazine and watch or listen to your targeted radio and television news programs, let the Puget Sound Media Directory make the process of identifying the right editors and reporters for your story easy and time efficient for you. My own copy from 2005 is well used



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Media-Savvy-To-Go

and well worn, and the newly updated 2007-08 edition is now available for purchase. Visit [www.pugetsoundmediadirectory.com](http://www.pugetsoundmediadirectory.com) to learn more.

If your company has news of interest to reporters and editors across the state of Washington, the Washington State Media Directory is a useful resource. Visit [www.finderbinder.com](http://www.finderbinder.com) to learn more.

If you need to take your message beyond Washington state, consider [www.medialistsonline.com](http://www.medialistsonline.com).

This service is built for publicists with only occasional needs for media contact lists. MediaLists Online allows you to generate basic media lists in a matter of minutes without having to invest substantially in software.

And, if you sell a product or service that is well targeted and well timed for national holiday gift guides or stories relevant to moms, dads and grads, take a look at [www.giftlistmedia.com](http://www.giftlistmedia.com). Be sure to allow plenty of lead time to pitch your stories because some national publications make decisions about holiday stories as much as six months in advance.

Now that you know about some of the useful tools available to help you share your story with the right decision-makers, invest wisely in the ones that will best serve your story. Then, get into action to bring your business and expertise out of obscurity and into the media spotlight today.

When your ideal customers read about how your product or service is making a difference for others, taking advantage of a timely trend or making news or solving problems that matter to people here and beyond, you'll earn new Web site visits, inquiries from qualified potential buyers and new engagements.

With such wonderful benefits waiting, my only question to you is this: What are you waiting for?

Nancy S. Juetten owns Nancy S. Juetten Marketing Inc. and is the author of the "Media-Savvy-to-Go Publicity Toolkit," which helps business owners get heard, seen and celebrated in their own backyards and beyond through the power of free publicity. Subscribe to her free Media-Savvy-to-Go e-zine by visiting [www.mediasavvytogo.com](http://www.mediasavvytogo.com). Get in touch with your media relations questions at [nancy@nsjmktg.com](mailto:nancy@nsjmktg.com) or 425-641-5214.