

# great news stories have these qualities

## twelve tips

**Everyone or nearly everyone** can relate to your company's story. For example, The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 10,000 people turn 65 every day and that 72 million Baby Boomers will be over age 65 by the year 2030. This statistic is huge, and so is the number of people who can relate. Does your company serve people 65+? If so, nearly everyone can relate.

**Holds the interest** and those reading or viewing the story; not at all boring. Have your elements in place before pitching your story to your local media. Elements such as variety of people to interview, multiple cities and a high-profile subject matter drove a Wall Street Journal reporter to Waco to cover our story idea rather than conducting interviews by phone.

**Anticipates and attaches** to the big news story. The 10th anniversary of the Branch Davidian siege happens only once, and we knew the media from all parts of the world would cover it. Our client's brand went worldwide that day.

**Non-promotional.** Good journalists know the difference between a sales pitch and a solid news story. If your story idea has no legs, the journalist will direct you to the advertising department.

**Developments that are ongoing** could likely call for a series of stories. Our client inked a deal with professional athletes to help promote the brand. One by one, as each athlete came on board, coverage was like clockwork.

**Experts such as yourself** are much-needed resources for journalists. Invite a journalist to lunch, explain your area of expertise. It can be specific such as pet care, fitness or winterizing a home to general subjects such as small business, franchising. Remind them you are a phone call or e-mail away if they need background information or opinions on that subject. Give the journalist a one-pager describing your expertise, your credentials and contact information.

**Research, ground breaking and peer review preferred.** Curves' five million five-year Baylor University research study opened many doors at national media outlets.

**Short quotes** that are memorable, colorful and truthful. What phrase sums up your company's message? Use it during interviews...more than once.

**Opposition and controversy** make your story interesting to the reader/viewer. Remember The Wall Street Journal reporter who traveled to Waco mentioned earlier? That story was the Bush Library story, and it was full of opposition and controversy.

**Never-before-seen or heard.** How often do you hear of a home owner turning a patio into a cat room with walls made of screen that have one inch openings at the ceiling and floor so butterflies and insects can come inside? Get the picture?

**Pictures and props** are critical to a good news story. The audience could relate to our client's Sugar Shock display, which visually told the story of the surprisingly high number of restaurant sugar packets in a glass of orange juice, a muffin, granola cereal and a serving of yogurt. The half-size sugar packet associated with our client's product visually told the story.

**Real people,** not actors or role-playing while sticking to the facts. If you try to fake a story, you will likely get caught, and your brand would be damaged for a very long time, if not forever.

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