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Electronic news media, a rapidly growing industry, provides society with immeasurable amounts of information allowing the world to communicate as one. This vast growing field is so common that we often take for granted all the hard work put into forming a good news story. News stories reach out to millions, but before they reach our television screens they must develop through two very important types of professionals - reporters and media relations practitioners.

As I read various articles on media relations, I found that most authors share a similar consensus that the relationship between media relations and reporting remains in constant flux. Both professions work very hard to try and maintain well balanced relationships with one another. The truth is that without reporters, media relations practitioners would lose a very effective form of communication to the public, and without media relations practitioners, reporters would be without their next big story.

In “Good Guys/Bad Guys,” a chapter from *Winning with the News Media*, author Clarence Jones discusses the importance of what a good persona can do for a media relations practitioner. He warns his readers that “Reporters develop a kind of personality radar. This is a sixth sense that quickly judges you and casts you on one side or the other” (Jones, 2001, ¶ 3). He creates awareness but at the same time encourages us to realize that we can control this by standards of behavior that seem to be accepted or favored by the media. This is very important because it gives good press to the person or corporation that the media relations practitioner is representing, and also gives a good story to the reporter.

Sharon Beder, author of the publication “Best Coverage Money can Buy,” acknowledges that, in our fast paced society, media relations contributes to what the news

is as we know it today. In the industry of media relations, practitioners remain busy as they "...feed stories to journalist, set up 'pseudo events' such as press conferences, tours, photo opportunities and pre-arranged interviews, all staged to provide reportable events for the media" (Beder, 1999, ¶ 2) This type of organization is what makes a news story come together so that both sides can be satisfied. Beder (1999) acknowledges this when she writes, "By initiating the story, PR people are better able to shape the angle it gets told from and determine which people get interviewed" (¶ 3). From a reporter/journalistic point of view, this can become a difficult situation if media relations practitioners attempt to sugarcoat bad situations. Reporters have to report the facts, but if they sense dishonesty they will be sure to include that somehow in their story without it sounding too opinionated. In most situations, media relations practitioners handle situations in an ethical matter that is respected by the public. It is also very important for reporters to establish new relationships and maintain existing ones with media relations practitioners. This will build trust that may allow a reporter to ask more questions and get better interviews, so they can cover the story first.

Todd Brabender, former TV news reporter/producer, knows what it's like to be on both sides of what he calls the "media interview game." He is now a PR professional and in his article, "Mastering the Media: What to do when the media comes calling?" he informs his readers of how important it is to have not only a game plan, but also a contingency plan when being interviewed by the media. He presents seven highly effective steps stressing the importance of maintaining focus, stating facts not "fireworks", speaking clearly and promptly and how not to speak unnecessarily. Media relations practitioners have to gain reporters attention but at the same time reporters are required to call it like they see it. Media relations practitioners can avoid bad press by remembering key points like the ones mentioned above.

Today, media relations departments and professionals are finding it easier to maintain healthy relationships between reporters because of advancements in technology. Dylan Tweeny, author of “Analyze Your Media Relations,” an article published in *Business 2.0* talks about Biz360, a software company that designs data mining tools. Their most recent software, Market360 is designed to “...quantify and analyze hard-to-manage information such as press coverage and Internet newsgroup discussions” (Tweeny, 2001, ¶ 2). This software will allow media relations the opportunity to make less mistakes because it sorts through enormous amounts of data, extracting the most important points so that one can refrain from making less mistakes in front of the media. This software is an innovative way that provides media relations practitioners with information like “...how often people are actually using the buzzword coined in latest campaigns, and which journalist prefer using your competitor’s buzzword instead” (Tweeny, 2001, ¶ 4). Technology advancements like this will eventually be able to measure favorable and unfavorable news coverage making it easier for media relations practitioners to make fewer mistakes in front of reporters.

After reading various articles on the relationship between media relations and reporting I have learned that the outcome of both professions success is based on the level of correspondence from both sides. I have gained a new found respect for all the hard work that is put into media relations and I have become even more intrigued by my career choice. I find it extremely important that reporters continue to merge with media relations practitioners allowing our society to maintain successful media coverage