



# Free Publicity

## Wherein we learn techniques for, and the value of, building relationships with reporters

*By Dana Kader Robb*

For a small business, a non-profit organization, or even a large company, the value of press coverage can't be overstated. Even being briefly quoted in a newspaper article can bring new clients or customers to your door — at no cost to you!!

Most publications have calendars and activity listings that are available free to local organizations. Just follow the instructions for submitting press releases. Still, the wise entrepreneur explores other avenues that lead to the media as well. To establish a useful (and reciprocal) relationship with reporters, start with these tips:

- Be aware of deadlines. Ask what times are convenient. Keep calls to a minimum.
- Provide your home and cell phone numbers as well as your office number.
- Be ready to handle negative questions. Never disappear when bad news hits your organization.
- Give reporters news with substance. Offer them legitimate news that still allows you to promote your company or product.
- Write your story for the publication's readers. This will de-emphasize your purpose and make your story more attractive to the reporter.
- Contact reporters if you come across a story that would interest their readers, even if your business is not involved.
- Remember that trust is the most important ingredient for a solid relationship with a reporter. Be honest. Damaged credibility can rarely be repaired.