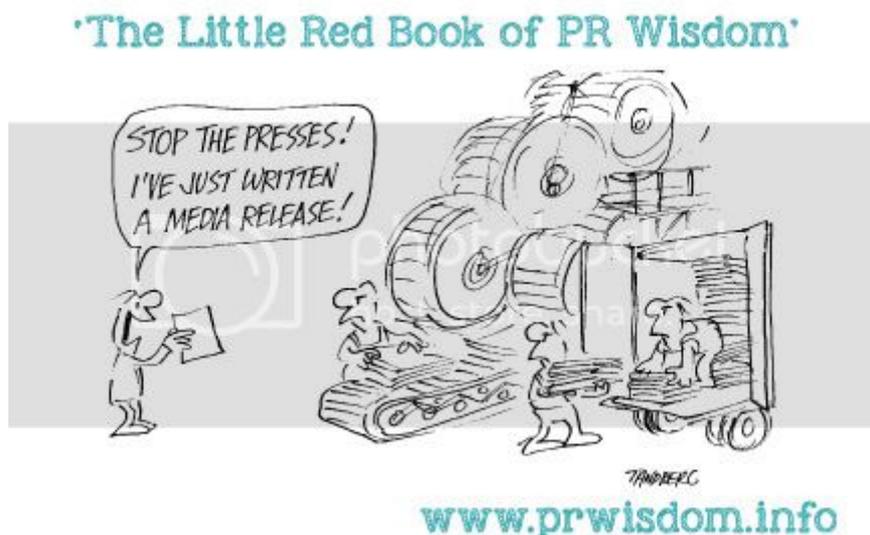


PR pitching: red light/green light

Friday, April 18th, 2014

Media types are very mercenary. They have to be. They've got deadlines, far too much work, and PR people bombarding them. Talking to them is a case of red light/green light, more often than not a red light, a knockback, because they are hard-nosed and hard to win over.



You must speak to them clearly and concisely. Your phone chat will be brief, probably rushed, and they're thinking about the other things you're distracting them from - you are chewing up their time. Nothing personal, but that's why many of them want to hang up on you. You may choose to email the media release prior to your call (allowing them at least half an hour to look at it).

Send it with this in the subject box: *Carmen - a story of interest here. Will call you shortly.* When you call Carmen, ask if she's had a chance to read it and give her a concise snapshot of two, three or four good points of interest. Options. Choices.

Clear and quick. Whether it's a control thing or not is for psychoanalysts to decide, but you'll often find they red light (reject) some angles almost by reflex. However, given choices, they may well find interest in one of the things you outline. If they red-light the lot just move on, quickly and politely, and put it down to experience. *No worries, Carmen, thanks for considering it. I'll come back to you when I've got something else that may be of interest.*

Be a supplier of information, of options. Not a hassler or negotiator. And **NEVER** try to argue the point if you're turned down.

They've told you they're not interested, so you've lost out this time. And they'll certainly remember someone who challenges their editorial judgement (read integrity). Don't fight a red light. Go pitch somewhere else and look for a green one. You certainly don't want to burn your bridges, because you might be dealing with that same person again - soon. Always remember, you are trying to cultivate a working relationship.

This advice is drawn from *The Little Red Book of PR Wisdom* www.prwisdom.info by Brian Johnson, an award-winning journalist and leading PR practitioner.

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