

PR can be a golden double-edged sword

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By **Brian Johnson**, author of *The Little Red Book of PR Wisdom*, www.prwisdom.info



Getting coverage that isn't seen or heard is a bit like an unread book – useless. The chances of key people in your organisation actually hearing or seeing your interview when it goes to air, or reading about you in the paper, can be hit-and-miss.

If your company or client has the budget, use a media monitoring service to scour the newspapers, the airwaves and the Internet, and email you a tidy bundle of the coverage. These monitoring services are very expensive, so unless you are a big organisation you'd only use them sparingly.

You can also try Googling for coverage – but that won't always rake in what you need from the electronic media. The alternative is to politely ask the radio/TV producer or journalist in question to send you a copy (PDF, audio/video file, etc) of their coverage.

They are not obliged to but many will. Armed with your press clippings and other material, you can then email the movers and shakers in your organisation and hit them between the eyes (and ears) with the coverage they have probably only heard about – if at all. It shows your organisation firmly in the spotlight and being treated as a leader on the issue.

Assuming you are happy with the coverage, this can greatly enhance your credibility within your own world, so bump it around: *"Sally, not sure if you caught this, but I thought you'd like to hear the radio interview our CEO did with so-and-so (attached)."*

Your sales people might even be able to leverage off the collected coverage and approach existing or potential clients. If you're going to request a copy of coverage, do it when you're locking in the story – not in the aftermath. If you ask in advance the media person knows it's part of the arrangement. Otherwise it can become a hassle for them.

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.

