

Knowing News “Categories” Offers Clear Opportunities

Written by PR Etc., Inc.

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All of us in the PR realm want the stories we pitch to hit it “big”, meaning a large headline, top of the newscast and/or numerous quotes from company executives. But reality demonstrates time and again that we’ll garner better results while leveling our own expectations – and that of senior management – by understanding the options available to us.

While there are various ways to categorize the types of coverage, here’s a high-level profile:

- **Hard News.** These stories precipitate media coverage and will lead off the broadcast news or receive top headlines in the paper. Such examples include a company’s earnings report, layoff disclosures, celebrity visits or very unique events.
- **Feature/Sidebar/Trend Piece.** Most companies believe their news is the aforementioned “hard news” when in fact it falls into this category. A feature, sidebar and/or trend piece is the “story” behind the story. And, it doesn’t have to be driven solely by your organization. For example, is there something happening on a national basis that parallels your company or that you have specific insight about?
- **Editorial/Column.** While there are a few exceptions, editorial opportunities are usually held specifically by media personnel. Of course, there are options to write “letters to the editor” but editorializing is the right of media companies to offer their opinions on specific topics.
- **News Brief.** This is a three to five sentence blurb of a company or news. An upcoming event or a significant personnel update falls into this category.
- **Roundup Item.** A brief mention of your organization with others can be found on the inside of most publications and include personnel promotions, new business updates, etc.

Keeping these opportunities clear will allow you to better identify to whom and how to pitch your news.