

## **Mentor Your Management in Public Relations**

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Members of your organization's management team may be excellent at what they do, but do they have the necessary knowledge or skill set to appropriately interact with the media on an ongoing basis? Mentoring members of your management in public relations may seem a far-fetched idea at first, but if they are open to the process, it can make an immense difference in their ability to feel comfortable in this role, get their messages across and enhance their – and your organization's – credibility.

The dictionary defines a "mentor" as someone who serves as a trusted coach or advisor. In most business circumstances, we consider mentors as those in a higher management level. But mentoring can work effectively as long as the 'mentorer' has specific key skill sets and knowledge in a particular area that the 'mentoree' needs to learn. This can be especially true as it relates to sharing your public relations insight with your management team.

Of course, senior management must be open to the opportunity to learn and grow in this area. To make them feel most comfortable with the opportunity, don't focus on only one manager, but rather gather three or four managers on a monthly or quarterly basis and outline an agenda of the goal or insight to be learned during each session. This will allow the managers to learn from you, but also from each other, about public relations which can be an incredibly confusing or intimidating area.

Session topics can focus on such areas as developing talking points for interviews, learning how to give effective sound bites, managing body behavior, or implementing mock interviews.

Although it may seem somewhat unconventional to mentor 'up', the overall goal for both you and your management is the same: making all feel more comfortable with the media and enhancing your organization's credibility and interactions with the press.