

Resolve This Year to Become a Media Ally

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As you head into the second full week of January and you maintain your personal New Year's resolutions, it's also the time to commit yourself to some professional resolutions in working with the media. So often organizations see a relationship with the media as an "us" vs. "them" option rather than a balanced opportunity to work together.

But to do that, you need to become a media ally, which means anticipating their needs and following through on what you've promised. This should be easy; after all, this is what you do on a daily basis for your clients and customers. The good news is that the media's expectations are consistent and basic.

Start with becoming a credible resource, which means making sure your information is correct on your news releases. Double check to ensure times, dates or days are included and accurate.

Also, follow through with media requests for more information, and return their phone calls – even if you do not have answers to their questions or your spokesperson is not available. Media appreciate this common courtesy – and they remember it the next time you pitch a story.

Be realistic about what is newsworthy. We all like to believe our story ideas are the best – but are they really worth two minutes of air time or 12 inches in the newspaper based on the other news of the day?

Your relationship with the media does not have to be – nor should it be – adversarial. Both of you have objectives within your jobs; it's a matter of understanding the media's expectations and requirements that will make you successful in 2006.