Media Relations 101: Following Up With News Reporters

**Question:** With the help of our college public information officer, I sent several reporters a media advisory for an upcoming event. What is the best time of day to call a news reporter so I can follow up in person and find out if they are covering my event or answer their questions?

**Answer:** It’s so great to hear that you sent the reporters a media advisory for your event and are now calling them to follow up. Making a follow-up call can be vital to securing news coverage. Typically, the best time of day to call a newspaper reporter is anytime before 12:00 noon. Never call a newspaper reporter to follow up on an advisory or story pitch after 2:00 pm or in the early evening. A reporter is typically on deadline at that point to generate copy for the next day’s newspaper. Unless he or she is writing about you that day and told you to call, your follow-up call may be an unwelcomed distraction.

In radio, deadlines are ongoing throughout the day. Know when the reporter you are trying to work with is on the air. Generally, it’s smart to call after his or her show airs, and not before. So if the reporter is typically producing stories for a 12:00 noon news update, don’t call at 11:00 am. Instead, call at 1:30 pm after the show is over.

In television, production deadlines typically revolve around news shows, with a heavy emphasis on the evening news. Avoid the hours before the evening news goes on the air. This is when the newsroom is the frenetically busy. Generally, for a television station with a news program starting at 5:00 pm and running at 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm, the best time to place a follow-up call is anytime before 2:00 pm.

You can improve your opportunities to influence the media by reaching out to reporters at the times convenient for them. If you’d like to submit a question for Media Relations 101, send it to ami@steppingstonellc.com.