

# Make front page news by NOT inviting the media

By David Leonhardt

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Media Relations Plan for Free Publicity

<http://www.TheHappyGuy.com/publicity-self-promotion-report.html>

Not a single reporter showed up at our news event. And we were THRILLED!

Not a single photographer showed up to capture the moment. And we were pleased as punch!

Not a single newspaper knew about the event. And we received front page coverage in every one!

You can make front page news by keeping the media away. But how did we do it? Here is the media relations plan we used:

**BACKGROUND:** A few years ago, I was working for a politician. In fact, he was a Canadian Member of Parliament (MP). That was about the time that Canada Post decided not to deliver mail to homes in new developments. Instead, new homeowners had to pick up their mail at community "superboxes" near the end of their streets. After laying down big bucks for fancy new homes, people expected the same door-to-door service they were used to, and my MP took the heat . . . even though Canada Post was an arms-length organization of the government.

**GOAL:** Our goal was to demonstrate that my MP cared, that he was on their side, that he was doing everything he could to help them.

**IDEA:** One of the complaints the new residents had was that they were not receiving their junk mail (Go figure!), including weekly grocery specials and, by coincidence, my MP's mailing to constituents. This gave me an idea. Why not send my MP door to door to deliver his bulletin, explaining how he, too, was frustrated that Canada Post would not deliver his bulletin to them.

**CHALLENGE NUMBER ONE:** But what about the majority of people who would not be home to see how my MP shared their gripes? We needed media coverage, so that everyone would read about it in their local newspaper.

**CHALLENGE NUMBER TWO:** This is a juicy story for reporters. Imagine the headlines: "Resident sock it to MP". Imagine the photos of angry residents waving their fists in rage against Canada Post. My MP would not look good one bit. The media had to stay away. But how would we get media coverage?

**METHOD:** We would have to report to the media "after the fact" that my MP had just gone door-to-door. We would have to supply everything the newspapers would need so that they have no

need to recreate the event, search for angry residents to interview or ignore the story altogether.

First I wrote a news release. OK, so it did not read quite like a typical news release. It read like a newspaper article. Actually, it read like five different newspaper articles, because I wrote a completely different story for each of the five newspapers in the area. To some degree, I was able to emulate each one's style.

Next, we decided to provide photographs. We dressed my MP in a postal cap and had him carrying a postal bag. I snapped shots of him at doorways chatting with residents. This was just too "human interest" for any newspaper to ignore. Off to the one-hour photo developer, then we chose the five best shots and attached one to each of the news releases.

Zoom, zoom. We hand delivered an envelope to each newspaper. The entire process took us just five hours from knocking on the first door.

RESULT: Each newspaper had its own, unique, original story with its own, unique, original photo. This made the journalists happy. Four out of the five editors even used the headlines I provided! It also made readers, many of who received two or three of the newspapers, believe the media had been there in person . . . making the story all the more credible.

Can you repeat this success? Yes. If you want to get great media coverage, but you are afraid the media will pick up a negative angle, this is the recipe to use:

1. Position your business as you would like to be seen.
2. Find a way to demonstrate your position or characteristic.
3. Write the story for each newspaper as the newspaper would write it, but place it in the format of a news release.
4. Get some great visuals, going for action or something with a twist, and ensure each newspaper has a unique photo.
5. Let the newspapers know that no other media outlet has the same photograph.

Of course, it is always best to invite the media to your event and serve donuts, but sometimes NOT inviting them is a better way to get not just "a" story, but the "right" story.

David Leonhardt offers dozens more creative ways to make your business front page news in the media relations "how-to" guide [Get In The News!](http://TheHappyGuy.com/publicity-self-promotion-report.html) at <http://TheHappyGuy.com/publicity-self-promotion-report.html> . For basic media interview training, visit <http://TheHappyGuy.com/media-relations-video.html> , or find out more about David Leonhardt at <http://thehappyguy.com> .

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