

# Looking For Free Publicity? Talk To "The New Kid"

By George McKenzie

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Looking For Free Publicity? Talk To "The New Kid On The Block"

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God bless reporters. They don't make much money; they don't get much of the glory; and they generally work long hours under withering deadline pressure.

But here's the most important thing to remember about reporters if you want to get free publicity:

Very often, they're responsible for coming up with their own story ideas. This is called "enterprising."

This is where you can become the reporter's best friend - and reap a bonanza of free publicity for yourself.

For the sake of convenience, I'm going to group newspaper columnists with reporters in this discussion. (This may bother some columnists but I hope they forgive me.)

I'm also going to group print reporters with broadcast reporters. (This will REALLY bother some print reporters, but I hope they also forgive me.)

I'm going to talk about anyone who loosely fits the description of "beat" reporter. Anyone who's responsible for staying-current-with-and-reporting-on a certain topic like technology, business, crime, government, health, travel, consumer affairs, etc.

And let's not forget the real heroes of everyday journalism: the general assignment reporters and feature reporters.

While everyone I just mentioned sometimes gets assigned to cover certain stories, very often they find themselves responsible for coming up with their own ideas. This is where your opportunity lies.

It's been said that most general assignment reporters are a mile wide and an inch deep.

In other words, they know a little bit about a lot of things, but they don't know a lot about anything.

Even beat reporters have a learning curve - most of the time they get assigned to a beat just because someone HAS to cover it. It's not because they have any special background or training in that particular subject.

Helping them shorten that learning curve - becoming their top resource for insight and information on their beat - offers tremendous potential for getting free publicity.

Even if they don't write about you or attribute quotes to you right away, it's just a matter of time before you start showing up on the air and in print.

So here's what to do.

Find the "new kid on the block."

Pitch your idea to someone farther down the newsroom hierarchy who's responsible for coming up with their own stories.

As a rule, reporters don't make nearly as much money as people think. So there tends to be a high turnover, with reporters moving from place to place fairly often.

When a reporter is first hired, they generally won't know much about their new job, and (this is extremely important) won't have built up a list of sources yet.

If you build a relationship and become one of those sources you'll often find yourself getting free publicity that's more believable, powerful, productive and profitable than any advertising you can buy at any price.

George McKenzie is the author of "Going Public: 10 Ways To Use The Mass Media For Free Advertising, Internet Marketing And Website Promotion. <http://www.get-free-publicity.com>

He has almost thirty years experience in radio and TV. Subscribe to his free ezine, "Get Free Publicity," by sending a blank email to <mailto:subscribe@get-free-publicity.com>

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