

# Put Muscle on Your News Proposal

By Rusty Cawley

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Let's say your company is opening a new widget plant. Immediately, you have change, which is one of the four basic elements of news.

But change is also the most common of these four elements, and thus the weakest. You should search for other elements within the story.

PR Rainmakers recognize these four basic elements of news: change, conflict, aberration and problem.

Any one of these, if significant in its scope, can spark media interest in your story. The more of these elements that are present, the most likely you are to get a reporter's attention.

But the converse is also true. You must have at least one of these elements in your story proposal, or you simply do not have a news story.

We've looked at change. Let's look at the other three elements that can put muscle on a weak news proposal.

You find out that some industry experts think it's insane for a company to invest in a widget plant in the current economy. There's conflict.

You learn that your company's widget factory is the nation's first new widget factory since World War II. There's aberration.

You discover that your company must convince customers to embrace a revolutionary new design over cheap imports of an outdated, but functional design. There's your problem.

With any of these three elements, you've got a much stronger story to offer than with change alone. And if you can work all four into your proposal, you've got a monster story with which to work.

But be forewarned. Most companies will readily accept a story proposal that focuses on change and aberration. But most will resist proposals that point to conflicts and problems.

Stand your ground. If your job is to get your company into the news media, then it is your responsibility to insist that your company maximize its potential for news coverage. The trick is to do it in a way that does not harm or embarrass your company.

In this, you must be guided by common sense and good judgment. Look for conflicts and problems that portray your company as a hero or as an underdog. Do this, and resistance within your company will melt away.

Just as attorneys must keep their clients within the law, and accountants must keep their clients within generally accepted accounting principles, so must you - as your company's media relations counsel - prod your client or your boss to make the most of any opportunity to create news.

The PR Rainmaker knows: Change is news. But to really get attention, you must find a way to include conflict, aberration and problem in any story proposal.

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Rusty Cawley is a 20-year veteran journalist who now coaches executives, entrepreneurs and professionals on using the news media to attract customers and to advance ideas. For your free copy of the ebook "PR Rainmaker," visit [www.prrainmaker.com](http://www.prrainmaker.com) .

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