

## PR HOT SPOT February 2010

### PR Tip: How To Handle Media and Interview Requests By Kimberly Miles, Public Relations Manager

No matter how big or small your business, how prepared are you to handle a call from a local or national journalist wanting a quote or interview from you? Media contact businesses for a variety of reasons to receive information and Public Relations professionals are not always the ones asked to be interviewed. You may think you are having a casual conversation with a media person over the phone, but keep in mind that nothing is off the record and your conversation could end up in print. Here are a few tips that can help you prepare the next time you receive an interview request from the media:

1. When a media person calls you, many people sometimes mistakenly think they need to begin answering questions immediately. However, most journalists, even those who work on compressed deadlines, are willing to give you **ten minutes to prepare for an interview**.
2. Assemble only **three to five key message points** about the topic of the interview. Limit each point to no more than one or two sentences. Write them down and use them as anchors for your conversation.
3. **Internalize the emotion** that you want to convey during the interview (enthusiastic, saddened, sympathetic, confident, ect.) Journalists are willing and able to incorporate raw facts and figures into a story, but what they need for a compelling story is the emotion behind those facts.
4. **Review all information that cannot be released** and be ready to explain why (perhaps of confidentiality, competitive reasons, too early to release publicly, or just unknown, ect). Never tell a journalist, 'no comment.'
5. If there is a **question that you simply don't know the answer to**, don't be afraid to say 'I don't know, but I can find out for you.' You can also suggest they talk to another person in your business that may know the answer and conduct a follow up call.
6. Place the call from a **private location** if you are participating in a telephone interview, preferably over a landline (rather than a cell phone). This is especially important if you are doing a radio interview.
7. If you are using the phone to communicate with a media person, don't be afraid to cheat by placing a **list of key messages** and a fact sheet right in front of you so you don't forget.
8. **Do not multitask during an interview**. Refrain from checking email, looking at a PDA or scanning a newspaper. Distractions will make you sound disinterested or insincere.
9. Most importantly, **RELAX**. A highly nervous or rushed person is not usually credible. Stay interested and engaged in the interview and conversation. Be sincere and actively listen to the questions.
10. **Congratulations!** You are now prepared for the most demanding of interview situations.

## **Print and Online Publicity Values**

### **December 2009**

Newspaper Articles 30

Nondaily Newspaper Articles 2

Consumer Magazine Articles 12

Trade Magazines 6

Web Articles 86

Wire Services 1

Total Circulation 65,668,984

**Publicity Value \$652,669**

Year to Date Ad Value for Myrtle Beach Travel News:

\$21,940,084

*What would you like to learn or see in a future PR Hot Spot? Want to be involved in this areas PR efforts? Have a PR related question? You can reach Kimberly Miles at 843-916-7218 or [Kimberly.Miles@VisitMyrtleBeach.com](mailto:Kimberly.Miles@VisitMyrtleBeach.com). Follow Kimberly's tweet from the Myrtle Beach Area CVB at <http://twitter.com/MyMyrtleBeach>*