



Clip Recycling: What to do With Killer Media Hits?

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I well remember a conversation years back with a campus chancellor in the University of North Carolina system. He proudly showed me a front page story from the local newspaper that recounted - with a wonderful color picture above the fold - a feature on the chancellor, who spent a week living in a dormitory with students. "You can't buy advertising this good", he said. "This is worth its weight in gold".

Wrong. The clip, though potentially "worth its weight in gold", has little value unless you can identify who read it and what perceptions they formed from the story. Did the mayor, City Council, Alumni, donors and Board members of the respective institution all pick up the newspaper on this Sunday and read every line of the story? Of course not.

So our focus has to be not on "killer media clips", but rather what to do when you get that "worth its weight in gold" media hit. Good media hits are "third party endorsements" of your institution. Your goal is to get the media coverage, but then to recycle it and send it to your key constituents to ensure they saw the coverage. Here are five key clip recycling steps:

- 1) Think audiences first: When you get a good media story, whom would you most like - in a prioritized fashion - to see the story and sit down and read it? Compile the list in detail, and be prepared to use this target audience list over and over. Clip recycling is a permanent strategy, not a one-shot tactic.
- 2) Now ask yourself: Should you send those audiences a color Xerox copy of the clip, or provide a URL electronic link?
- 3) Continuing on, ask yourself: Who should send the clip? If the clip is going to Board members, obviously in the my case above it should be sent from the chancellor. If to donors, perhaps the VP of University Advancement. If to high school counselors, perhaps the head of Admissions, and so on.
- 4) And next, what to say in a printed or electronic note: We simply say, "hope you got a chance to see the wonderful coverage of XYZ institution in yesterday's newspaper". We are recycling third party endorsements of the institution, so the less said in the note, the better.



Bottom line: strive to get the good media hit, but don't rest on your laurels when your good work succeeds. Ensure that you recycle that clip by: sending a hard copy or electronic version to and get it directly in the hands of those people you seek to influence most.

As always, we welcome your comments and thoughts

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