

7 Steps to Get on a Reporter's Go-To List

Prospective clients, when needing legal help, call an attorney they know or have read about.

So do reporters.

When you read a news story, perhaps with a quote from another IP lawyer, don't get mad that you were overlooked by a reporter who probably never heard of you.

Get even, by introducing yourself to the reporter and highlighting the business insights you bring to her readers.

Create an **Executive Media Profile**, a tool I've used to suggest attorneys as sources to reporters at *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *CFO magazine*, *CNBC* and *Grocery Headquarters*, to name a few media outlets.

Unlike a speaker bio, or a press release, an Executive Media Profile establishes credentials and answers the essential questions of the trained skeptic reporter: *Why YOU* and *Why NOW?*

First, **summarize the areas where you are an expert**: trusts and estates for venture capitalists or commercial real estate for foreign investors. Focus on a few themes without listing your degrees, clerkship and former corporate titles. This text should occupy three sentences in no more than six lines. Include your Name, Partner at law firm name, your email address and your phone number above this paragraph to make your contact information readily accessible.

Next, **create a bulleted list of three to five hot issues** for readers of that publication. Consider the bottom-line impact of regulatory changes or reporting requirements, for example. These topics may affect sales, operations, finances and so on. Be specific and keep each idea to one line. Demonstrate you understand the issues that readers are confronting; remember, in a subsequent conversation or interview, you'll provide the reporter more depth and nuance.

Name the trade and business publications that your current and prospective clients read. Review the three most recent issues to identify the journalists who regularly cover topics that align with your areas of expertise. Contact them by email and highlight WHY YOU are a potential source for them and WHY the journalist should speak with you NOW. Refer to an article: *Your coverage of issues in the _____ industry on _____ (date) caught my eye. I write to briefly suggest some ideas of potential interest to your readers.*

Follow-up with a phone call in a week or so. Reporters are busy like you, so a voice message will suffice as a reminder.

On a quarterly basis, **share a client alert** or other short document to keep your name

top of mind. You may also update your list of topics.

Keep your eye on the news for an emerging topic. When a politician makes a campaign speech at a manufacturing plant in a market sector where you have expertise, reach out to those industry trade publications. You may provide thoughts on how the candidate's idea might affect companies.

Finally, when the reporter does call, **take a few moments to prepare** for the conversation or interview. Get his name, phone number and email address and the subject of discussion; promise to call back in a half hour. That will give you time to consider what you might say, instead of speaking off the cuff. Then, make the call.

An Executive Media Profile focuses on potential hot topics; it offers an authoritative and insightful observer on subjects that readers care most about: *how to save money and save time, often by avoiding litigation.*

Lawyers who offer thoughtful comments and are available by phone put themselves at the top of a reporter's go-to list for timely insights. Quotes in news articles that explain how the law affects business not only answer readers' concerns, they drive prospects to call that attorney.

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