

A FREE UNCOM MEDIA RESOURCE



The Relationships That **Protect** **Your Story.**

A workbook for building real relationships with the journalists, trade publications, and industry voices who shape how your organization is seen, before you ever need them.

WHAT YOU'LL BUILD

A short list of the industry reporters and trade publications that actually matter to you.

A network of industry allies who are not competitors, but are not silent either.

A simple, low effort routine for staying on their radar.

CLARITY • CONSISTENCY • TRUST

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A Note Before You Start

Public relations is not what it used to be. A press release used to be able to move markets and fill front pages on its own. Today, that same press release competes with millions of other things fighting for the same five seconds of attention.

But something else has not changed at all. The reporters, editors, and trade publications who cover your industry still carry a kind of credibility that no amount of advertising or social media can buy. When one of them says something about you, people believe it differently than when you say it about yourself.

WHY THIS MATTERS

You do not need a big PR firm to benefit from this. You need a handful of real relationships, built before you need them.

This is not a guide about writing the perfect press release. It is a workbook for identifying the people who already have the trust and reach you are trying to build, and quietly becoming someone worth knowing to them, long before anything newsworthy happens.

Work through it, build your lists, and start small. This is one of the few things in communications that is genuinely free. It only costs attention and consistency.

With clarity,
The UNCOM Media Team

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Why Traditional PR Isn't What It Used to Be

The press release used to be the whole strategy. Now it is barely the opening move.

There was a time when a well written press release, sent to the right handful of outlets, could genuinely shape public perception on its own. Newsrooms were smaller, attention was less fragmented, and a handful of gatekeepers controlled most of what the public saw.

That world is gone. Newsrooms have shrunk. Attention is split across hundreds of channels. A press release sent into a general inbox, with no relationship behind it, competes with everything else landing in that same inbox that day, and it usually loses.

None of this means public relations stopped mattering. It means the mechanism changed. The value shifted from the announcement itself to the relationship that existed before the announcement was ever written.

SECTION 02

The New Model: Relationships Are the Strategy

You are not pitching a story. You are building a relationship that will eventually include a story.

The organizations that do this well are not the ones with the biggest PR budgets. They are the ones who identified the journalists, editors, and trade publications that actually cover their industry, and spent time becoming useful to them long before they needed anything in return.

This is not about talking to them constantly. It is about being a known, credible, easy to work with source, so that when the time comes, whether that time is a good story or a difficult one, you are not a stranger asking for a favor. You are already someone they know.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Relationships built in advance are the only kind that actually work when you need them urgently.

SECTION 03

Why This Still Matters: Credibility You Cannot Buy

Reporters, editors, and trade publications have spent years, sometimes decades, building a reputation for being accurate and fair. That reputation is not transferable to you by paying for an ad. It is only extended to you when they choose to.

When a respected industry publication covers your organization, or a well known reporter quotes your leadership, the credibility of that coverage reflects onto you. It also feeds directly into your online reputation. Coverage gets linked, shared, and referenced. It shapes what people find when they search your name, long after the original story runs.

WHAT ADVERTISING GIVES YOU

Reach, on a schedule you control, that people know is paid for and can discount accordingly.

WHAT EARNED COVERAGE GIVES YOU

Credibility borrowed from someone the audience already trusts, which advertising cannot replicate.

SECTION 04

Finding the Right Industry Experts and Trade Publications

You do not need to know everyone in media. You need to know the right handful of people in your specific industry.

Start with the trade publications, not the general news outlets, that people in your industry actually read. Then identify the specific reporters and editors at those publications who consistently cover your space. Look at bylines over the past year. The same names tend to show up again and again once you start paying attention.

- ☐ List the two or three trade publications your customers and peers actually read
- ☐ Identify the reporters or editors whose bylines cover your specific niche, not just your broad industry
- ☐ Follow their recent work so you understand what they care about, before reaching out
- ☐ Note which of them also show up on panels, podcasts, or newsletters in your space

SECTION 05

Building the Relationship: The Insurance Policy Mindset

Think of these relationships the way you think about insurance. You build them before you need them, not after.

You do not build a relationship with a journalist by pitching them the moment you meet them. You build it by being genuinely useful first. Share information that helps them understand your industry, even when it has nothing to do with promoting your organization. Answer their questions honestly and quickly when they have one. Be the person who returns their call.

Over time, you become one of the people they think of when they need a quote, a source, or context for a story in your space. That is the entire goal. Not a placement. A standing relationship.

WHY THIS MATTERS

If something difficult ever happens to your organization, the reporters who already know and trust you are far more likely to tell a fair, accurate version of the story, and to call you before they publish, not after.

SECTION 06

What to Actually Send Them

Most outreach to journalists fails because it is entirely self interested. The relationship works better in the other direction. Lead with what is useful to them, not what you want them to publish.

SEND THIS**NOT THIS**

Industry data, trends, or context that helps them understand the bigger picture

A press release with no relationship behind it

An honest, useful answer when they reach out with a question

A vague non-answer routed through three layers of approval

An introduction to another useful source in your network

A pitch that only benefits your organization

A congratulations or a share when they publish something strong

Silence, until the day you need something from them

SECTION 07

Beyond Journalists: Industry Influencers and Allies

This does not stop at reporters. Every industry has its own respected voices.

These are not necessarily social media influencers. They are the people your industry already listens to: conference speakers, podcast hosts, association leaders, well regarded consultants, and long tenured practitioners with real followings inside your space. Extending your relationship building to this group works exactly the same way as it does with journalists. You are not trying to become their best friend. You are building a genuine, low effort network of allies who know who you are and generally think well of you.

WHY THIS MATTERS

You do not need a large network. You need a real one. A handful of allies who would speak up for you is worth more than a thousand casual followers who would not.

When Something Goes Wrong

This is where the relationship pays for itself. When a difficult story breaks about your organization, the reporters and allies who already know you are more likely to reach out for your side before they publish, more likely to include real context, and more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt that a stranger never would.

This does not mean coverage will always be favorable. It means it is far more likely to be fair. In a moment when your own words carry less weight than usual, a credible third party willing to vouch for your character, even quietly, can matter enormously.

SECTION 09

When Something Goes Right

The same network matters just as much on good days. When your organization has real news, an award, a milestone, a genuine community contribution, the relationships you built long before you needed anything are exactly what gets that story picked up, shared, and taken seriously.

A press release sent cold rarely gets attention. The same news, sent to a reporter who already knows and trusts you, has a real chance. This is the version of public relations that still works, and it does not require a large budget. It requires patience and consistency.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Good news needs a distribution network as much as bad news needs a defense. Build it before you need either.

Your Media List

List the trade publications and reporters who actually cover your industry. Start with three to five. This is meant to be short and real, not exhaustive.

PUBLICATION	REPORTER / EDITOR	BEAT / FOCUS	LAST CONTACT



SECTION 11

WORKBOOK

Your Allies and Industry Influencers

List the respected voices in your industry, the people whose opinion carries weight with your customers and peers, even if they never write a headline about you.

NAME	ROLE / PLATFORM	WHY THEY MATTER	LAST CONTACT

SECTION 12

A Simple Relationship-Building Routine

This does not require daily attention. It requires consistency over a long period of time.

CADENCE

WHAT TO DO

Monthly	Read recent work from the people on your media list. Note anything worth commenting on or sharing.
Quarterly	Reach out to one or two contacts with something genuinely useful. No ask attached.
Twice a Year	Review your lists. Add new names, remove ones that no longer fit, note who you have not spoken to in a while.
As It Happens	Share real news the moment it happens, with the people most likely to care about it first.

SECTION 13

Quick-Start Checklist

Everything in this workbook, in one place.

- ☐ Identify the trade publications your industry actually reads.
- ☐ Build a short list of the reporters and editors who cover your specific space.
- ☐ Identify the industry influencers and allies whose opinion carries real weight.
- ☐ Lead with value. Share useful information before you ever need something back.
- ☐ Stay in touch on a light, consistent schedule, not only when you need coverage.
- ☐ Remember this network matters on your best days and your worst ones.

A FINAL NOTE

You do not need a big PR firm to benefit from real relationships. You need a short list, real value to offer, and the patience to build it before you need it.

YOU HAVE THE FRAMEWORK

Now Let's Build The Relationships.

A workbook can help you identify who matters. Building those relationships, and knowing how to use them well when it counts, is where UNCOM Media's communications and media strategy work comes in.

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