



## HOW TO WORK WITH A PUBLICIST

BY ROB EAGAR

*\*\*Bonus article based on Rob Eagar's [Sell Your Book Like Wildfire](http://bookwildfire.com) (bookwildfire.com)*

There are plenty of things you can do in order to capture media interviews on your own. However, there may some cases where hiring an experienced publicist may be beneficial. I'm not against publicists. There will always be a legitimate need for the professional services they provide. This is especially true if you're an author who is too busy to create media blasts and manage an interview schedule on your own, such as a corporate executive, church pastor, or business owner.

However, don't blindly turn over the reins to a publicist and expect them to work miracles for your book. You need to stay engaged in order for a publicist to properly assist you. Keep these points in mind as you go through the process.

### **1. Assist with creating the hooks for your book**

You'd be surprised how some publicists will try to promote a book without actually reading it. They might skim through a few chapters and ask the author some questions. Sometimes, though, they won't gather enough

knowledge about your book to create a hook that's captivating enough to entice producers. They simply try to live off of the relationships they've accrued over the years with the various programs.

I know this is true due to the number of poorly written press releases I've seen lot of professional publicists write. There's no memorable hook, no compelling story or statistic, and no description of results that the author can create. The press release simply announces that so-and-so author has a new book available. This kind of bland publicity will kill a book's media potential.

Don't stand for letting your publicist send out a dull press release. Get involved with your publicist, and feed him ideas to help make a strong hook. Tell him you want to approve the press release before it is sent out. Lean on a publicist's knowledge, but it's your responsibility to assist with building a creative campaign. You should feel comfortable sharing good ideas for a hook. If your campaign is a failure, it will ultimately be your fault, not theirs.

## **2. Ask for media training**

If you pay big money for a publicist, ask her to include basic media training in the deal. Some publicists may charge extra for this service, but it never hurts to ask for a little free practice. I've helped many of my author clients prepare sound bites and rehearse interviews before they go into a studio. We'll get on the phone, and I'll pretend to be the host who asks scripted questions, antagonistic questions, and even throws in some curveballs. Every author who's practiced with me has admitted, "Wow, I wasn't nearly as prepared as I thought. Thanks for taking me through a practice run."

## **3. Hold your publicist accountable**

This should go without saying, but if you pay someone big bucks to do work on your behalf, then you're entitled to a regular update on their efforts. When you hire a publicist, you're essentially paying to play the media game. Yet many authors never hold their publicists accountable. They never ask for an activity report. They never ask for a list of all the producers and programs who have been contacted. They never ask if any follow-up activity is being conducted.

Some publicists may not want to share their contact database for fear of it being stolen, but it doesn't mean the author shouldn't receive monthly or

quarterly status reports. Before you hire a publicist, get a written assurance that she will provide this information on a regular basis. Otherwise you'll have no recourse if the publicist fails to line up adequate interviews.

A good publicist can help land exposure for your book on bigger programs with an audience of millions. They're not cheap, but when they do their job right, their efforts can help you build a wildfire in the press.