

## INTRODUCTION



# Publicity Simplified

*The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance.*

—Oswald Chambers

Complexity is the enemy. Fundamental truth is our friend. But you already knew that—even though you didn't read it in a headline. Prepare to be surprised by how much you know. Prepare to be shocked that you didn't know you knew it.

You want positive, high-impact—and not to mention free—publicity that drives success in our media-crazed culture. Who doesn't? But how do you get it, keep it coming, and in the process not get burned? Countless public relations professionals and media gurus promise they have the answers to these questions, and some of them do. The problem is, they have more answers than anyone

outside the PR business would ever want to know. They've got advice and tips and strategies and dos and don'ts for every conceivable situation. It's a dizzying mess that's best left to experienced, high-priced experts, right? WRONG. Getting great publicity is not nearly as complicated as it seems or as tricky as some PR gurus would like you to believe.

The premise of this book is simple. To win the publicity game you must play by the Media Rules. There are only a dozen, and they are as plain as the nose on your face. These Rules are not my Rules. They are the Rules of the game that were established by the Media Beast—the all-encompassing term for the press. The Beast follows these 12 Rules religiously, which makes him extremely predictable. When you know what the Beast needs, you've got a practical, logical system for getting what you want—publicity. It's not complicated. It's fundamental truth—most of which is already in your head.

## **A Fresh Look at Publicity**

As you can already tell, this book is written from the contrarian point of view. The “experts” claim that consistently winning news exposure is a sophisticated art form. In fact, some like to call it “the art of spin.” Specialists in the field are referred to as “spinmeisters” or “spin-doctors.” They belong to an elite club that charges high prices for its services. One such expert wrote a book about his spinning exploits, and in the preface he warned his readers that it takes “years of studying, more years of understanding, and still more time to refine your own style and skills.” He claimed that it's a “business of subtleties—and it is one's ability to appreciate those subtleties that often makes the difference between winning and losing in the court of public opinion.” To that I respectfully say, “HOGWASH!”

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not calling this gentleman a liar. He truly believes that effectively utilizing the power of the

press demands the skill of a high-wire performer. That's because he has spent a lot of time working through his own intricate, subtle, highly complex way of managing all the minutiae of the PR business. Through the years, he has developed a fine, *intuitive* sense of how to get the most out of news reporters. It works for him, but then again, his entire life is devoted to "spinning." You, however, do not have the time, the resources, or the patience to learn how to become a *publicity artist*. But more importantly, it's completely unnecessary. Forget complexity, and forget paying high-priced spin doctors, while you're at it. You don't need them.

What you do need is a *systematic* understanding of how all publicity works. You need something easy to learn, easy to remember, and easy to apply. You need the Media Rules methodology, fundamental truth that will enable you quickly to work your way through virtually any publicity situation.

## Why the Media Rules Work

Think about the activities of life in their most basic terms. So much of what we do is centered on acquiring knowledge and then using it to make our lives better. Put another way: learn it, use it, and get good at it. Oh, if it were only that easy. Wouldn't you like to "know" everything you ever "learned"? How much material from that biology class do you remember? How about those geometry formulas? The fact of the matter is most of us have lost far more knowledge than we have retained. Learning isn't the problem—it's keeping the learning that's so difficult.

It is estimated that 90 percent of people who take short-term seminars never apply what they learn. The same is true for those who read self-help books. The roots of this problem are obvious. First, attempting to absorb a massive amount of new information in a short period of time doesn't work. It's like the college student

who crams all night. He passes the test, but within a week his short-term memory has dumped the information, and 98 percent of it is gone forever. Second, a significant majority of books and seminars offer up a lot of new information that is delivered in the form of long lists of dos, don'ts, tips, and strategies. There are no reference points for this new knowledge—no skeleton upon which to attach the information. And because this “learning” is not connected in a systematic, logical fashion, bits and pieces begin to float away. They are quickly booted out of your brain space by other, more immediate concerns. It's a downward spiral from there. Because the information fragments so quickly, there is little opportunity to actually put the theory into practice. You don't use it, so you lose it.

The Media Rules methodology avoids these problems because it does not require you to learn a lot of new, disconnected information. This is stuff you already know. You just need a little help in looking at publicity from a different angle. Once you witness how the Rules work, you will wonder how you could have missed seeing what now appears to be so obvious. Best of all, the Media Rules do not stand alone. They are part of a network. Each Rule reinforces all the others, making them easier to remember. And that's the key. Because you retain the Rules, you use the Rules. The more you apply the system, the more it becomes ingrained in the way you think. Ultimately, you won't have to think about the Rules much at all because you will view all publicity opportunities through this framework. The big payoff is that your systematic knowledge will be more powerful and effective than the intuition of all those so-called “spin doctors.”

## **The Belly of the Beast**

There are four vulnerabilities common to all news outlets. These are the forces that drive the wants, needs, and desires of the News Beast.

As you will see in chapter 1, the Beast is Handicapped, Harried, Hungry, and Human. These key weaknesses—the soft underbelly of an industry that doesn't want you to know how vulnerable it really is—have a tremendous impact on how journalists do their jobs.

Once you have a good understanding of the Beast's instinctual drive, you will have no difficulty recognizing and using the Rules to feed this fascinating creature. Even though few journalists consciously recognize the Media Rules, they obediently follow them nonetheless. It's kind of like having a diagram of the Beast's hot buttons. Push this one to get a reporter's undivided attention. Push that one to become his friend. Avoid that one at all costs because it will bring down his wrath.

The Media Rules fit into four categories: Seducers, Enablers, Aggressors, and Hazards. The Seducers are the three basic elements that attract all journalists. Yes, there are *only* three. The Enablers are the three rules that must be followed to put the Seducers to work. Remember, the system is *active*. The Aggressors are the three principles that any publicity seeker needs to follow *consistently* to generate free exposure. That's the value of having a system—it can be used over and over again. Finally, the Hazards are the three troubleshooters that will help you evade *bad* publicity. In those cases where it cannot be avoided, a good grasp of the Hazards will greatly minimize the damage. As an added bonus, the same Rules that get you great publicity also show you how to deliver excellent soundbites and quotes.

How about it? What do you say we meet the Beast? Don't worry. All that roaring you hear is the product of myth, mystery, and misconception.