

Foreign Media Relations Guide



BUSINESS FOR DIPLOMATIC ACTION

Building New Bridges to The World

www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org

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Preface

The reputation of America among the six billion people who live outside the U.S.A. is shaped by more than foreign policy. Other factors include the actions of U.S. corporations that operate in international markets, the famous product brands they market and the ubiquity of American movies, TV programs and music. These are potent influences as are the impressions left by individual Americans who make 60 million trips abroad each year, on business and pleasure.

The mission of Business for Diplomatic Action is to enlist the U.S. business community in actions to improve the standing of America in the world today. We have already taken steps to encourage citizen diplomacy by the production of “World Citizens Guides” which have been widely acclaimed. The success of the first guide, for college students traveling abroad, was followed by a guide for business travelers. Already, more than 800 companies have distributed this guide to their globe-trotting executives who can help the image of our country while traveling for their companies.

To make further strides in improving America’s reputation, U.S. business can deploy its considerable communications skills and public relations resources when working with the foreign media—that critical group of journalists who shape impressions of America among audiences abroad. By ensuring access, cooperation and a flow of vital information to foreign journalists based in the U.S. and in their home countries around the world, American companies can help protect and promote their own interests and, at the same time, enhance America’s standing in the world. That is the purpose of this short guide, which draws on

the expert advice of communications professionals in corporations that are recognized as “best in class.” Reading the guide will show that a few simple activities and policies can make a significant difference—for the better. We hope that more corporations will be encouraged to pay close attention to establishing good relations with the foreign media and see measurable benefits as a result, for themselves and for America.

The idea for the guide came from Michael Morley, a member of the Board of Directors of Business for Diplomatic Action. I am grateful to Michael for this inspiration and for his acting as editor. Readers will benefit from his 40 years of experience as an international PR counselor to Fortune 500 corporations and as author of the book “How to Manage Your Global Reputation.” I also thank UPS for their support for this initiative and for underwriting the cost of printing and distribution.

We hope you will learn from and profit from the advice that follows and we invite you to share with us your own media experiences and successes which can be included in future editions.

Keith Reinhard,
President
Business for Diplomatic Action

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To learn more about BDA and how you can help, go to www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org or contact Cari Eggspuehler at Cari.Eggspuehler@sf.ddb.com.

Foreign Media Relations Guide for U.S. Corporations
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Introduction

It is as important for multinational corporations to cultivate strong relationships with non-U.S. media as it is for them to maintain good relations with local newspapers, television affiliates, *Business Week* magazine, *The Wall Street Journal*, and relevant trade journals. Having strong relationships with members of the press who are based in—or otherwise represent—the markets where a company does business, enhances corporate reputation, facilitates a company’s recruitment efforts, turbocharges marketing and business development, and strengthens consumer confidence. Poor media relations can lead to lack of knowledge about a company and put it at a competitive disadvantage.

According to soundings taken by Business for Diplomatic Action (BDA), some American-based multinational companies do an excellent job of maintaining relationships with members of the media in all markets. Others get a failing grade.

Why?

Limited resources and inexperienced professionals contribute to the problem. So too does the fact that it’s daunting to deal with people who don’t speak the same language and are unfamiliar and maybe mysterious.

The purpose of this guide is to demystify for U.S. corporate media representatives the practice of media relations with non-U.S. media. It offers counsel on how to manage a company’s reputation on a multinational basis through sound media relations. The information is based on the experience of companies that have mastered the art—companies that are conducting, according to their peers and members of the media themselves, “best practice” international media relations.

“Misunderstanding exists in many countries in people’s perceptions of business and how companies work. I believe media relations professionals have an important and necessary role to play here.”

Robert Grupp, Vice President, Corporate & Public Affairs, Cephalon, Inc
2007 President-Elect, International Public Relations Association

Relations With Foreign Media

There is little difference between dealing with American and foreign media. **Everything you practice on a daily basis with U.S. media applies to the international media too.** Clear writing, respect for deadlines, facts not fluff, responsiveness, knowing what the publication and journalist are interested in and routinely cover are essential elements to a successful foreign media relations program too. If you’re doing this, you are three quarters of the way there, but the final quarter needs careful handling.

This involves understanding customs, cultures and media conventions in many nations and the ability to adapt and customize your strategies, programs and materials to meet the needs of local media in multiple locations.

The next sections will help you do this.

The most successful American-based multinational corporations know that the creation of strong public and media relations is achieved by establishing professionally managed units in each of the regions and countries in which it has facilities or sales operations.

“We have media professionals in each main market and also at a regional level.”

Perry Yeatman, Vice President of Global External Communications, Kraft

This involves hiring individuals who understand the customs, culture, and language of the local market and preferably have their own network of connections with members of the media and other influencers. They are, or will become the face and voice of the corporation in each territory.

Not all corporations, however, can support a full time in-house PR unit in every market; a good alternative is to use the services of outside PR Counsel combined with company executives trained to deal with the media.

At the same time, the public relations team at the company's headquarters also should maintain **direct** relationships with select media, particularly:

1. Foreign correspondents in the United States who cover the company's important markets around the world.
2. Editors and industry beat reporters based in foreign markets.

There are two reasons why this is important. First, regional and local managers of MNCs are rotated or change and this policy ensures continuity. Second, it's important for key media to be aware of the company's global operations and not see it solely through the prism of a local subsidiary which may not be representative of the full range of its activities.

In today's global village it is important not to underestimate the potential of foreign media coverage to influence sentiment in the U.S.A. It is not uncommon for an article in a little-known publication in say, Asia, to attract attention of investors and cause movement of the stock price.

“As a company with a strong global presence, it is essential for us to show the foreign media not only the UPS they know at home, but our company’s operations on a global scale.”

Ken Sternad, Vice President of Public Relations, UPS

Members of these two groups should be invited on familiarization trips to the company’s United States facilities, receive tailor-made press releases and be invited to meet the CEO and other senior members of management when the latter travel.

Their names and contact information should be consolidated in a database, which serves as a dynamic tool for managing relationships. A database is an important tool because regional and local managers of multinational companies change frequently and a central record of all contacts ensures continuity. Different countries have different rules about protecting the privacy of information in databases, so companies should make sure they are aware of and following all local rules.

Who's Who in the Foreign Media

Wire Services

Wire services are the mainstay of international news. Many smaller news organizations depend on them for international news coverage. Larger outlets combine wire service reports with dispatches from their own correspondents.

Foreign/International News Editor

Based at the publication's home base, the foreign news editor assigns stories to the foreign bureaus and chooses which stories to run.

Foreign Bureaus

Foreign bureaus are the U.S.-based offices of foreign news operations. (Similarly, foreign-based offices of U.S. news organizations are called foreign bureaus too.) Some news organizations have offices in New York and Washington, D.C., but rely on stringers, or much smaller offices, to cover news in other U.S. cities, while others use just one or two reporters to cover all the beats (politics, business, sports, and entertainment) across the whole country.

Foreign Bureau Chief

Foreign bureau chiefs delegate responsibilities to their correspondents, ultimately basing their coverage selection on feedback from correspondents in the field, their editors "at home" and their own assessment of the news. Many foreign bureaus are small, so most bureau chiefs act not only as manager but also chief correspondent.

Foreign Correspondents

Foreign correspondents generally work for a wire service or a specific news outlet and are stationed in a particular market, often for

several years, so building relationships can be a worthwhile investment of time and effort.

Stringers/Freelance Correspondents

Stringers are paid by the story or by the word. Stringers, sometimes referred to as freelance correspondents, do not work for one specific news organization; rather, they have arrangements with one or several for which they produce most of their work.

Parachute Journalists

Parachute journalists, on the staff of a publication, live in their home markets and travel abroad for short periods of time to report major foreign events.

Press Corps

The press corps is a term used to describe accredited political reporters who observe and report speeches and events from the press galleries in the White House and Congress. The term can also be used to describe any group of reporters who cover a specific political figure, company, industry or issue on a regular basis.

Press Clubs

Press clubs are associations that encourage communication among journalists and promote journalistic standards. The Overseas Press Club serves foreign journalists working in the United States by connecting journalists with local newsmakers. Most countries have their own press clubs. In certain countries, press clubs regulate communications with the media. In Japan, for example, press clubs representing various special branches of journalists act as gatekeepers between corporate representatives and the media. It is best to work through these clubs when planning a press conference because the club selects the date and venue and issues the invitation to its members.

Working With Media

There are several simple rules to keep in mind when interacting with editors and journalists working for foreign media. Many of these tips may seem obvious but they often are overlooked. Following them will help you build trust-based, long-lasting relationships.

1. Remember the time difference

Newspapers in foreign markets are in widely different time zones. Australia, for example, is fourteen hours ahead of New York. So a press release sent to an Australian newspaper on a 5:00 pm New York embargo for the next morning's news will be published in that same day's Australian morning news, several hours before you intended your release to hit the American press. If your release is time-sensitive, an oversight like this one can cost your company dearly and could antagonize U.S.-based media. It is far safer to embargo your news for a specific time (i.e., 6:00am Eastern Time or 3:00pm Central European Time).

2. Be aware of language and cultural nuances

“We’re going to blow them out of the water,” an American businessman told his Japanese client during a presentation.

“What water?” the man replied. Avoid slang and jargon. Write simple and concise English. If possible, have spokespeople who can communicate in the language of your principal foreign market.

“In each of the 119 countries where we operate, McDonald’s has a strong local identity. Our franchisees, vendors, managers and employees are all locals and they are our spokespeople.”

Jack Daly, Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations, McDonald’s

3. Tailor public relations materials

Be aware of the meaning of your company logos, pictures and designs in different markets. Images that are mainstream in American culture can hold entirely different meanings in foreign cultures. For example, a promotional illustration for a sunglasses company in Thailand showed a group of cute animals wearing sunglasses. However, in the Thai culture, animals are considered a base form of life and no self-respecting Thai would ever wear sunglasses worn by an animal. Needless to say, the promotion failed.

4. Cater to local interests

Customize your news announcement to make it interesting and relevant to the audience the news organization serves.

“Think ‘local’ then ‘global’ when developing your pitch – not the other way around.”

Perry Yeatman, Vice President of Global Public Relations, Kraft

5. Use pictures rather than words

Pictures are often more compelling than words, especially when communicating with a journalist for whom English is a second language.

6. Familiarize yourself with key media

A corporation’s public relations specialist should get to know the foreign bureau editors, correspondents, and reporters specializing in the company’s industry. Establish a relationship of trust as you would with national media.

“Build relationships: if you visit their market, make contact. If they visit your market, offer an opportunity to meet with them, if possible.”

John Flick, Director of International Public Relations, UPS

7. Provide access to management

Afford foreign media access to your CEO and other top management just as you do for U.S. media.

“Providing foreign-based reporters and editors with the opportunity to talk with your top company leaders (and prioritizing your managements’ tight schedules when necessary to make these interviews possible) is absolutely critical to ensure that media understand your business. By taking a truly global approach to allocation of senior management media time with the journalists who can help to convey your messages to key audiences, you will build important relationships and help ensure well-informed coverage of your company.”

Matt Pilla, Group Manager of Worldwide Public Relations, Microsoft

8. Organize interviews with management when traveling (before, during, and after)

When your CEO or other senior managers travel abroad, arrange interviews with key local and trade media in the countries they are visiting. Make this a policy and ensure that it is carried out consistently.

9. Plan familiarization trips

Invite key media to visit your headquarters in the United States and major facilities abroad to give them an understanding of your company’s geographic reach and full scope of activities. Make sure to observe local laws and rules governing payment of expenses.

10. Schedule open days

Open your offices, as well as manufacturing and R&D facilities, to press visitors. Provide guided tours and access to executives for briefings/interviews.

11. Arrange annual press briefings

At home and in strategic markets abroad, provide statistics on your company's performance and upcoming developments.

"We urge our clients to widen their array of spokespeople beyond management to include consumers and employees with first hand knowledge of the company's products and corporate practices. This is the way to build strong relationships of trust with journalists of all nations."

Richard Edelman, CEO, Edelman

12. Work with press clubs

Press clubs exist for every major media market. They can be an efficient entry point through which you can reach many media outlets simultaneously.

13. Place yourself in the position of the foreign correspondent

What would you expect from a company's media relations professional? Follow through.

"Take us seriously. Don't assume we don't know anything about your company because we have usually done our homework. Nor are we only interested in your company's business in our home country. Finally, don't be averse to granting an interview with your CEO."

Martin Dowideit, U.S. Business Correspondent for Die Welt and Welt am Sonntag

"Too often, responses are slow or I am told the CEO is too busy to talk to me. This attitude has colored the tone of my reporting."

Journalist from major Chinese daily newspaper

14. Internationalize your website

Make sure your website leads media visitors to the different language versions, especially the information available in the “newsroom” section.

15. Keep track of new media trends

Work with the new media and bloggers overseas. Some countries (e.g. Korea) are ahead of the U.S.A. in this regard while other important markets are catching up or just starting. Keep track of changes.

Resources

1. PRSA International Professional Interest Section

<http://www.prsa.org/About/Leadership/intdesk.asp>

The Public Relations Society of America's International Section "serves and advances the professional needs and interests of PRSA members engaged in international practice and provides a forum and network for the exchange of information for professionals worldwide."

The Public Relations Society of America

Tel: (212) 460-1403 or (212) 460-1459

exec@prsa.org

resources@prsa.org

2. Council of Public Relations Firms

<http://www.prfirms.org>

The Council of Public Relations is the trade association for nearly 100 PR firms of all sizes in the United States; it sets industry guidelines and best practices. Member firms participate in benchmarking studies, roundtable discussions and leadership forums.

The Council's "Find-A-Firm" searchable database (www.prfirms.org) links to Council members who can advise on international media relations practices.

Tel: (877) PRFIRMS (877-773-4767)

Kathy Cripps

President

kcripps@prfirms.org

3. International Public Relations Association (IPRA)

<http://www.ipra.org>

IPRA is a network of more than 1,000 PR professionals worldwide. The organization can provide your company with information on specific international locations and region-

specific media relations tips from professionals throughout the world.

Tel: +44 1483 280 130

Secretariat@ipra.org

4. World Association of Newspapers (WAN), World Press Trends

<http://www.wan-press.org>

The World Association of Newspapers includes 72 national newspaper associations, individual newspaper executives in 100 nations, 13 news agencies, and nine regional press organizations, representing more than 18,000 publications on five continents.

World Press Trends is the annual report by the World Association of Newspapers. It contains information on every country where newspapers are published, 208 in all, providing a broad picture of the global press industry with unusual and interesting facts about newspapers throughout the world. This report is available to members only.

Tel: +33 1 47 42 85 00

contact_us@wan.asso.fr

5. Bacon's International

<http://www.bacons.com/bacons-international.asp>

Bacon's provides its member with the contact information for journalists writing for major news organizations throughout the world as well as basic media monitoring services.

Tel: (866) 639-5087

Visit the website to send an e-mail.

6. PR Newswire

<http://www.prnewswire.com/> - "International" tab

PR Newswire International can translate and distribute releases on behalf of your company

and charges per word.
intl_info@prnewswire.com

7. Businesswire

<http://home.businesswire.com>

A wire service providing “full-text breaking news releases, multimedia, and regulatory filings for companies and groups throughout the world,” Businesswire maintains relationships with more than 60 media services worldwide. Like PR Newswire, your company can release its materials to the media through Businesswire for a set fee.

Tel: (415) 986-4422

Toll Free: (888) 381-WIRE (9473)

8. The NewsMarket

<http://www.thenewsmarket.com/>

The News Market stores and delivers web based video and photos to 9,000 media outlets in 144 countries throughout the world. For a set fee, your company can release information to the media through this wire service.

Toll free (U.S.A.): (888) 887-0886

Tel: (212) 497-9022

sales@thenewsmarket.com

9. Medialink

<http://www.us.medialink.com>

Medialink delivers video news releases worldwide and monitors coverage of your company in the global press, providing “strategies and solutions that enable corporations and organizations to reach target audiences with maximum impact on television, radio, print, and the Internet.” The London office coordinates the global release of media materials.

Tel: +44 20 7554 2700
For the U.S. Office: (800) 843-0677
contact@europe.medialink.com

10. PIMS

<http://www.pimsinc.com/>

PIMS is a production and distribution service for PR and marketing professionals, which delivers your news releases and promotional materials to the foreign press.

Tel: (212) 279-5112
info@pimsinc.com

11. Institute for Public Relations

instituteforpr.org

The most authoritative and comprehensive source for information on PR tools for measurement and evaluation.

Frank Ovaitt
CEO
Tel: (703) 568-5611
iprceo@jou.ufl.edu

12. International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)

<http://www.iabc.com/>

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) provides members a professional network of more than 13,000 business communication professionals in over 60 countries. The IABC web site offers a library of how-to articles and case studies of communication tips.

Tel: (415) 544-4700
Toll Free: (800) 776-4222
service_centre@iabc.com

13) Your Public Relations Agency

Your public relations company may have a proprietary media database with contact information for foreign journalists.

Media Centers

1. Overseas Press Club of America

<http://www.opcofamerica.org/>

The Overseas Press Club of America, founded in New York City by a group of foreign correspondents, seeks to “maintain an international association of journalists working in the United States and abroad.”

Tel: (212) 626-9220

Visit the website to get in contact with the OPC of America.

2. Foreign Press Association

<http://www.nyforeignpress.org/>

The Foreign Press Association of New York is a nonprofit, independent organization of correspondents based in the United States, claiming over 400 members from 50 different countries. The group connects journalists and takes actions on their behalf, as well as keeps them in contact with “American life and opinion.”

Tel: (212) 370-1054

Suzanne Adams

Director

3. International Association of Press Clubs (IAPC)

<http://www.iapcworld.org/>

The IAPC creates a network for Press Clubs, Foreign Correspondents’ Clubs and International Press Centers worldwide to communicate and provide information to member journalists.

Tel: +971 4 361 6666

Zeba Ahmad

IAPC Coordinator

Zeba.Ahmad@dpc.org.ae

4. International Center for Journalists

<http://www.icfj.org/>

The International Journalists' Network (IJNet) assists the media community worldwide. It is an online service for journalists, media managers, media professionals, journalism trainers and educators.

IJNet completes media training for journalists who are stationed throughout the world, working for news organizations in and outside of the United States.

Tel: (202) 737-3700
editor@icfj.org

Third Parties

If you are just beginning to plan outreach to international media, there are places you can go to for help.

1. Foreign Press Centers

<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/c4696.htm>

Through the U.S. State Department, Foreign Press Centers assist foreign correspondents based in Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles. Locally funded International Press Centers are also located in Chicago, Seattle, Houston, Atlanta, and Cleveland. The FPCs assist journalists in obtaining interviews with U.S. “news makers and experts.”

2. U.S. Embassies

American embassies have relations with local media and may be able to provide you with the contact information for important journalists.

3. Trade Associations

Trade associations associated with your business often have sophisticated media departments with international reach to assist member corporations.

4. The United Nations

<http://www.un.org/media/accreditation/index.htm>

The UN provides a free list of journalists accredited to the United Nations. You can search it to identify journalists in markets of interest.

Gary Fowlie

Chief, Media Accreditation & Liaison Unit

Tel: (212) 963-6934

(212) 963-6937

Fax: (212) 963-4642

Measuring Success

All media outreach programs should be evaluated. Several services can track coverage of your company in the international press, using the data to fine tune or change your messaging for maximum effectiveness:

1. Echo

<http://www.echoresearch.com>

Echo is a firm of global specialists in reputation research and analysis, enabling client organizations to measure how they are viewed.

Catherine Reynolds-Shores
Senior Vice President
Tel: (646) 495-5416
catherineR@echoresearch.com

2. Carma International

<http://www.carma.com/>

Carma specializes in worldwide media content analysis and evaluation.

Jennifer Hoffmann
CARMA Vice President
Tel: (212) 460-5791
jhoffmann@carma.com

3. Delahaye

<http://www.delahaye.com/>

Delahaye helps companies “understand and improve their reputations, plan and evaluate their communications programs” through international media analysis.

Jack Serpa
Senior Vice President, Sales
Tel: (212) 299-4990
sales@delahaye.com

4. BIZ 360

<http://www.biz360.com/>

Biz 360 gathers and analyzes information, including international media coverage, about an organization, its brands, its competitors, and its products.

Tel: (650) 645-2400
bizinfo@biz360.com

5. Cymfony

<http://www.cymfony.com/>

Cymfony, Inc., a software company, scans and interprets articles in the media, analyzing market influence using human and computer automated technologies.

Tel: (617) 673-6000

6. Your News Distribution Service

Basic media content analysis is also available from news distribution services, such as Bacon's or Medialink.

Notes

What They Are Saying About This Guide.....

“...Required reading for anyone who is or is thinking of working with the international media. It will be required of all my students - undergraduate or graduate - in their media relations coursework...”

Professor Don Stacks, School of Communication, University of Miami and 2007 U.S.A. Chair, IPRA

“...good commonsense advice...”

Dick Martin, author of “Rebuilding Brand America”

“...direct, clear advice on a vital component in building reputation and trust with international stakeholders...”

Richard Edelman, CEO Edelman

“...very good and worthwhile...”

Kathy Cripps, President, Council of PR Firms

“...The resources and best practices identified are important tools for every international practitioner. This reference guide is definitely on the “required reading” list...”

Carolyn Raffia Fazio, CEO, Fazio International Ltd., 2006 Chair, PRSA International Section and Past President IPRA.

“...helpful media relations resource...”

Public Relations Society of America

“...practical, direct, chock full of good advice about operating in the global village while still taking into account the local nature of media relations...”

Helen Ostrowski, CEO, Porter Novelli

“In an increasingly complex global marketplace where information travels around the world and back in a heartbeat, this booklet from Business for Diplomatic Action is a great resource for communicators. It offers sound, practical advice that any company can use to deliver its messages more effectively.”

John D. Graham, Chairman, Fleishman-Hillard International Communications

“...A mandatory read for ANY professional who has a connection with media. There are no borders anymore!...”

MaryLee Sachs, U.S. Chairman and Worldwide Director of Marketing Communications, Hill & Knowlton

Ten Golden Rules

1. Remember journalists have a demanding and often difficult job to do. Make their work easier.
2. Return calls.
3. Be accurate, clear, and concise.
4. Brief the press when any major event occurs within your company.
5. Listen to journalists and make your best effort to comply with their requests.
6. Check announcements for clarity and cultural nuances; make sure to take different time zones into account.
7. Make management accessible.
8. Arrange regular visits to your offices, and R&D and manufacturing facilities.
9. Get to know the foreign press clubs.
10. Build personal relationships with foreign editors and correspondents.

Seven Deadly Sins

1. Unresponsiveness.
2. Trade jargon and slang.
3. Treating foreign journalists with disdain.
4. Treating foreign journalists as secondary citizens.
5. Assuming foreign journalists are hostile.
6. Bluffing, snowing, spinning.
7. Providing misleading or incomplete information in crisis situations.

