



Who participated

What we asked

The results

Media's comments

Q + A

**2006/07 Media Report Card
on Canadian Business**



Porter Novelli Canada and CNW Group sent e-mails to journalists across Canada working in every area of the business: editors, writers, TV and radio journalists, producers, freelancers, Internet media and publishers.



Participants were asked to link to our Web site and respond to a series of questions with Grades: A (exceptional), B (very good), C (satisfactory), D (unsatisfactory) or F (Fail).

Participants also had the opportunity to comment in their own words on how to improve the status quo. About 200 journalists participated in the survey.



How well do Canadian businesses understand the media and the way reporters work on a day-to-day basis?

A 0%

B 9%

C 52%

D 34%

F 5%

Combining Ds and Fs = 39% Unsatisfactory



How would you rate the job that companies do in providing access to executives for interviews or comment?

A 0%

B 13%

C 55%

D 28%

F 4%

Combining Ds and Fs = 32% Unsatisfactory



Is the level of access to CEOs and senior executives improving or getting worse?

Improving	9%
Getting Worse	25%
The Same	57%
No Sure	9%



In your experience, how honest are company spokespeople with the media?

A 1%

B 14%

C 54%

D 25%

F 6%

**Combining Ds and Fs = 31% Unsatisfactory
(Versus 37% 2004/05)**



How trustworthy is the financial and corporate information provided by Canadian companies?

A 1%

B 18%

C 64%

D 14%

F 3%

**Combining Ds and Fs = 17% Unsatisfactory
(Versus 35% in 2004/05)**



Overall, how well do businesses meet the needs of journalists in providing useful and accurate information?

A 0%

B 10%

C 57%

D 29%

F 4%

Combining Ds and Fs = 33% Unsatisfactory



How well do businesses respect your deadlines?

A 1%

B 11%

C 43%

D 34%

F 11%

Combining Ds and Fs = 45% Unsatisfactory



Rate the overall quality of releases that you receive in a typical business day?

A 1%

B 15%

C 57%

D 21%

F 6%

**Combining Ds and Fs = 27% Unsatisfactory
(Versus 40% in 2004/05)**



How often do you change the angle of press releases that you receive to make the information more newsworthy?

Always 43%

Sometimes 43%

Rarely 9%

Never 5%

Always + Sometimes = 86% (Versus 90%)



**How much time do you spend online daily
on average?**

Less than 1 hour	6%
More than 1 hour	28%
More than two hours	34%
More than three hours	32%

Journalists online two hours or more daily = 66%
(Versus 57% 2004/05)



How do you prefer to receive information being distributed by companies?

E-mail with copy	70%
E-mail + Web site link	12%
Fax	4%
News wire	10%
Mail	2%
Phone call	2%



How often do you refer to a corporate blog as an information resource?

Daily	1%
Weekly	4%
Occasionally	34%
Never	60%



How much influence do you think blogs have with the media today?

None	1%
Very Little	36%
Some	59%
Significant	4%

Some + Significant = 63% or about 2 in 3.



Which methods should companies be using more to communicate or to launch products/services?

VNR	59%
Staged media events	55%
Podcasts	36%
Desk-side briefings	30%
Media tours	12%
Celebrity spokespeople	4%
Blogs	1%



What mistakes do company spokespeople make most often when dealing with the media?

“Not being truthful . . . Not returning phone calls . . . Being unprepared to talk about details.”

“Too much technical talk, jargon, corporate speak.”

“Issuing releases that are not targeted enough or that are not relevant to my specific audience. ”



“Not understanding the importance of giving good quotes or the importance of knowing and respecting our deadlines.”

“Making it difficult to reach the key people who can really speak to a matter or an issue. Stonewalling instead of giving us information.”

“Not answering direct questions with **DIRECT ANSWERS!”**



“Not being able to answer the questions of Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.”

“Not returning calls, or calling after deadline or the next day. Then getting mad that their side was not presented in that day’s coverage.”

“Not having information at hand. It’s bad when you know more than the PR people about a story or issue you are covering.”



“Not considering the medium. TV needs visuals, not just a talking head.”

“Trying to tell reporters what the story IS, and becoming inflexible when reporters wish to pursue other angles.”

“Being more concerned with obstruction than with providing information.”

“No sense of what I cover or what kind of stories my paper is interested in.”



Some general comments from journalists on how well companies deal with the media today:

“Most companies could use a good tutorial in news release writing.”

“CEOs and CFOs generally do not understand the needs of the media. Corporate Canada needs to do a much better job in media relations and public disclosure.”

“Please provide media friendly Web sites with contact information and corporate history.”



“Governments, companies and organizations should stop trying to ‘manage’ the media, and simply provide accurate and contextual information and answers to requests and questions. If the news is good, bad or indifferent, so be it – don’t try to hide it.”

“Research, target and understand what we want to cover as a publication, then develop relationships with publications and editors that create win-win propositions and editorial possibilities.”



“Larger companies do fairly well in responding to media, while mid-size and smaller firms try to angle stories into ad copy.”

“Business spokespeople need to better understand the media and rid themselves of the paranoia that the media are out to get them.”

“Judging by the nature and quality of news releases that reach me, there must be something very, very wrong with the PR programs in our universities and colleges. Somebody ought to stand up and shout: The emperor has no clothes!”



“Regarding releases: the new trend seems to be to make absolutely sure that the spokesperson listed as contact is NOT AVAILABLE when reporters get the release.”

“Communications pros need to get back to basics: writing better and tighter releases that are less focused on corporate lingo and that quickly and concisely convey key messages.”

“Stop trying to act like media people. Trying to pass off podcasts, video releases, blogs as NEWS makes me distrust them automatically. Stick to your job, I’ll stick to mine.”



How can we give journalists what they want?

- 1. Know and respect their deadlines.**
- 2. Be accessible: Are there opportunities for senior executives to provide comment?**
- 3. Provide useful information. Is there a link to the current news agenda or to a trend?**
- 4. Be honest. If you cannot provide info, explain why. If a mistake has been made, respond quickly, honestly and frequently with accurate information.**



5. Build relationships: This creates goodwill and improves the quality of dialogue between an organization and the individual players working in the media.

6. Headline your two or three key messages so the reporter knows what is the most important information.

7. Deliver your messages in conversational English rather than as well-written prose that can make reporters work too hard to decipher your message.



8. Lifestyle or business pitch? Tailor your message to address the media outlet's audience. Provide a clear idea of why the message will be of great interest to that specific audience.

9. Use thoughtful and insightful quotes, examples, facts and figures, anecdotes.

10. You have a great new product or service? Try to include customer quotes – even contact info - that will resonate with audiences. Make the story relevant in the 'real world.'



Q + A

