

PR practitioners should focus on pitching newsworthy stories instead of being friends with journalists

By [Kabelo Chabalala](#)

17 Aug 2023

The phrase "Public Relations (PR) professionals need to build meaningful relationships with journalists based on mutual respect and trust" can be misleading. In fact, many PR practitioners miss the mark when it comes to writing newsworthy press releases because of "putting meaningful relationships" above writing newsworthy press releases.



Source: www.unsplash.com

In my years of juggling a PR and journalism career side-by-side, all a good PR professional needs to do is share a newsworthy story with the relevant journalist(s) to get it published. I believe that you don't have to build any meaningful relationship with any journalist or editor to get a newsworthy story published.

High regard

A newsworthy story will always be worth publishing, relationship or not.

Any editor or journalist will hold a PR specialist who shares newsworthy press releases in high regard without even having them on their WhatsApp contacts.

This oversold idea of building relationships above writing and sharing relevant information with journalists leads to many PR Practitioners needing to differentiate an entertainment reporter from a business reporter. You end up sending everyone everything without considering its relevance to their daily outputs as journalists.



A golden opportunity for African professionals to set prices to reflect their value

16 Aug 2023



Some people believe you need to ask the journalists what kind of stories resonate with or interest them. That only requires you to have a relationship with someone to understand if they are new in the game. A quick Google search about a journalist will give an idea of what they specialise in.

Flowery copy

Generally, journalists are interested in stories more than relationships, except for political reporters (the least favourites and probably unnecessarily praised). That will be a discussion for another day.

There must be prominence on PR professionals being aware of what is the story in the content they want to share with journalists. If it is a story they want to see on the website of a reputable news home page or the physical pages of a newspaper, it must be worth the time. Write it well but remember that the journalist would want to know the five Ws and H in the first and second paragraphs.

But if you concentrate on writing flowery copy, it will always lead to you bringing flowers and bottles to newsrooms, always trying to build relationships, but the real story ship would have long sailed.

Media relationships with PR professionals should be about good stories that journalists will happily interrogate and find worthy of publishing. In that way, relationships are about the work and not trying to solicit favours to get non-stories published.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kabelo Chabalala is an author of two non-fiction books, a radio host, copywriter and a villager at heart. He has worked as a PR professional at Duma Collective and Primedia Broadcasting.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>