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A Company Story Must Carry Impingement Value to Obtain Widespread Publicity

1477

What brings the media to your company door? Why do some stories appear in print, while others get lost in the shuffle? How can you impinge upon a reporter to make him or her eager to interview you?

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In two previous columns, we talked about how quality management attracts Publicity, or PR. Nearly every company is constantly trying to attract the attention of the media. What brings the media to a company door? That what every public relations man or woman would love to know. For this is what PR people get paid to obtain for their clients.

Quality management is certainly a key motivation in attracting a reporter attention. This helps persuade the reporter or a radio/TV producer that the proposed interview isn't going to be with someone who has "nothing to say?or just rehashing a clich?or tired, old story. The higher the title and the better known a company, the greater the "impingement?a PR pitch (that what publicity people use to sell a reporter) impacts upon a member of the media. If someone from the publicity department at Microsoft calls Fortune magazine to ask about profiling Bill Gates, the pitch will have major impingement value. Few names have this kind of clout, either personally or corporately.

In any event, the senior editor of the major magazine will still inquire about the story angle. The editor will want to know, "What are we going to talk about??Ultimately, it is the outstanding story that sells magazines or newspapers, not just the big name. Not all such stories involve a big name speaking or spouting his thoughts for the day. Often, better stories evolve when there is a strong newsworthy angle. Let look at two recent stories ?one which involves a uranium company and another one about a coalbed methane (CBM) company, which we've covered in this column.

On Thursday, Pacific Asia China Energy (PACE) was featured in the Financing section of Canada Globe and Mail newspaper. Headlined "High-Energy Performer,"the opening sentences told us why the reporter was interested: "PACE holds contracts to help China explore for and develop its coalbed methane (CBM) resources ?fuel China needs to help satisfy its energy demands.?"

The big story, which drew the newspaper to Pacific Asia China Energy, was China. PACE piggybacked that story because the company may be helping to offer a legitimate solution to the country energy mix. Part of the big story is the possible size of the recoverable gas, estimated in a technical report by Sproule International to be as large as 11.2 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Those two items enhanced the reporter interest in PACE. China needs alternative energy sources, such as CBM, to improve their energy mix ?from a near total dependence upon coal. And, PACE has a potentially huge resource, which could last a good number of years. Such a gas resource could be sufficiently large to make an impact on China. After all, China has proven reserves of a little more than 30 trillion cubic feet. Another 11 trillion cubic feet, should the potential be proven up, would represent a significant increase of available gas in a very large country. By itself, this could later develop into a major international energy story, reported upon by a great number of news media. Another impingement about the reporter is having the satisfaction of reporting upon a good story, well before others write the story.

Chatter in the newsroom:

"Did you hear about PACE gas discovery in China, Bob??

Bob Reply: "Oh that one. Yeah, I wrote about it eight months ago!?"

Therefore, there are multiple impingement points in this story. Each "draw,?or a reason to attract eyeballs to the story, is another point the story must score, for the reporter and his editor, to overcome the hurdles of being featured in a major publication. China is a draw. The size of the PACE coalbed methane gas resource is a draw. The potential impact upon China energy mix is a draw. Writing about it before the rest of the pack jumps on the bandwagon? That a draw, too. In this case, four draws sufficiently attracted media coverage for this small CBM development company.

Sometimes, the timing is just perfect, and the overpowering "big story?accidentally introduces a lucky guy onto the world stage. On the same Thursday, the PACE story was carried in the Globe and Mail, the Chief Executive of

a tiny Canadian uranium company impinged on a Russian news service reporter in Hong Kong. Such was the good fortune for Craig Lindsay, a Certified Financial Analyst, who has spent more than 16 years in corporate finance, investment banking and business development, according to the website of Magnum Uranium, for which he now serves as Chief Executive.

While Magnum has a market capitalization of about \$15 million, and Lindsay is neither a geologist nor engineer, RIA Novosti news agency touted him as a "well-known energy expert." Admittedly, Lindsay gave a great speech at the Hong Kong Club for foreign correspondents. Cleverly, he announced, "Uranium may be the next oil," during his speech. As many other industry experts have predicted, Lindsay also forecast uranium "may hit \$50/pound by the end of the year." So many are now announcing this it is likely to become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

What elevated Lindsay publicity was not what he said in his speech. Most of his commentary has been already been reported in numerous publications, including in our columns. (What reporters really hate is rehashing old news to give someone publicity!) It was to whom Lindsay was speaking, and especially the "timing" as to when it was said. Here is how Craig Lindsay got his 15 minutes of fame.

About six hours earlier, the very same Russian news agency reported that Russia and Kazakhstan had signed a uranium deal worth \$1 billion. The photos of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev appeared as the photo op which goes with such really big stories. This was a major event involving two very big names, and among the biggest names and countries in the uranium sector. This was also Russia first contract to import uranium; Kazakhstan is the world third largest uranium producer. All of this is "big news." The clever Russian freelance reporter, who attended the Lindsay speech in Hong Kong, probably text-messaged or emailed his editor by Blackberry, tried to piggyback the Russian-Kazak story with his own story. Yes, that is how timing works. As soon as a major event takes place, other journalists rush to piggyback the event with "their" story. The Russian reporter scored points with his editor and got his story filed (slang for published).

Two cunning gentlemen, the Russian stringer (slang for freelance reporter), and Craig Lindsay (whose name was spelled Kreig Lindsay in the article), both accomplished their purposes. Mr. Lindsay got his company into the world spotlight. The Russian stringer got a great story. The reporter threw up a softball question, for which Mr. Lindsay supplied the desired answer.

What was the question the reporter asked Lindsay? That pretty obvious from what the reporter published in his article. Here is a clip from the Moscow News article:

Foreign investors are ready to invest in Russia uranium industry, if Moscow wants this to happen and establishes a necessary legal base," Lindsay said. "I believe that Russia is one of the most promising directions for this kind of investments, it is an undeveloped market, full of opportunities. My company will be the first to come to Russia, if the necessary conditions are created," he added.

Nowhere in Lindsay speech did Magnum Uranium Chief Executive discuss investing in Russia. However, the reporter NEEDED a good quote. It had to tie-in with "investing in Russia for uranium development." Lindsay accommodated. He didn't commit to investing in Russia, but he kept the door open. Magnum Uranium recently announced the acquisition of a 1,080-acre land package in Converse County, Wyoming. The company is also exploring for uranium in both Wyoming and the Athabasca Basin. Its finances are probably already stretched from both exploration and acquisition activities. Magnum market capitalization would probably be insufficient to launch investments into Russia, at this time.

However, Lindsay did a great job getting his company this caliber of publicity. And he got the uranium sector excellent publicity. He capitalized upon an impending story—a story that did show up on the world radar—by correctly supplying an answer the Russian journalist was trying to prod out of him.

This is the essence of how journalists and publicity-seekers work together. If the PR person gives the journalist the story angle he is looking for within the bigger story, chances are it will appear in print. Piggybacking a "main event" is the most common way to increase one's impingement value to a reporter. And by being a cunning interviewee for his Russian reporter, Craig Lindsay just got Magnum Uranium into this column as well!

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