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## **Working with the media: Making it work for you**

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Cultivating media relationships is often regarded by real estate agents as daunting and time-consuming; putting it at the bottom of to-do lists. However, the media - including reporters and editors, bloggers, radio and TV news producers - develops lists of reliable experts that can offer valuable insight and commentary on both local and industry-wide stories. By having positive relationships with the media, you can establish yourself as such an expert to increase your visibility in the market.

### **Pitch It!**

To get started, research your local and regional media and identify those focused on lifestyle, business, and feature stories. Introduce yourself by offering a well-crafted story pitch related to your industry. Ideas for pitches include a creative take on a hot industry topic - such as "Know This Before You Flip (a Property)" - or sharing the success story of a partner or client (with permission), like a construction project for a non-profit organization that will benefit the community.

Realtor Magazine's January 2011 edition provides this advice: "Send tips to reporters about stories that aren't about you and your business. If you send a tip about a great new architect in town, the story will be all about the architect, but you'll be quoted as someone who knows and appreciates good building design. Your credibility in the eyes of journalists and potential clients will go up another notch" (Become a Real Estate Expert in the Public Eye).

### **Make it Routine**

To integrate media relations into your busy schedule, put a weekly task on your calendar. This could be sending a pitch on Wednesday, following up by phone Monday, and emailing a statistic with local impact to a reporter the next week. Eventually, increase your tasks to two (or more) each week as you become more comfortable.

As with any relationship, being helpful, readily available, and courteous in all your media interactions will lend success. Your ability to provide factual information and your professional opinion at a moment's notice will put you at the top of the media's call list. In turn, you will become a regular, quotable source without much effort on your part - and your positive public image will increase sales and awareness for your real estate business.

Note: If you would like additional support, an integrated marketing firm can provide you with media training.

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