Helping you connect with people...
## FCSI PR Toolkit

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Dear FCSI Member

Want to be famous in hospitality and foodservice? Win extra business? Or be widely-known as the expert in your field? If the answer is yes, then read on.

We’ve compiled this PR Toolkit to help you start generating PR and reap the rewards that come with positive exposure and a raised profile for you and your business.

In straightforward, easy-to-follow steps we’ll guide you through the PR ‘dos and don’ts’, give you some tips for dealing with the media and an overview of the ever-increasing world of social media.

In short, everything you need to ‘PR’ yourself and achieve a maximum return for your business.

Good luck! We look forward to seeing, reading and hearing all about you.

Ian Hopper

FCSI Worldwide President
FCSI PR Toolkit

Section one
What Public Relations (PR) can do for you...

PR: What can it do for me?
PR will raise the profile of you and your business – making you famous for what you do best.

Whether you’ve got a great project to shout about, want to comment on the latest burning foodservice issues, or strongly disagree with another expert opinion, PR will give you the voice you need to express your views.

It will raise awareness of you and your business and:
• Make you stand out from the crowd
• Give you a voice – a platform to share your news and views
• Position you as an expert
• Generate media coverage and exposure for you and your business
• Keep you ‘top of mind’ with your audience

PR: What exactly is it?
PR is anything and everything that creates a positive impact and gets your key messages through to the public.

If you want the official line, The Institute of PR describes it as: The planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.

But we prefer to describe it as a highly credible tool that provides the right information to the right people to create a positive impact.
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Section two
PR - The basics

Understanding the media: An overview of the basics...

Mention the word journalist and a lot of people will run a mile. However, despite their reputation as creatures to be feared, most journalists are simply looking for a good story and will be pleased to receive information from you, the expert.

In this chapter, we’ll talk you through the basics - how best to make sure you’re getting the right information to the right people in the right way.
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What’s the difference between news and a feature?

Each publication, online channel and radio or TV show is made up of a mix of different types of stories. There are news stories, features, case studies, profiles and comment pieces. But what’s the difference?

**News story:** A news story announces new information. E.g. The opening of a new restaurant or the win of a new contract. It will be short, snappy and to the point, including the key facts and usually a comment from an expert.

**Feature:** A feature is an in depth look at a subject, issue or event. It will use colourful, descriptive language, and give the reader detailed information on the subject. Features are often a more in depth look at a news story, or current event.

**Case study:** A case study demonstrates how something is done and, like a feature, gives the reader detail on a subject, issue or event. Case studies often accompany a feature to give a ‘living’ example and help illustrate the story. E.g. A feature looking at catering in schools is likely to be accompanied with a case study showing how one school is doing particularly well.

**Interview:** An interview is a question and answer session with a subject of interest. Again, an interview normally runs prior or following a news announcement. E.g. The man behind the design of Ramsay’s new restaurants explains how it was done.

**Profile:** A profile can be on a particular business, product or person. It will give the reader an in depth insight into the subject.

**Comment piece:** A comment piece voices the views and opinions of an individual on a topical issue. They often follow news stories and will almost always be based on a current, topical issue.

**Analysis:** An analysis piece is an in depth look at a current issue – it will often include comment from multiple experts on a subject.

**Letter to the editor:** A letter to the editor addresses either a previous article in the publication, or a topical issue that you would like to bring to their attention.

We’ll give you some hints and tips on how to produce these different elements in section 5.

**Top tip:** Whether it’s news or a feature, each story will need an angle. Something that makes it timely and relevant enough to catch the eye of the journalist.
Targeting the right press: Deciding which media to talk to...

There are millions of print publications and TV channels worldwide, not to mention the online news sites, which are increasing in numbers on a monthly basis. That’s a lot of people to talk to.

You can’t, and don’t want to target them all. So one of the first things you need to do to ensure you make a positive impact with PR is decide who you want to talk to and why.

Ask yourself:

• Where do I want to be seen?
• Who do I want to influence?
• What is my target audience reading and watching?

Once you know the answer to these questions, you’ll be able to identify which media is right for you:

**Hospitality trade press:** These are titles that focus specifically on the hospitality or foodservice industry. They include news, features, case studies and analysis on issues specific to the sector.

**National consumer press:** National consumer press includes glossy magazines, newspaper columns and supplements – many of them have web-based equivalents.

**National business press:** Titles that focus on corporate stories including business profiles, interviews with personnel, growth of the business and the impact specific ventures may have on an industry. Columns within national daily or regional newspapers profiling businesses and their success stories.

**Lifestyle:** Consumer interest titles that cover a broad range of subjects.

**Broadcast media:** Broadcast media consists of television, cable television, satellite television, and radio stations that have local or national outlets.

**Regional press:** Daily newspapers and broadcast media accessible by region/state only. Generally interested in region-focused issues that will affect the population of a specific area of a country. Interested in local events and regional case studies.

**Specialist trade press:** Trade titles read by people within an industry segment e.g. architects, innovation, design and facilities management. Specialist titles, which focus on a particular interest. E.g. technology, the environment, legal issues, food & drink and leisure etc.

**Online:** As the Internet grows, so do the number of online media outlets. As with the traditional press, online media encompasses both consumer and trade websites. Most consumer and trade publications now have their own websites.
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Targeting the right press: Deciding which media to talk to... cont’d

The Consultant: FCSI’s very own magazine for the membership, The Consultant, presents plenty of opportunities to share your news, or demonstrate best practice through a case study. Send your ideas to editor@fcsi.org

Top tip: Once you’ve decided who you want to target: buy or subscribe to the media and make a note of the journalists who frequently write or broadcast on topics of interest to you. Google Alerts are a great way of tracking issues. To create a Google alert follow this link. http://www.google.com/alerts

Media channels
Print media is media in its written form: magazines, tabloid newspapers, broadsheet newspapers or newspaper supplements.
Broadcast media is local, regional or national radio or TV.
Online media is any media found on the internet: news websites, blogs, podcasts or newsfeeds.
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Who’s who: Who to talk to to get the best results...

Knowing who to talk to will save time and increase the chances of your story being published.

Like all businesses, different people have different responsibilities and getting in front of the right one will make the difference between success and failure.

The guide below will make sure you know who to approach with your story:

**Publisher:** The publisher organises the financial and organisational side of a newspaper or magazine. Generally, they have no direct involvement in the news content of the publication, but may be useful to have ‘on side’ if you are planning an industry-wide campaign that combines editorial and advertising.

**Editor (or producer in radio):** The editor or producer makes all the decisions about editorial style and oversees the content.

**Features editor:** The features editor is in charge of all the different editorial features within a publication. Very useful if you are considering writing an article rather than broadcasting ‘hard’ news.

**News desk:** A journalist on the news desk is a key contact to talk to about real news items, which are time sensitive.

**Picture desk:** The picture editor will decide which events are photographed. The picture desk is responsible for all the photography taken for the paper or magazine.

**Forward planning desk:** The key contact to talk to about news, events, filming opportunities etc for local TV news programmes.

**Top tip:** Never rely on news@ or editor@ email addresses – they are rarely viewed. Instead, send information to a named contact e.g. John.Smith@BBC.com

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**Editorial and advertising. What’s the difference?**

**Editorial** is free, unbiased and decisions on its content are made by the journalist.

**Advertising** is paid for space in print, broadcast or online media. It serves to promote a specific service or product and its content is decided by a company or individual, not the journalist.

**Advertorial** is a cross between editorial and advertising. It is paid for and its content is decided by an individual or company, but made to look like it’s part of the publication or channel.
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Getting the most from the media...

To get the most from the media you need to put yourself in the shoes of their readers. Journalists don’t care what you want. They want stories that will interest their readers. Stories:

- **About people relevant to their audience**
- **That are topical - news is new**
- **That can be kept short and simple - space and airtime are always limited**
- **That engage and entertain**

Journalists love reliability, so don’t make promises you can’t keep – if you say something will be with a journalist by 10am, make sure it is.

Make yourself the ‘go-to’ expert in a subject by repeatedly offering comment on it.

Present the media with angles for stories that are newsworthy, fresh and, when appropriate, fun.

Turn a routine story into a feature story.

Humanise and personalise a local story.

Localise a national trend story, announce a special service awards programme or sponsor an educational session for the community.

**Top tip:** You will very rarely get approval of an article, case study or feature before it gets published. Make sure you are 100% happy with what you submit before it goes to the journalist – and only say what you are happy to see in print.
Media deadlines: Getting your information in on time...

Different media want different stories at different times, so how do you know what to give to who and when?

The most important thing to remember is that news must be new. Journalists want fresh stories, so be quick off the mark.

Generally, deadlines for news follow this pattern:

**Monthly publications:** Get them your story 2 – 5 months in advance of its publication date. So, to get a story in for Christmas you need to approach them around August.

**Weekly publications:** Get them your story 2 – 4 weeks in advance of its publication date.

**National supplements:** Get them your story 1 – 3 months in advance of its publication date.

**Daily publications:** Get them your story 1 day – 2 weeks in advance of its issue date. Note: Daily publications are most likely to make last minute changes to what they publish due to a changing news agenda. E.g. A plane crash or national disaster will bump other stories from the pages.

**Online:** Get them your story immediately. The sooner they have it the sooner they can put it online.

**Radio stations:** When to get them your news depends on the story, but ‘day of’ is usually acceptable for breakfast news, several days in advance for notice of public events.

**Television stations:** When to get them your news depends on the story, but ‘day of’ for breaking news, several days in advance for public announcements, usually by 10am to make 6pm news.

These are a guide. As with everything, different people work in different ways so it’s best to get to know the journalist you want to influence most to increase your chances of getting published.

Remember, the one thing all journalists want is the story first. News must be new.

**Top tip:** Don’t call a journalist on deadline day. Never break a promise to meet a deadline – you’ll be blacklisted, and the journalist is unlikely to use you again.
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Media dos and don’ts...

Be sure to:
✓ Contact the right reporter or writer at an appropriate publication or broadcast programme
✓ Respond quickly to their requests for additional information or interviews
✓ Be prepared to answer questions and discuss issues in depth once you have piqued their interest

Don’t:
☒ Offer them stale news
☒ Call them when they are on deadline
☒ Persist if a story is rejected
☒ Pressure them to cover a story by ‘going over their head’ e.g. to another journalist or editor
☒ Mention how much advertising you have placed with them
You’ve heard of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn – but what’s it all got to do with PR? And how can it help your business?

Customers (happy and not so happy) can have a huge influence on your business – good and bad! They can tweet about you, blog about you and share photos of your work online. If you’re not plugged in to the conversations you won’t know what’s being said about you and have the opportunity to respond; you need to sit up and listen to the conversation.

In this chapter we’ll give you the basics you need to get started on social media – explain the dos and don’ts and help you know when to listen and when it’s time to talk. Good management of social media will help give you and your business positive PR.

So what is social media?
Put simply, social media is everything and anything you do to engage online. It can be blogging, tweeting, engaging on Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Blogging**
A blog is a website, normally your own, where short, snappy news items are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. The term blog is a shortened form of weblog or web log. Authoring a blog, maintaining a blog or adding an article to an existing blog is called ‘blogging’.

**Tweeting**
A tweet is a short message, 140 characters message update posted on twitter – a micro blogging site. It’s a stream of short snappy thoughts, news bytes and your views.

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**Top tip:** Using a URL shortener will take a long URL (another name for a web address) and shorten it. This is particularly useful when you are using sites like Twitter and are restricted to getting your point across in 140 characters.

E.g. http://www.fcsi.org/?page=MembersConsultants can be shortened to just http://bit.ly/ITphRs There are a number of sites that will shorten a URL for you, just paste in the long version of the web address and they’ll generate a short version. One example is https://bitly.com/
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A look at the most popular social media channels...

Twitter: With short 140 character nuggets of information delivered instantly, Twitter’s the best medium for announcing breaking news and for driving clients to your website.
http://www.twitter.com

Facebook: The best place to engage in casual conversations with your community. It’s a better medium for conversation and reaction than Twitter, given the lack of a 140 character limit.
http://www.facebook.com

LinkedIn: LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network with over 120 million members and growing rapidly. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.
http://www.linkedin.com

Top tip: Use LinkedIn to gather insight and opinion – there are lots of groups you can join, or you could create your own.

Websites: A great way to communicate longer, more in-depth information to your target audience. Your own website is the perfect place to upload case studies and short videos. You have complete control of anything that’s published.

Blogs: A blog is a frequent publication of thoughts, comment, news, views and ideas. It is a great medium to share both breaking news and examples of your best practice.

Top tip: Use everyday language and mix up the content and length of your blog. As well as sharing news and comment, try posting photographs, links to videos and case studies.

Email: Email’s best for private or individual communication. You can target customers, potential customers and even press with mail shots announcing your news or showing case studies of your projects.
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When to engage: Tips to get you started...

All of the social media sites listed below can be set up for free and have online step-by-step guides to help you get started. Simply log on to the internet, then click the links below to be taken straight to the guides.

LinkedIn
Before you get started you’ll need to set up a LinkedIn account and create your profile.

One of the most important parts of LinkedIn is your profile. It’s what you use to connect with people in your network and your profile is how you get found on LinkedIn, because it contains information about your skills and experience.

In addition, your LinkedIn profile can increase your visibility online and help you build your professional brand that showcases your background to prospective customers.

Follow this link for a step by step to getting started.
http://learn.linkedin.com/

Facebook
Getting started with Facebook is incredibly easy and you can have your account up and running in a matter of minutes. Millions of people of all ages use Facebook everyday to stay in touch with their friends, share photos and videos and find people they know.

Follow this link for a step by step to getting started.
http://www.facebook.com/help

Twitter
Twitter’s concept is very simple – it lets you communicate short (140-character) bursts of information to the people that subscribe to your updates or ‘follow you’. These updates are known as ‘tweets’. It’s like blogging, only smaller – hence Twitter. And you can also subscribe, or ‘follow’, other Twitter users yourself.

Follow this link for a step by step to getting started.
http://support.twitter.com/articles/100990-how-to-sign-up-on-twitter

YouTube
YouTube is a video sharing channel populated with video content every second by people all over the world. YouTube is a great business tool for getting your services out there, for little cost. It is also a great way to get constantly up-to-date information about projects you have been working on to new and existing customers.

Follow this link for a step by step to getting started.
http://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en
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How to engage online...

Be helpful: Offer your network advice or suggest people that can help.

Be present: Participate and contribute. If you’re going to go online, make sure you’ve got something to bring to the table, and engage with your social network.

Be social: Engage with as many people as possible – DON’T just spam messages out to a list. Talk to new contacts one-on-one, respond to people’s comments, and ask people questions.

Share the love: Make it about them, not you. Show your network that you appreciate them, that you value their opinions, and that you’re interested in who they are.

Pay it forward: Build equity by contributing to your network before asking for anything in return and never take out more than you put in. Don’t expect people to rush to join your social network if all you ever do is flog the hard sell; consider giving expert advice, or running online-competitions.

Top tip: Social media allows you to communicate with people who are already in your network – your fans and followers. If you want to reach new customers and contacts, you’ll need to reach beyond your current base and into other communities.
You wouldn’t design a kitchen without careful planning or implement a foodservice strategy without a clear idea of what you’re trying to achieve. PR should be no different – a clear, well thought out plan is the key to your success.

Most PR plans follow the same basic format:

- **Overview:** An executive summary of the marketing challenge you’re facing that the PR campaign is designed to help you meet
- **Goals:** What you want the PR campaign to achieve for your business
- **Strategies:** The methods by which you will achieve your goals
- **Target audiences:** The types of customers and businesses you want to reach
- **Key target media:** The specific publications and programmes you’ll target
- **Recommendations:** Which PR tactics you will use, any other ideas you have and the theme, hook, or angle for each tactic
- **Next steps:** An action plan for who does what and when

Put your plan in writing and share it with the team who are going to help you deliver your PR. Most importantly, stick to it!

**Top tip:** Remember, PR works best as part of a comprehensive marketing plan and in addition to your advertising, networking, direct mail and sales efforts.
Now you know what you want to achieve and why, how do you get journalists to sit up and take notice?

In this chapter, we’ll give you step-by-step instructions for writing killer copy – press releases, features and comment pieces that make you stand out from the crowd.

You’ll learn how to caption a photo and how to get the most out of video.

We’ll also give you interview preparation tips so you’re ready to meet the journalists face to face, or conduct television or radio interviews.
A press release is an announcement of news – your opportunity to tell a journalist about your business.

It should be clear, concise, snappy and to the point.

The most effective press releases:

• Tell the story at a glance – making it easy for the journalist to understand and easy to include in their news pages

• Look and read as they would in the paper or magazine – if the journalist can copy and paste your story it’s more likely to get covered (journalists are lazy by nature)

• Are error free – watch out for off putting typos, spelling mistakes or bad grammar

Follow these simple steps to help you write the perfect press release:

**Remember the five Ws:** The basis of every news story is always: who, what, when, where, and why? These are the heart of your press release, and they should be spelled out as soon as possible, either in the first paragraph ‘lead’, or soon after.

**Details, details:** While your lead paragraph should outline the facts, succeeding paragraphs should provide additional details in descending order of importance.

**Make it easy:** Include as many facts relevant to the story as possible. Editors are constantly facing deadlines, so your job is to make their job easy. They shouldn’t have to hunt down all the facts in your release, or call you because important, basic information is missing.

**Find the angle:** Every story has more than one approach or angle. Your job is to determine the most appropriate, newsworthy angle that will generate interest.

**Keep it simple:** Your press release should be well written, but short, no longer than two pages. Sentences should be short. Paragraphs should also be kept short, usually no longer than four sentences.
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How to write a press release... cont’d

Don’t exaggerate: Nothing turns a journalist off more quickly than the use of lots of adjectives such as ‘wonderful’ and ‘marvellous’. Overuse of adjectives is one of the first things that will be cut. Editors just want the facts, so relate them simply without overstating them.

Proof read and proof read again: Check your release more than once for spelling, correct titles etc. If possible, have someone else proof read the release as well – it’s easy to overlook small mistakes.

Quotes: A quote will add weight and interest to your release – but only if the quotes really say something.

Cite your sources: Don’t make claims without citing the source of the information that you plan to include in the release. Attribution can be given in the sentence where the fact or claim appears, or as a footnote at the bottom of the page.

Paper: All releases should be on your own business letter-headed paper with FCSI Worldwide or regional logo on a white background top right.

Headline: The headline needs to catch the eye of the journalist and capture the essence of the story. Don’t forget to include the dateline as news is always current and a date is essential.

End of release: Officially mark the end of your press release with the word ‘end’ centred in the next double-spaced line following the last line of your release.

Contact details: Your name and contact details should always appear at the bottom of the release. Usually these are names of one or two people who can be reached easily for more information, and who are knowledgeable enough to speak with the press.

Notes to editor: One of the final items to include in any press release should be the notes to the editor. Include company and FCSI background and any additional information not included in the main body of the press release.

Photography: Use photos and captions to bring your press release to life. In the journalist’s mind, a photograph always enhances a story. If you are inserting an image into a press release or presentation make sure they are low resolution (below 500Kb) and attach a high-resolution image (300dpi jpeg).

Checklist:
- Write in the third person. Use it / he / she / they instead of you / we
- Always check for spelling and grammar before sending
- Your press release should be a news story, not an advertisement
- Use quotes in the present tense. They add immediacy and credibility
- Use simple, everyday language instead of complex words and industry jargon
- AVOID THE OVER USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS. Capitals slow the pace of reading

Please note that all press releases are to promote your own business and consulting practices and is a great opportunity to talk about your FCSI membership. Only FCSI officers or directors can issue press releases about FCSI.
Think newspapers, magazines and online, and we tend to focus on the hard-news stories that fill the front pages. But much of the writing found in these publications and websites is done in a more feature-oriented way.

Feature stories are typically a bit longer than a regular news article and will need to go fairly in-depth about the subject you are writing about. Like any form of writing, a feature article follows a standard structure. While it may vary depending on your topic, a feature article should always include:

**Headline:** This is your opportunity to grab the reader’s attention. It’s your first, and perhaps only chance to engage with the reader so it needs to be short and sum up your story in one line.

**Introduction:** The first paragraph outlines the subject or theme of the article and should leave the reader wanting to find out more.

**Main body:** This is your opportunity to get into the real detail by including stats, quotes, and any anecdotal information to support your views.

**Concluding paragraph:** Should sum up the article and leave a lasting impression.
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How to write a case study...

Case studies are an essential part of your PR Toolkit. They are a great way of showcasing the benefits of working with you, an FCSI member, and your business.

A well-written case study should clearly describe how your client benefited from using your services.

Keep it short, a case study should be about 300 words and no more than 500 words. Keep the copy simple, use everyday language, avoid industry jargon, and include testimonials from your clients.

These three simple steps will help you:

**Step 1: Start with the research**
Identify case study opportunities:
- Check with your client they are happy for you to use their project to generate publicity
- Talk to the journalist and see if they are interested in running it in their publication

**Step 2: Plan the content**
Draft case study plan and include:
- What you want it to say
- What key points need to be included
- Who you need to speak to
- What’s the deadline

**Step 3: Writing the case study**
Remember to:
- Look at the word count/page or section size to ensure the copy is the right length
- Draft the copy in the style of the magazine
- Send case study to publication

**Top tip:** Once published, case studies are a great way to publicise a project by uploading them to your own website.

**Top tip:** An editor will always edit copy from the bottom up; this is why it’s really important to get your key messages across early.
How to write a letter to the editor...

Writing a letter to the editor of a publication can be a great way to share your opinion on articles, reports or editorials in a newspaper or magazine.

Use these six steps:
1. Identify the issue you would like to comment on or raise
2. Identify the publication which is most relevant to your cause
3. Write out the key points that you want to get across
4. Draft a short, snappy letter – two or three paragraphs is ideal
5. Email or send it to the editor
6. Put in a follow up call to the editor or their PA to raise your issue and highlight that you’ve written to them outlining your view

Top tip: Check the publication for an email address that you’ll find on the letters page.
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How to get the most out of video...

Video is an easy and cost effective way to reach a large audience and communicate a complex message in a few minutes. Short of getting a customer in the door or going out to see a client, online video is the best way to demonstrate a product.

Once you’ve made a couple of videos, you could even think about creating you own YouTube channel. It’s easy to set up and as the second-largest search engine after Google it represents a huge audience of potential customers.

Four things to remember when creating a video...

**Plan:** Start by determining your objective for the video and then plan the content.

**Production:** With the increase of YouTube you don’t have to spend a fortune. To create a quality video, concentrate on the visual and audio aspects of your video, as well as the quality of the spokesperson and the story line.

**Keep it short:** The best online videos for marketing purposes are around 2-3 minutes.

**Getting it out there:** Putting a video on your own website is great for your visitors, but if you stop there you’re missing out on the huge distribution potential of online video channels that make it easy for you to share your videos.
FCSI PR Toolkit
How to prepare for a media interview...

Congratulations! Your PR efforts have paid off and a journalist has arranged to interview you. Media interviews are a great way to get your message out to your audience. However, your work is far from finished. With a little preparation and some practice, the better your chances are that you’ll more effectively communicate your messages in the media.

Follow these 10 steps when getting ready for an interview with the media.

1. Think ‘news not information’.
2. Be clear what the advantages are for your business from taking part in the interview and think about how you can use it to promote FCSI.
3. Know who the interviewer is and which publication/station/programme the interview is for.
4. If possible, request questions in advance and ask if it’s live or recorded.
5. Understand the viewing audience, and tailor the pitch accordingly.
6. Memorise no more than three key messages and don’t be afraid to repeat them.
7. Have all essential facts and background to hand. Try to tell a story or anecdote to illustrate the point or to back up facts.
8. Don’t use notes or jargon and never speak off the record – there is no such thing.
9. Be positive and project passion, enthusiasm and confidence.
10. If you are asked a question you can’t answer in a broadcast interview say the information is not to hand and then state something else positive which the media can use – this is called bridging.

Saying the right thing: One of the most effective techniques to help you stay in control of an interview is called ‘bridging’. Bridging takes the discussion from unfriendly to friendly territory by making a smooth transition from an undesirable question or topic to an area that fits your agenda.

A = answer: “That’s simply not true…” / “That’s the wrong conclusion…”
B = bridge: “…the facts are that…” / “…I think you should remember…”
C = communicate: “We are the biggest/best/most efficient etc."

Here are some useful bridging phrases
- “It’s our policy not to discuss ---- specifically, but I can tell you…”
- “That speaks to a bigger point…”
- “That is correct/incorrect, but the important issue is…”
- “That is your view, from our perspective…”
- “The most important thing to note…”
- “The answer to the question I think you are asking is…”
- “I don’t know, but what I do know is…”
- “Yes, and in addition…”
- “No, and let me explain…”
- “That’s how it used to be, but today…”
FCSI PR Toolkit

Section six

FCSI: Potential media questions...

Journalists like to think they’re one step ahead and are often eager to ask a ‘tricky question’ or two to make their article stand out. But so long as you are well prepared and know your stuff, there really shouldn’t be such a thing as a tricky question.

Think about what you might be asked and prepare your answers in advance so you’ve got all the stats, facts and key numbers to hand.

Here we’ve given you an example by outlining what a journalist might ask about FCSI.

What is FCSI?
Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI) is the world’s leading association promoting professionalism in foodservice and hospitality consulting.

For our clients, this means that wherever in the world they operate, FCSI independent consultants can provide knowledge, advice and insight to deliver innovative, sustainable and commercial solutions to foodservice challenges.

Who are members of FCSI?
We have over 1,400 members in 47 countries worldwide – experts in foodservice strategy and design. Members are either:

- Professional foodservice consultants
- Allied members – individuals or businesses who have an active interest in hospitality and foodservice
- Affiliate members – individuals who are involved in the operation, management or provision of professional services to, or education relating to the management of, foodservice and hospitality facilities

What is a foodservice consultant?
A foodservice consultant is an independent professional advisor who, for a defined scope of work and related fee, works in partnership with their client to help them achieve their goals through the design and implementation of foodservice facilities and/or operations/management systems.
FCSI PR Toolkit
FCSI: Potential media questions... cont’d

Why would I need a foodservice consultant?
Consultants provide expertise, knowledge and experience to giving specialist advice that operators may not have internally, or by providing resources not available at the time, including:

• The need for objectivity, independent or third-party opinions
• An alternative viewpoint to a project or business challenge
• The need for technical expertise
• Specialist industry or benchmarking knowledge
• The need to re-engineer a foodservice operation, concept or brand
• Operational performance could be improved but no one is sure how
• The need for additional project support or resource time

Why should I choose an FCSI member?
FCSI is the only such foodservice and hospitality consulting society that operates on a worldwide basis.

The FCSI Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards required by FCSI as a condition of membership. It works to achieve total client satisfaction and always maintains independence from the supply side of the industry.

In addition, consultant members are required to participate in the FCSI Continuing Professional Growth programme by attending educational seminars that focus on cutting edge developments in the foodservice industry. This continually adds to their expertise, also assuring you that an FCSI consultant is the best in their field.

What is the Code of Conduct that governs FCSI Professional members?
The FCSI Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards required by FCSI as a condition of membership and is guided by three master principles (in order of priority):

• The client’s interests
• The public’s interests
• The profession’s interests

You operate worldwide. How do I know you’ve got the right knowledge to help in my area?
With members in 47 countries, covering each continent, FCSI is the only society whose independent consultants can operate on a worldwide basis. All FCSI members are expert in local trends and insight, and being part of a global network means they can tap into the knowledge and expertise of members in other parts of the world.
How do you become an FCSI member?
To become a member, a consultant must meet strict criteria assuring their experience and professionalism.

How do FCSI members work with the wider hospitality and foodservice industry?
FCSI members have extensive and wide-reaching networks with valuable links and relationships within the foodservice and hospitality industry.

Through FCSI global membership, consultants also benefit from networking with other professionals in the foodservice industry during Society sponsored events and activities.

Does FCSI work with other industry bodies?
Yes, FCSI has partnerships and engages with other industry and professional bodies on topical issues, joint seminars and collaborative projects.
FCSI PR Toolkit
Section seven
Measuring the success of a PR campaign...

How can you determine whether your PR strategy is proving beneficial to your business?

To work out the value to your business it’s important to understand the success of your PR and how people are talking about you versus how you’d like to be talked about. By measuring your media coverage you’ll be able to check you’re communicating the right message to the right media and audience, in turn making sure you generate great PR coverage.

A guide to measuring coverage
When you get coverage in a magazine or newspaper, online, on TV or on the radio, ask yourself the following questions:

• Was the coverage positive, negative, or neutral?
• Did it get my key messages across?
• How much would I have had to spend to achieve the same results through advertising?
• Have my contact details or website address been included?
• Has an image or video been used to help illustrate my point?
• Has there been a business enquiry as a direct response?
• Has there been an increase in the number of people visiting my website?

Look back to the goal you made in your PR plan to check that the coverage you are achieving is helping meet this.

Top tip: When evaluating the success of print media it’s worth remembering that, on average, three different people read each print publication. So to get an accurate idea of reach, simply times the print publication’s circulation figure by three.
FCSI PR Toolkit
Section eight
Sharing success with members...

FCSI wants to hear from you! An important part of PR, one that’s often overlooked, is how we share our successes with each other.

So, if you’ve got a project to shout about, let’s share success with fellow FCSI members. This can be a case study, press release or blog, so if you’ve already written one for the media why not share it with your fellow members?

You can do this on the members’ only section on FCSI website. Before you get started, take a moment to update your profile on the ‘Find a consultant’ section of FCSI website, https://fcsi.site-ym.com/members/edit.asp

This is really important, if we don’t have up to date details for your business, customers won’t be able to find them either.

There will also be an opportunity in advance of each quarterly conference call for your PR representative to share your successes with the PR Committee. These will be taken back to their regions as ideas or news for their regional website and publications to help them generate similar results.
Now you’ve got the ‘tools’ to do the job, but which ones will get you the best results and when? In this chapter we’ve included some of the most commonly asked PR questions and give you the answers you need to succeed.

I’ve just won a new contract, what’s the best way to let everyone know all about it?
A press release will be the most effective way to announce the news.

I want to show how well I’ve worked together on a project with a partner. What’s the best way to do this?
A case study will allow you to show how you’ve worked together with a partner and shout about your success.

Top tip: Remember, try and give your case studies a topical hook to make them newsworthy.

There has been a lot of confusion in the press about an issue. I’d like to set the record straight. How best can I do this?
Target the letters pages of the magazines and newspapers running the stories or contact the journalist who has written the articles and offer your expert comment on the subject.

Top tip: Remember, act quickly so your opinion is offered while the issue is still being debated.

A journalist is writing a feature that I’d like to comment on. How’s the best way to go about it?
Pick up the phone and speak to the journalist. Let them know what you can offer and ask them what they are looking for and in what format (a written response, tips, a telephone interview or a site visit).

I’ve given an interview to the journalist and they’ve taken what I’ve said out of context. What do I do?
Give them a call, explain the situation and gently point out the mistakes. If the story will be reproduced online, ask the journalist to update the copy. If it’s in print only you’ll need to make a judgement call – is it worth asking the journalist to print a correction (which can sometimes draw further attention to the error) or should you just let it pass under the radar?

I’ve approached a journalist with a story and they are not interested. What can I do to make them change their mind?
Nothing. If the story isn’t for them accept their answer and try offering it to a different publication or radio station or TV programme.

Top tip: Never go over a journalist’s head. If one journalist says no, don’t go to their colleague.
You’ve said journalists receive hundreds of emails a day. How do I make my email stand out from the others?

A clear subject heading telling the journalist exactly what’s inside the email is key. E.g. PRESS RELEASE: David Bentley to succeed Jonathan Doughty as FCSI Chair.

Once you get a name for yourself and a reputation as someone who provides accurate, timely and engaging information, journalists will take more notice when they receive your emails.

What’s the best way to communicate – email or phone?
Everyone is different and you’ll soon find out how each journalist likes to be approached. Picking up the phone will get your name known and will give you the chance to speak directly to the journalists.

Top tip: Don’t call on a print journalist’s ‘press day’ – the day they are finishing off their publication before it goes to print. For daily newspapers always try to contact a journalist in the morning or early afternoon – not when they are up against deadline.

I’ve got a great story but I’m not sure where it will fit or who to approach.
Think about where you want to be seen. Have a look at publications that target these readers. Do your homework and find out if there have been any similar style stories before calling to let them know you’ve got a great story or sending through your press release.
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