



11 steps to building a media profile

Tapping into the media is a great way to raise awareness about you and your business. But where do you start? How do you work through a structured process resulting in a national media profile?

The following 11 steps will help you go from obscurity to omnipresence, in no time at all.

1. clarify your message

Too many people try to be everything to everyone when they start to raise their brand awareness through the media. In order to cut through the swathe of people all wanting the same media coverage, make sure you are very clear on your message. Before you start pitching your ideas to the media, run through the following key questions:

- What is my 'master message'? What is the common thread or filter that has run through everything I've done (both good and bad)?
- What is my style? (This is also called 'finding your voice'). Am I going to be formal and scientific, funky and fresh, or a combination of both?
- What am I the expert at? What do I have years of experience doing? (and try to broaden the horizon to be a lot more than fitness)
- How can I say less in more?
- What are some signature stories that I can use to really get my message across and make it memorable?
- Does my message stick? (meaning do people remember it long after you've spoken to them)

2. be different

There are already stacks of people talking about eating healthy food, exercising more and improving quality of sleep. What can you do to be different? If you say the same things, in the same way, with the same boring monotony that everyone else does - you won't even walk through the gates to get a start. Sorry to be so blunt, but these are the facts I think you need to know before trying to kick-start a media profile.

Take Gordon Ramsay as an example. There are hundreds and thousands of chefs in the world but he stands out with a very clear message and clear brand. Sure, he bucks convention by swearing heaps and continually dropping the f-bomb, but he is memorable and passionate. You can see he really loves what he does and wants to help people. His frustration and impatience makes him human, and in a way, endearing to the audience. What is your brand? How do you speak, dress, interact, think, walk and talk? Make an effort to be yourself, be different.

3. write, write, write

Writing regular articles is one of the best disciplines you can get started on. I must admit, writing regular articles has given me so much more clarity on what I speak about, and more importantly - what I don't speak about.

Make a goal to write a minimum of 3 to 4 articles a month when you first get started. I can already hear some people saying 'what do I write about' and 'what if I don't have enough experience to write my own articles?' First of all, write what your clients are asking you about. If they ask about sleep and how to improve energy, write on that. Secondly, of course you have enough experience! Even if you've only been in the industry for a short time, draw on all the experience you've had in life.



Make yourself accountable by writing a regular blog and including articles in your monthly eNewsletters (if you don't have a blog or eNewsletter, you're going to miss major opportunities to grow your business via digital platforms).

4. package into bytes

OK, time to take a breath and put the first 3 steps together. Now you have more clarity on your message and unique point of difference, combined with the discipline of writing regular articles, it's time to spin your content into bytes of information.

The media is a complex and intricate beast requiring you to have skills to deliver packages of information in both short and longer formats. Start by picking one topic you are comfortable with. Now, how would you present this topic if you only had 30 seconds; what would you present in 3 minutes; and what would you cover in 30 minutes? Running the '30 second - 3 minute - 30 minute' filter through a range of topics will help you work out a process for flipping your material into loads of potential interviews/segments. Start with the key points you'd cover in 30 seconds, then add some more flesh for 3 minutes, then add signature stories and proven case studies to unpack 30 minutes.

5. practice on your dog

Cougar, my 47kg Rhodesian Ridgeback, knows all of my talks, radio interviews and TV segments. Why? Being the loyal legend that he is, whenever I'm in my home office practising for an upcoming media segment, Cougar parks himself by my feet and listens intently, or at least for 5 minutes before he loses interest and falls asleep, snoring like a steam train. Seriously!

You don't have to have a dog but the main point is to practice in your own backyard before you take your material live. This makes a huge difference in getting your message across in a clear and concise format. Tape yourself on a digital recorder (even though you'll hate listening to your own voice to start with) and record yourself speaking into a video camera. Listen and watch over and over again and you'll pick up audio tags (words you continually repeat like 'like' and 'you know') and watch for head positioning and any quirky body movements that can become exaggerated on camera.

6. keep it local

Now you've worked out your message, packaged into bytes and practised on your dog - time to let rip. It's generally easier and more likely to get your first media coverage through local or community radio stations, suburban newspapers or subscriptions and local or regional TV stations. This will provide invaluable experience and give you content to then market to larger, national distribution channels. And don't forget digital media. There are a stack of opportunities to write for online magazines, newsletters and digital publications that help build your media experience.

7. design a media kit

This probably sounds a bit back to front, and it is. Shouldn't you design a media kit before you start building a media profile? This is the traditional method taught to most budding media enthusiasts. But to snag main stream media appearances, organisations want to know you're not a risk or a liability, they want great talent and proven experience. I believe it's best to gain local experience first and then build a media kit that you can send showing footage/articles/examples of you in action. Include a professional photo, a bio showing experience in your specialist area (again, try and think broader than just push ups and carrots!), contact details and web address. Best to design your media kit in a digital format as well so you can email as well as send through in physical format.

8. creative press releases

Remember, TV stations, radio shows and newspaper journalists receive hundreds of press releases in an average day. Designing a standard, boring, bland press release that is the same as everyone else's is a good way to make sure your message never gets heard!

Think of creative ways to get through to editors, producers, journalists, freelance writers and on air talent. I've found physical products (including audio programs, DVDs and especially books) a great way to get a foot in the door. In fact,



every time we now get a media enquiry we send a copy of my book www.fliptheswitch.com.au and a link to all previous media segments.

Once you have established relationships with a range of media outlets then look at sending press releases. But again, be different. Send though information that is cutting edge, the latest research, trends, or be confrontational and challenge the status quo. Media outlets want information that is topical, relevant and different.

9. professional and approachable

Make the editor/researcher/journalist's job easier to do. Prepare research for them, write introductions to position you and sample questions to be interviewed on. Think how much work the average producer has to do in an average day to put a show to air. Making their job easier will get you loads more opportunities in the future.

Remember to always say thank you for the opportunity. Send a card, email or make a phone call thanking the station/interviewer/producer/etc for the experience. They'll remember you the next time they need an expert commentary and if they like dealing with you and find you approachable, you'll go to the top of the list.

10. fish bigger ponds

Now you've got some experience under your belt, you've sharpened your message and have invaluable experience across the 4 media platforms (TV, radio, print and digital) it's time to target the larger media outlets. Make a list of all potential TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazines, periodicals and digital publications that are likely to publish your materials. Do you have any contacts at these businesses and can they help you get through to the right people? Put all of the details into a spreadsheet and plug in the missing contacts you need.

Send a copy of your physical products, print outs of articles and links to previous media appearances so they can get a feel for your style and content. Go to <http://andrewmaymedia.blogspot.com/> for an example. Build your database of media contacts and remember to include freelance writers and consultants.

11. annual media calendar

If you follow this process, I guarantee you'll dramatically increase the chances of regular media coverage. The final step is to plan an annual calendar with specific events and activities linked to your message/expertise. Think of content/stories you can provide that tie in with recurring themes, holidays, (eg, how to have fun but not pack on the pounds at Christmas, relaxing on holidays, avoiding back to work blues, heart health during health week, relaxation skills, etc).

Have a blend of releases related to your annual calendar and keep this fresh with new content based on trends and what's hot throughout the year.

Final piece of advice, just do something. Your material and presentations skills will never be perfect, that's just a fact of life. But the best way to improve your skills is the discipline of regular practice and accountability. Get started immediately on building a media profile, and watch your business and bank balance improve in the process.

Andrew May

Andrew May is the author of the best selling book Flip the Switch and the upcoming title f-words! He presents a regular health and lifestyle segment on 2UE and is the resident Performance Coach for Channel Nine's TODAY show. Andrew has appeared on Channel 7, Sky News and the ABC and writes for a number of national publications including Women's Health, Ultrafit, CanFit (Canada) and Fitpro (UK). Andrew is regularly quoted in newspaper stories across Australia and in digital publications including Kochie's Business Builders, Flying Solo and Super Living Magazine.

