

Interview with News Anchor Delaine Mathieu

As public relations students, we are taught that media professionals are the gatekeepers between our story and our audience and that building trustworthy relationships with media professionals is crucial. So how do we build the bridge of trust between the gatekeepers and ourselves? I interviewed Delaine Mathieu a local television anchor for News 4 San Antonio to get her opinion on how relationships between PR professionals and media professionals can work best.

What I took away from my interview with Delaine was that honesty is key to building trust. A relationship with a media professional works no differently than most relationships. If you are honest and open, people will trust you and vice versa. Media professionals build trust with PR professionals by being honest and respectful. For example, Delaine says, “If someone comes to me with information and wants to keep it off the record, it’s off the record. That is how you build trust.”

Other things that Delaine appreciates from PR professionals is a willingness to help and being available. What drives her crazy is when PR reps are not available, do not return calls or emails, give dishonest or misleading information, and only give corporate answers. She says, “It is important to remember we need each other,” and with a smile she says, “And we are not monsters.”

Once we establish trust with media professionals how do we get them to report our stories? Delaine told me that a story is important to her when it has a significant impact on the community. The more people a story effects, the more important it is to get the information out to those within that community. A good news release should be directed at the proper recipient not just thrown out to everyone within a station or newsroom. It should also be specific and to the point. Media professionals are bombarded with pitches or story ideas. They have a minimal amount of time to scan your release and decide if it is newsworthy so it is important to make your release brief but detailed.

The jobs of public relations professionals and media professionals are intertwined. In order to work effectively they must build trust by being open, honest and respectful. We must remember not only are media the gatekeepers to getting our stories shared, but they can also be our friends when we want to keep a story from making headlines.