

Debbie Leven

How to become a media expert



How do you become a media expert - someone called on by the media to comment about stories relevant to your niche?

It's something that feels like the Holy Grail for many. It can seem like those people that get the media spotlight are in another league. But, they are no different to you or me and many of them didn't start out with that profile, did they? But, journalists pick up the phone and email them to get their views and to invite them into the studio for comment.

What makes them different and how can you tap into that so that journalists are calling you too for your expertise, knowledge and insight?

Here are some tips on how to become a media expert – they'll take you time and effort to implement or you'll need to hire someone to implement them on your behalf. They aren't rocket science but you do need to stick with it over time to get results.

1. Mindset – first you have to believe that it is achievable and believe in your own abilities in wanting to share your skills and knowledge via the media. If the whole thing feels daunting then that is not necessarily a bad thing. It's good to stretch yourself but you have to have an underlying belief. It will keep you going if you have knockbacks or those moments of doubt.

2. Objectives – you need clarity too about why you want this and about what, **specifically, you want to achieve** from each media opportunity. Don't do it for the sake of it or because it seems like a good idea. Be smart and take a strategic approach.

3. Target audiences – **know who you want to reach** in terms of media profile. This is essential so that you don't waste your valuable time on PR opportunities that won't get you in front of the right people.

4. Find the right journalists – sounds like a 'no brainer' but you need to find the journalists who will be interested in you and what you have to say. That might be via posting a profile on the media databases that journalists use to source contacts or tracking down the individual contacts themselves based on what they have reported on in the past or researching their areas of interest. Smart PR requires covering all bases.

5. Shout about your credentials and availability – if a journalist landed on your website would they know that you are up for speaking to them? If that is what you want and you aren't making it obvious then you are missing a trick, don't you think?

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6. Ongoing contacts research – forming relations with the media isn't static. You need to be across who is writing about, and reporting on, your niche and what they are saying. You can then add to your list of journalists to follow and engage with. The idea is not to build a huge list but to identify the key people you need to connect with and pick up on any new faces that appear.

7. Think ahead of the game – when a relevant event is imminent then you need to think about how you can help your target journalists. What information, angle or insight can you bring or suggest? Then get in contact and pitch it to them. But, do it in a personalised and tailored way rather than as a blanket 'spray and pray' email out to hundreds of people.

8. Think on your feet – when a story breaks then journalists are on the hunt for information and comment. If you follow the right journalists then you can use that to be in the right place at the right time. This is something that has the potential to get you quoted but also just to get noticed by your target journalists as a useful contact.

9. Shout about your successes – profile breeds profile and the more you shout about your successes the more the media will take notice.

10. Keep doing it – focus on a handful of media contacts and

keep following them, comment on their articles and reporting, share what they say, answer their questions, suggest how you can help. Then, rinse and repeat again and again.

In a nutshell: Making yourself an expert is a bit like planting seeds – you have to put in the initial work and then keep nurturing the relationships to reap the benefits.

What are you doing to make yourself a media expert?

Want to be featured in the press and media? Then check out: [7 Quick and Easy Ways to Get Media Visibility](#).

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About the Author

Debbie Leven is an award winning Public Relations consultant. She has worked in Public Relations for more than twenty years and helps service based businesses and entrepreneurs get their message across and get more visibility on and offline via the media and guest blogging. She hit the Number 1 spot on Amazon for her book: *99 Public Relations Tips for Small Businesses*. She's been featured on The Huffington Post, Marketing Donut, Business Zone and 12 Most. She has just launched a Guest Blogger Matchmaker service – to save clients time and hassle in finding the right guest blogging opportunities for their business.

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