



27 October 2008

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Putting Global Media Fascination of Israel to Work for You

Current wisdom has it that Jerusalem hosts the third largest global media concentration — with its 400-plus permanently stationed foreign correspondents — in the world. Only Washington, D.C., and Moscow have larger representations.

But what does that have to do with me, asks any reasonable start-up CEO or brilliant R&D *mayven*? Surprisingly, the answer might well be "plenty."

We all know that the world is fixated on Israel as a news subject, and has been for at least 20 years. Veteran Middle East correspondent and author Tom Friedman even wrote a cover story some years ago in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* exploring precisely this phenomenon. For our purposes, the "why" is really not as relevant as the "what."

Which is ...? **They are HERE.** Hundreds of reporters and broadcasters who must constantly justify salaries, staffs, cars, rented houses, offices and editors' interests back home. Clearly, they are here mainly for the death of Arafat and the politics of disengagement and the occasional terror attack. But guess what? That still leaves a fairly generous chunk of time. My firm has consistently mined those "down-times" for many, many years, resulting in positive coverage in places ranging from *The New York Times* and *Business Week* to Reuters and *The Wall Street Journal*. I remember one red-letter month in which we secured no less than seven non-political (business-related) placements on CNN worldwide alone!



Two quick cases in point:

- ▶ Given Imaging, developers of the the fascinating camera-in-a-capsule diagnostic device, was set to launch their product a few years back at a major medical trade show in California. Working together, we decided to conduct a pre-launch from Israel to generate serious international buzz. With such a creative innovation as our showpiece, the plan worked like a charm. A high-powered press conference in Bet Agron in Jerusalem attracted nearly 50 foreign media, and the world already knew about this device when they walked into the trade show less than one week later.
- ▶ Another client told me that he wanted to raise his organization's profile in Israel. They gathered significant contributions from Christians overseas for distribution to worthy projects in Israel. This was September. I told him to open his datebook and mark that he needed to be back here for a media event in Israel on December 17. He agreed but naturally asked, "What are we doing then?" to which I honestly answered, "I don't know, but that's when we're doing it!" We all know that every newspaper in the world has Christmas-related coverage. All the more so, every foreign correspondent in Israel doing his or her "Holy Land" contribution. In the end, we designed a poll by Israelis regarding their perspectives of Christians and Christianity, which we released a week prior to the holiday, branding the client as the "Christian experts" viz. Israeli public opinion. Subject and timing were thankfully impeccable, and significant global coverage resulted.

If you have a decent product or can associate your company with a larger industrial or economic trend; if you grasp the importance that timing plays for journalists or play a role yourself in a sexy or cutting edge sector (homeland security, for example, or biotech), then media doors in Jerusalem can most assuredly be opened that will communicate your story and benefit your business objectives literally around the world.

It doesn't even take much digging to track down the likeliest reporters. They have a funny habit of adding their names right on top of the articles they write every day!

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About the author: Charley J. Levine, a veteran media relations consultant based in Jerusalem, serves as CEO of [Ruder Finn Israel](#). RFI proudly counts Trendlines amongst its special, wise clientele.

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