
SHOULD YOU TRY FOR A MEDIA EXCLUSIVE?

FIVE QUESTIONS EVERY COMPANY SHOULD ASK

A frequently asked question around any major news launch is, “should we go for an exclusive?” While there are pros and cons to such a media strategy, the easiest way to find out if an exclusive is right for your brand is to ask these five key questions:

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS?

If your news isn’t meaningful enough to draw significant eyeballs, no journalist will agree to an exclusive. What’s “meaningful” is subjective, and your PR agency should help you walk through the considerations. A simple example: a \$15M investment round when the market is frothy probably isn’t enough for an exclusive. But add interesting investors or changing economic conditions, and perhaps an exclusive makes sense.

WHAT’S THE ANGLE?

Sometimes a good PR team can come up with a story angle to elevate otherwise mundane news. That said, we don’t have a magic wand... we can’t make The Wall Street Journal care about your news just because it’s important to you and/or your target prospects. But we can ask you probing questions, and you should be ready to share details. Speaking of which...

WILL YOU DISCLOSE DETAILS?

Are you willing to share the details it will take to land an exclusive? For funding news, this might require overall valuation. For product news, it might be a brand-name customer that’s willing to speak with the reporter. And be realistic... we’ve had clients get cold feet minutes before an interview with a major business publication, which doesn’t look good for anyone, and guarantees disaster.

WHICH METRICS MATTER?

Which is better: one article in a high-value publication or 30 across a combination of first and second tier outlets? There’s no right answer, but it’s important to consider the question. It may be possible to achieve both – ask us how! – but it’s entirely possible that by going for an exclusive, you’re giving up on much broader coverage that might be more valuable for customer traction, partnerships, etc.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

What if you go for the exclusive, and instead of a feature article you only get a few summary paragraphs? Have you had that discussion with your PR team... and with the journalist? If you’re expecting the larger article, are you providing the background (customers, industry impact, education, etc.) and – most importantly – the time needed for the reporter to flesh out the story? If they’re new to the space, and on deadline, expect a summary, not a treatise.

Deciding whether to go for an exclusive story is tricky. Understanding the value of your story, what results it may garner and how you can get there are critical considerations. Experiment with these tips, track your results and communicate with your agency. Still not sure where to start? Let’s chat.