

January 1988

TO: Executive Addressed

FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR Chairman

RE: How to Assess a News Story About You

Executives often feel they are treated unfairly in news stories. Sometimes it's true, but most of the time it's not. Here's a framework to use to assess a news story about you, your organization, issue, product, or problem. It's an adaptation of one news organization's effort to help reporters and editors assess the way they treated a story subject. Using this brief checklist will help you determine whether or not you have been fairly treated.

- Are the facts straight? Have they been checked and double-checked?
- Is the story complete? Are the facts thorough and presented in context?
- Are the facts in balance? Has everyone who could be affected by the story had a chance to comment?
- Do readers/viewers/listeners have a legitimate right, need, or desire to know the information in the story? Are there public funds involved? Would public health or safety be affected? Is personal freedom at issue?
- Is the story told in sufficient depth to relate it in understandable terms to the average reader's level of interest? Does the story have meaning for the reader/viewer/listener?
- Has the medium handling the story given it the length and display or air time in keeping with its importance? Was the story presented with dignity and professionalism?

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