

## Who's bugging who?

Posted on Jan 08, Posted by [Juliette Kemp](#) Category [Public Relations](#)

REPEATED phone calls from PR folk are just about the biggest bugbears for journalists, I read this week on [HoldTheFrontPage](#). Along with Americanisms and corporate jargon.

But this blog is my response to some of those points. Let me start immediately by saying: I KNOW.

I may have gone over to the dark side being now a PR pro as well as a hack, but I have been in journalism probably longer than many of those newsroom staff I'm trying to reach, and still consider myself a journalist, so I KNOW. I KNOW many newsrooms are understaffed and facing further redundancies.

I, too, have been driven insane by calls right on deadline, from Ffion, Araminta, Fiffi, et al, asking whether I've received their press release about the latest fabulous must-have lip gloss (no local relevance, no local connection, advertising really). So I KNOW.

Yet Crucial spends an enormous amount of time drawing upon its journalistic expertise to aim press releases directly at the regional and trade media so that they should be deemed worthy of publication by the recipient, often tailoring each release to a specific region or publication.

As for those email follow-up calls, described as 'loathsome' by some colleagues. As a professional organisation providing a professional service, we issue media reports to clients so they can see how we working on their behalf to deliver their message, exactly where their press releases are going and the responses of those to which they are sent.

"Do not ring constantly just because you have sent me an email. I can read. If I want to follow it up, I can pick up the phone," says the report. Er - actually, we also like to ensure you've got the

email.



We KNOW you'll pick up the phone if you want to take it further but let's ensure you've got it first. At times when newsrooms are continually merging and shrinking, email addresses and addressees are constantly changing, often data bases and website contact details (extrordinarily vague and elusive in some cases, you'd think the media wouldn't want you to contact them for stories) are out of date.

Furthermore, I've been told many times an email's been junked unseen, by mistake or because newsdesks are just 'too busy'. I once sent the same release to an individual three times - and when finally read, then it was found to be of interest.

Well report resposdee who said: "In 20 years of journalism I cannot remember a single case of a PR phoning me about an email they have sent where this call has been anything other than a useless irriation," if I hadn't kept calling . . . .

And as for bad manners . . I have a job to do on behalf of someone else and I pride myself on carrying it out in a polite, friendly and professional manner. Please don't slam the phone down without so much as a goodbye having grumbled tersely about how busy you are on things that are 'far more important' and can't look/call back/etc etc. It's rude and it's unprofessional - not every PR is trying to sell a product or company and actually might have a good story.

Poor spelling and bad grammar? We agree wholeheartedly with you there! And, being journalists we, equally loathe corporate jargon and Americanisms and avoid them like the plague. Also, why use three or four words when one will do?

To the editor who advises PR people: "Why not try reading some newspapers, you might glean some idea of what makes a good story and what interests journalists?"

Admittedly some PRs may do well to heed this but please don't patronise all of us. Crucial PR

comprises entirely of journalists, we do nothing but read newspapers, magazines, websites and - we often have a better idea of what makes a good story than your own newsteams do.

Read the full Buzzword Report [here](#). □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

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