

Welcome to Taboo

February is a notoriously busy time for the media. To make sure your pitch gets heard above the crowd, read our interview with *The Australian Women's Weekly* Editor-in-Chief, Helen McCabe, who provides honest feedback on what works and what doesn't when pitching your story.

We hear from DIY PR guru and author/publisher, Annette Sym, who tells us how she caught the attention of the media with her innovative publicity stunt.

This month we also give you PR Guru's nine top tips on what to do if you win a coveted award in the lucky Chinese Year of the Dragon; as well as our regular debuts and departures section, showing some interesting moves on the board!

For those who haven't completed our survey – there's still time to go in the draw to win an iPod Touch when you do – link below. And, if you want more than your monthly Taboo fix 'like' PR Guru on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

Got news to share? Drop us a line at editorial@prguru.com.au.

Enjoy!



Time in lieu: 2 minutes with...Helen McCabe, Editor-in-Chief, The Australian Women's Weekly

What sets *The Australian Women's Weekly* apart from everyone else? It represents every aspect of women's lives across most age demographics. It is trusted, respected and basically it is an institution in this country.

What are your readers interested in? Everything, but they love to cook or at least to eat. They tend to enjoy reading about inspirational people more than celebrities and they are very family focused.

Complete this sentence "If you're pitching me a story idea don't ..." make mistakes in your pitch, don't pitch if you have never read the magazine, don't email me asking for a list of my feature ideas, don't call me direct asking for an updated staff list and don't offer me part of a story when you have pitched the rest to a rival outfit.

What are the three things you look for when deciding on a story? There is no formula. But let me just say I get frustrated when I take on a story and then the PR belatedly insists the story must be subject to picture and copy approval. (If I had known at the outset I probably would have said no and saved the money on the shoot.) By raising the issue of "approvals" after, the PR risks the relationship with the client or person involved in the story and that is damaging to the magazine and distressing for all concerned.



Complete this sentence "People always say I am..." actually, I don't know the answer. I suspect they say many different things, but I would prefer not to know.

What's the best part of your job? The opportunity to work with some of the most extraordinary women, and mostly they are ordinary people doing great things.

What is the best way to grab your attention? I have one journalist on staff that is really good at pitching story ideas. If you convince her, you convince me. Otherwise it is tricky and I have heard it all. If I had one message it would be that the key is relationship building and this is based on trust. If I trust you then you have a lot better chance of cutting through. The spin doesn't work.

My guilty pleasure is... champagne.

I'm on the look out for... great new restaurants.

Tell us something about yourself or your job that our readers generally wouldn't know... I am a bit ashamed to say I don't really cook. Actually, I never cook unless it is with my niece, Amy. But even then, the last time I tried to teach her how to make an AWW chocolate cake, I nearly burnt the house down by putting an electric jug on a gas stovetop.

DIY PR guru: Symply Too Good To Be True!

Annette Sym, *author/publisher and inspirational speaker* shares her DIY PR success story. Sym, is the author of *Symply Too Good To Be True* (a weight loss cookbook series).

What is the best pictorial angle you have put forward to the media? I presented them with a lifesize statue of myself, at my previous weight of 100kgs. The media loved it and it was a great way to show the 'before' and 'after'.

Why do you think print and TV responded so well? Who does that - a picture of yourself looking like that? Very brave of me! It was a great attention grabber and something a little different.

How did you know what the media wanted? A friend who is in television told me once, you have to stand out, you have to offer media something unusual, something that they haven't done before. So I thought doing the statue would interest them because it is quite unique. And it worked.

What are some of your tips for sustaining media interest in your recipe books after having such success at the beginning? Constantly re-inventing the wheel is what I do. I am always looking at what is topical, what is NOW and offering it to the media via a press release. I have found that bringing out new cookbooks has also helped grab media attention. I have also started creating free e-books and the media like this as well.

What role does PR play in your business? It is an important part as the media help to reach new people which in turn can help with sales of the cookbooks.

Which media story about your business created the biggest response for you and why? The biggest and most powerful response would have to be the time we released my sixth cookbook in the series 18 months ago. *Today Tonight* did a fabulous story on it and it just went off!!!! Also when I released my free e-book called *Diabetes Essential* during *Diabetes Awareness Week* last year, the *Sunday Mail* (Qld) did a story on it, which was another WOW



moment. We had a huge response and the phones went off the hook for weeks. LOVE IT!!!

What is the secret to your media coverage success? Making sure that we offer the media something new or interesting. Making it super easy for them and not constantly bombarding them with press releases. This is so that when they get one they think...hmmm Annette does good press releases I will read hers.

What advice would you give to someone outside the food/weight loss industry who wants to get publicity? Make sure that you have something 'sexy' to offer the media. What I mean by this is for example my statue at 100kgs is what is called 'sexy.' I know it doesn't look sexy, but for media when you have something so alluring that they think...hmmm this is really interesting tell me more, that means you have successfully 'hooked' them in. You then have a good chance of getting coverage. If you aren't sure what is sexy about your product or business then ask a happy customer why they use you. What is it that you do that they love, or why do they come back time and time again? Look out of the box for ways to pitch to the media and also look at what is topical, such as when I pitched the e-book it coincided with *Diabetes Awareness Week*.

What is the best feedback you have received from a journalist? When the *Today Show* emailed me to say that they had had a record amount of enquiries for a recipe that I had cooked on their show. That was fabulous.

What are some other great ways to attract media that you can share with small businesses wanting to do their own PR? I like [SourceBottle](#) as a daily feed of media leads, so sign up for that one as it is worth it. I also do a lot of talkback radio. Offering to talk about something of interest is a great way to be a regular on a show. Call the station and speak to the presenter or producer and hook them in with a great topic or idea that will be of interest to their listeners. Forget trying to 'flog' your product, sell yourself and be interesting and they will mention your website or product along the way. Make a segment interesting and they will get you back but if you just try and get free advertising time then you may lose a golden opportunity. And finally remember the media don't care about your product they only care about a good story, a good segment so give them that and you will reap the rewards.

Taboo or not Taboo? It's the Year of the Dragon, what does this mean for you?

According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2012 is the Year of the Dragon. A creature of myth and legend, the Dragon signifies a year of success and happiness. Which means good luck may come your way...



Think business awards. There are local, state and national business awards to enter as well as industry ones. Do your research on what to enter, and be prepared for when you win.

Here are PR Guru's nine tips on what to do if you win:

1. Have a speech ready. Write down the important things that you want to say, including who you want to thank for their support (sponsors, family, colleagues, the organisers etc).
2. Master the skill of brevity. Don't lose your audiences attention with a 10 minute speech or speak in jargon. Everyone needs to be able to understand what you're saying.
3. Be mindful of how you look. If the event is black tie, don't turn up under-dressed. The way you present yourself says a lot about you and your brand and image.

4. Make sure you have a photograph taken with your award. If there are influential people relevant to you or your business, get a photograph taken with them too.
5. Have a press release (and a list of relevant media contacts) about your win prepared just in case. This way you can distribute it while the news is fresh.
6. Be ready for media interviews. Make sure you are still on song after the victory celebrations and keep in mind the key messages and achievements that you want to get across.
7. To maximise your success organise your own media interviews within your industry and local press if they haven't been teed up by event organisers.
8. Tweet and update your status on Facebook about your win to let all of your followers and supporters know of your success.
9. Upload photos and your press release onto your website and other social media platforms.

Media debuts and departures

- Mia Freedman, writer, editor and publisher of *Mamamia.com.au* joins News Limited's Sunday newspapers as a columnist
- *AdNews* editor Darren Davidson joins *The Australian* as a business writer in March.
- News Limited has appointed Belinda Hickman-Newton as editor in chief of *Quest Newspapers*. She replaces Neil Melloy who took on the editorship of *Cairns Post* last year.
- Ten has announced its talent line-up for its new morning show *Breakfast*. Joining Paul Henry and Andrew Rochford is ex-Weather Channel meteorologist Magdalena Roze and Ten journalist Kathryn Robinson. The show is set to launch late February.
- Amy Sinclair editor of *New Idea* has been appointed editor of *Famous* magazine.
- Former *Neighbors* actress Jane Hall is set to join Chrissie Swan in an all girls breakfast show on Mix 101.1.
- *The Herald Sun & Weekly Times* has appointed former *Herald Sun* head of sport Ondrej Foltin to the new role of publisher, major events and partnerships, responsible for planning editorial coverage of major events across *The Herald Sun*, *Mx*, *The Weekly Times* and associated digital platforms.
- Cathie McGinn will join *MumBrella* and sister title *Encore* magazine in an editorial and marketing role.
- Julian Lee returns to *The Sydney Morning Herald* as a media writer, after leaving the paper in April 2011.



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Tell us what you think of PR Guru. By participating in our short 5 minute survey you have a chance to win an iPod Touch. <https://macinnismarketing.wufoo.eu/forms/pr-guru-customer-satisfaction-survey-2012/>

