

The Reality of Television: Successfully Working with Production Companies

By Mindy Bianca

This piece was adapted from a June 10 presentation at PRSA's Travel and Tourism Conference in Tampa.

Being featured on TV is a great way to gain exposure for your brand, so it's important to know how to tell your story through sight and sound. It's hard to land a popular production, so make sure that you have a compelling story and a unique backdrop.

The panel of TV producers and destination marketing experts who were part of this breakout session at the Travel and Tourism Conference agreed that CVBs, hotels and resorts, activities and attractions, restaurants and other businesses can effectively work with production companies to generate invaluable coverage through TV exposure.

The session discussed ways to maximize opportunities when you want to attract the attention of a TV show — or when a show is attracted to you.

Here are some basic tips for making the most of your chance to work with a production company:

- Watch the TV show that you're pitching (or that is pitching you) in order to decide if this is a



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good match.

- Have video available to share as part of the pitching or negotiating process. TV is a visual medium, so you need to be able to show what things look like.

- Anticipate the crew's needs and think about everything as if you're looking through a camera lens. These days, you can be the photographer. Put your smartphone in video mode to see what the crew will see.

- Know the most likely establishing shots and ensure that things look the way you want them to look.

- Have a conversation with the crew about the show's expectations — and yours — before the cameras are on site. Try to figure out ways for the two views to mesh.

- Look out for the crew; so many people are only focused on the talent. Also, learn the names of everyone you're working with.

- Reserve parking spaces as

close to the filming site as possible, and find ways to help the crew move equipment from place to place. Provide mail carts, luggage carts, golf carts or gurneys — pretty much anything with wheels.

- Know how to reach anyone who you might need on a shoot day. Add all of these contacts to your phone.

- Don't hesitate to enforce the rules if you have to and take safety seriously. Often, the best shot involves a safety or security obstacle, and sometimes, the media won't ask but will just go for it.

- Offer a good reason why you can't film something, if that's the case, and have B-roll available or present an option for an alternative (and equally amazing) shot.

- Make sure that you have access to a lawyer. Someone will

need to review the paperwork that the show shares with you and look out for your interests. Often, the show or company will ask your organization to sign property, personal and materials releases. Most production companies should have proof of insurance, and it's OK to ask them for this. It's common for a legal team to request that proof prior to signing the documents the show asks you to complete.

- Be sure to check with your show contact before publicizing anything, including posts on social media. Keep this in mind as you're planning the shoot, when the crew is on site and even once you know the show's airdate. Sometimes shows have very specific strategies about sharing information, and you don't want to step on anyone's toes with your own efforts.

- Know which direction the sun rises and sets if you are doing outdoor shots. Someone's going to ask you — I promise. **T**



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