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PR professionals are valuable partners to reporters

I suppose the editor of the Houston Business Journal, Bill Schadewald, thought his cheap shot at expurps (excited PR people) was really cute. ("PR activity signals economic recovery," June 25-July 1 issue, Denver Business Journal)

It seems easy for journalists to denigrate PR people, even though they count on us for interesting stories, reliable sources and to save them the trouble of doing their own homework. From my perspective though, it brings to mind the words of Paul Simon: "I don't find this stuff amusing anymore."

Maybe Schadewald should ask his reporters how many of their stories each week are generated by public relations professionals who work hard to provide accurate, factual information, trustworthy sources for expert opinion and the exclusive stories that his publication demands to get the scoop on its competitors. How many times do his reporters call PR people at the last minute because they desperately need a quote or facts verified before their deadlines?

In this era of consolidation in the news

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media, when reprinted stories from other publications often replace solid local journalism and when the blurry boundaries between news, advertising and entertainment create an environment where some journalists commit plagiarism just to make a name for themselves, the PR profession provides a valuable partner to reporters who need trustworthy information and new angles to do their jobs.

Maybe Schadewald should try publishing his paper this week without a single story generated by a PR person. My guess is there would be a lot more room for advertising.

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