

Role of Lawyer in High-Profile Case

I'm wondering if I can get some advice on this one. Recently picked up a client (who is a corporation) on a relatively high-profile local case.

Without getting into too much detail, a public statement is necessary at this time due to events which have recently transpired. My question is, should I as the attorney draft this and issue it to the public as the face of this representation, or is something like that better handled by a PR firm?

Thanks for any thoughts!

Hire a PR guy. This is what they do. I never release a statement without running it by my PR guy. I use Bill Bradley: <http://me-comm.com>

Jonathan Stein, California

Thanks Jonathan ... but just to clarify, after the message has been crafted by a PR guy, do you release it yourself (i.e. in your name), or have them do it for you?

Troy Tyson, Indiana

My PR guy writes it, I edit it, he fixes my crappy edits, I approve it and then he sends it out. The PR guy should have contacts with the media outlets that will get it to the right folks. That is half the benefit of the PR guy.

Jonathan Stein

Depends upon the case - sometimes a PR guy is the right person, sometimes the lawyer is, sometimes the client is . . .

Walter D. James III, Texas

This is a client decision. Recommend that the client hire a PR firm to work with you. You advise on the legal things (make sure statement does not accidentally admit guilt, liability, etc. PR firm decides what the message is in the statement.

Don't talk to press without express authority from the client. And if you get that authority, don't talk to the press; instead, issue a statement (hopefully cleared through the PR firm).

Andy Simpson, U.S. Virgin Islands

Thank you, Andy. The client is urging me to do it (they didn't even raise the possibility of a PR) because they know and trust me, but I'm nudging them to engage a PR firm for the same reasons pointed out - it's what they do.

Troy Tyson

Gotcha, thank you, Walter.

Troy Tyson

Hire PR; work with them on statement. Let PR firm or client release statement. Statement can cite you as the attorney, but be prepared to receive media calls. Know in advance how you will respond to media inquiries. It's never a good idea to just ignore them.

Meg Tebo, Illinois

My go-to would be Trisha Volpe at Barnes & Thornburg (Minneapolis), assuming there is no conflict of interest. A current lawyer, Trisha previously enjoyed a career as a news reporter covering several significant stories. She runs a media project for Minnesota Women Lawyers that involves preparing lawyers to speak to the media. She's a great resource.

Kristin Haugen, Minnesota

We do our own media, unless the client is willing to engage a PR firm and said firm agrees to be under our umbrella for "attorney-client privilege" purposes. We have a freelance media consultant available to review & target lists before we release anything, and we have subscribed to a database for making "official" press releases, so it is an investment to look legit. If you think this is a one-time only, then maybe outsource it to a PR firm.

Murtaza Sutarwalla, Texas