

## SOME USEFUL RULES FOR PRESS MEETINGS

*You've booked a meeting with a journalist, but how do you make sure that it goes well?  
Here are Napier's 12 rules to help you avoid the most common interview pitfalls:*

### PREPARE

This is the most important thing – talking from memory is far more effective than talking from a pile of papers. Also ask your PR agency for their input – they will be able to tell you a lot about the journalist, including how technical he/she is, what they have been researching recently, and how they like to conduct meetings.

### DECIDE ON THE HEADLINE YOU WANT

You should know what headline you want – e.g. "The fastest processor in the world", and use this as the "anchor" for the meeting.

### DECIDE ON 2 OR 3 KEY POINTS

Typical articles are 500-1000 words most of which could be background, so decide what are the most important points you want to get across and focus on them.

### ASK THE JOURNALIST WHAT THEY WANT

Before you start, ask the journalist how long they have, if they'd like refreshments and how much they know about your company and the industry sector – the answer to the last question obviously helps you in determining how much detail to go into.

### REPEAT THE HEADLINE AND KEY POINTS

In order to emphasise the key points, repeat them. Several times! Journalists actually want you to do this to help guide them to the most important information.

### ADMIT IF YOU DON'T KNOW SOMETHING

And follow up with the answer as soon as possible (preferably later that day).

### NEVER DISCUSS ANYTHING CONFIDENTIAL

Even "off the record" or as "background". Very few journalists would deliberately publish confidential information, but all of them can do it by accident. Don't be afraid to say that "we have not made any public announcement on this issue and therefore I cannot comment". In particular be very careful about giving any information on financial performance.

### DON'T KNOCK COMPETITORS

It never sounds good!

### DO DISCUSS MARKETS/MARKET TRENDS

Make sure it is all referenced to your company, and not to competitors. Give opinions, but be careful about any financial information if you work for a public company.

### DO CHAT SOCIALLY

Be friendly, and tell the journalist something about you that will help her remember you.

### USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE

Try to make everything a positive comment, rather than using negative language.

### DON'T TREAT IT AS A CUSTOMER MEETING!

It's very different! The journalist doesn't want huge amounts of detail, and is not likely to be an expert. They also want to focus on the news, and not on the company's financial situation. Journalists also want things put in context.