

MEDIA TIP SHEET

Throughout construction, the news media will be anxious to be in touch with businesses to find out the impact of construction and how they are handling it. The exciting part about this is the opportunity for Military Avenue Businesses to receive great coverage and in essence, free commercials! While we understand your business will experience challenges during this time, remaining positive for the media is the best way to protect your bottom line.

If a reporter shows up at your place of business for an interview, we hope you will keep these tips in mind:

1. Avoid negative statements: The media will be looking for businesses to say they are hurting and customers do not like to visit places where they think business is bad. Instead of saying you are experiencing challenges, focus on the shortness of the project, the street remaining open or the future of what the street will look like.

Examples: “We are lucky the construction time frame is relatively short and know we can get through it”, “We are pleased the street is not completely closed and access to our location is not a problem”, or “The end result will be a beautiful street bringing modern design amenities to the district”. Besides Military Avenue, customers have other streets and alleys to use for business access.

2. Have a few key statements thought out: Continue to steer the reporter to what you want to talk about such as continually talking about your in-store promotion or how you have been able to keep your loyal customers interested in coming back. Do not worry about repeating yourself or sounding like a broken record, it is ok to keep going back to the key messages you want portrayed.

3. Decide in advance what you are not going to say: Stick with your talking point: Don’t assume that anything you say is “off the record.” If you do not want to see it quoted in print or on the air, DO NOT say it. If you don’t say it, it can’t be used.

4. Use communication skills you would like your customers to see: This is an opportunity for your business to receive free publicity, and if you are upbeat and energetic, customers will see the construction is not impacting how you run your business.

5. Ask the reporter for the questions ahead of time: Prepare your answers. If they ask you a question you do not know the answer to, do not say “no comment.” Instead, tell them you will get back to them with an answer and follow up after the interview.

6. Give short responses: If you can get the question ahead of time, try to prepare sound bites that reflect your key points in a concise way.

7. Return phone calls: If you are contacted by a reporter please return the phone call the same day; as many are on tight deadlines for stories.