

## CHAPTER 4

### GET YOUR STORY OUT FIRST!

*“There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.”*

*~ Oscar Wilde*



#### **#1 Rule: Inform & Inspire**

Whether you are a manufacturer or service provider, you must tell your story first. To inform strategically, to get the press and your consumers interested in who you are or what your business is all about, you must also INSPIRE.

The first person out there with the story is the one we listen to and usually the one we believe. It's an old belief—if it's in print, it must be true. But what if the article was misquoted or had erroneous information? When you read the newspaper, for example, do YOU pay attention to the retractions? That's where they say “oops, we got something wrong.” Chances are you don't. In this case, you are in the majority. That's because once the story is read—it's over. Information received. Opinion formed.

Consider this workplace example: there is the friend in the corner office. She tells you, “Did you hear Sara might get fired because she has a bad attitude?” That's it. Next time you see Sara, even if you doubt what you heard was true, you put the story with the face of Sara. Once you hear the first story, especially if it is an interesting one, it becomes the one you remember. And should Sara hear of the incorrect story, she only gives it more attention by asking if you heard it. Any change to the story by Sara is considered defensive at best. Enough said, you tell yourself, and you move on. In your mind, this information makes Sara a “short-timer” from whom you should distance yourself lest you be seen by company management as part of the “outgoing” or “disgruntled” group. Keep in mind what we said about PERCEPTION in Chapter 1.

Maybe you've served on a jury or seen a television program where this happens: The judge strikes the prosecutor's statement from the record after you've already heard it. The statement is not only told first, but then it gets a second round of attention when it is retracted. The human brain cannot retract or delete like a computer. Once it's heard, it's stored. Guilty as charged.