

Media Relations Report

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Got a blog? Yeah, you and everyone else

It's getting harder to get reporters (or anyone else) excited about your organization's new blog. So how do you come up with a fresh angle for what is fast becoming just another medium?

No longer do you get “cool points” simply by having a blog. As blogs become just another part of the communications landscape, you can't expect the media to “ooh” and “ahhh” over them. Thus, the pressure is on to come up with a solid story angle that goes beyond the mere newness of the blog.

New York PR firm [gabbegroup](#) faced this challenge when trying to pitch the [OwenBloggers blog](#), which was started up by students at the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University. The blog, which offers an unvarnished view of B-school life, is not sponsored by the graduate program, although it has its unofficial support.

Scott Addison, a vice president at gabbegroup, explains that the Owen graduate program, a client of the firm, wanted to use the blog as a way to gain feature coverage. “Our mandate is to keep Owen top of mind in the increasingly competitive business school market,” Addison says.

Addison went out with a soft pitch about the blog to some of the key media covering business-schools – with lukewarm feedback. “We didn't get a whole lot of

interest,” he says. “Blogs are old news to a great extent. But we felt that the higher education media haven't necessarily tackled the subject.”

Regrouping, the PR team brainstormed for a better story angle, and decided to pitch the idea that blogs such as OwenBloggers were changing the rules of B-school recruiting. “The campus visit used to be the main recruiting tool, but now blogs are giving potential students a front-row view of what it's like to go to a school – the good and the bad,” explains Addison.

One of those pitches went out to Rebecca Knight, a writer at the *Financial Times* – a prime target for the graduate school's PR efforts, given its business readership. Wright liked the trend idea, and interviewed bloggers and Vanderbilt administrators, as well as creators of similar blogs. When her story ran last month, OwenBloggers.com was featured in the first few intro grafs, and the blog's founders were also highlighted.

Lesson for PR: If you're in the position of pitching your organization's blog, says Addison, “it's got to be tied to the influence it's having, or that it's changing the way things are operating.”