

“NO COMMENT”



No comment?

It can be a tough call ... but we've got you.

In the past, the Covalent Logic team has suggested responding to nearly every media inquiry — even a cautious “no comment” was rarely advised. And we weren’t alone in this recommendation. As media relationships formed, communications professionals prioritized engagement to help shape and own the narrative, even when there was a risk of being taken out of context.

However, the media landscape has shifted dramatically: distinguishing between a “journalist” and an “advocate” has grown murky, and a single blogger or influencer can now wield as much power as traditional news outlets once did. With limited time and resources, communications professionals must now be more selective, focusing only on the relationships that are truly worth the effort ... and are trustworthy enough to ensure a fair and balanced message. With a team of former journalists who have been on both sides of the inquiry, we created this quiz to help you navigate the tough decisions and make the best choice for your brand or organization.

So, you've been contacted by a reporter, and now you're tasked with deciding whether you should go through with an interview or give them the old “no comment” ... or ignore the request entirely. Normally, we advise against “no comment,” but in rare cases, keeping quiet is the safest strategy.

Take this quiz to determine whether you should speak up — or PASS!

References

[Poynter: Shutting Journalists Out](#)

[University of Michigan: Tips for Connecting with the Media](#)

[Columbia Journalism Review: When They Won't Even Say No Comment](#)

[Columbia University, University Protocol](#)



STEP 1:

Who's Asking?

Is the outlet openly politically biased? (Examples: Fox News, HuffPost)

- A)** No, they're known for balanced reporting.
- B)** They have a slight bias on some topics, but nothing extreme.
- C)** Yes, they're very partisan.

Is the outlet a blogger or social media influencer?

- A)** No, it's a traditional news outlet.
- B)** It's a digital platform, but reputable.
- C)** Yes, it's primarily a blog or social media-based.

Is the reach of the outlet under 10k viewers, readers, listeners or subscribers?

- A)** No, they have a broad reach.
- B)** Their reach is moderate.
- C)** Yes, they have a relatively small audience.

Do you or a client advertise with, sponsor or have ties to the media outlet?

- A)** No, we have no connection.
- B)** We've worked together in the past.
- C)** Yes, we have a business relationship.

STEP 2:

Rate the Reporter

Has the reporter worked for less than three years at this news outlet?

- A)** No, they're seasoned.
- B)** They've got a bit of experience, but are still new.
- C)** Yes, they're pretty green.

Has the reporter previously misquoted or misrepresented your business?

- A)** No, they've been accurate.
- B)** There have been minor issues.
- C)** Yes, they've gotten things wrong in the past.

Is the reporter a columnist or pundit rather than a journalist?

- A)** No, they're a hard news journalist.
- B)** They write commentary pieces, but do some fact reporting.
- C)** Yes, they're more of a pundit, commentator or analyst.



STEP 3:

What's the Question?

Is the information the reporter seeks available publicly on your website?

- A) Yes, it's all out there.
- B) Some of it is accessible, but not all.
- C) No, it's private or confidential.

Has the requested information been reported previously?

- A) No, it hasn't been widely covered.
- B) It's out there, but not prominently.
- C) Yes, it's old news.

Is the inquiry regarding developments outside your company?

- A) Yes, it's external.
- B) It's indirectly related.
- C) No, it directly involves us.

Is the inquiry regarding an individual or entity your company is actively involved with (partnership, sponsorship, employee, etc.)?

- D) No, it's unrelated.
- E) There's a loose connection.
- F) Yes, we're involved with them.

Is the inquiry provided in the form of a loaded question?

- A) No, it's straightforward.
- B) It's slightly leading, but not bad.
- C) Yes, it's very leading and biased.

Would a lack of acknowledgment better serve you in this situation?

- A) No, it's important to respond.
- B) It's 50/50.
- C) Yes, staying silent would be better.

Is there an active or pending lawsuit related to the situation in question?

- A) No, we're in the clear.
- B) It's possible, but I'm not sure.
- C) Yes, this is an ongoing legal matter.



What's Next?



Mostly As:

Speak Up!

You've got this! You trust the outlet, the reporter has a good reputation and you know your subject matter backwards and forwards. Stick to your talking points, and go forth and conquer!



Mostly Bs:

Tread Lightly.

You're in the gray, here. Weigh the pros and cons of responding, consult with your PR team and craft a careful, deliberate message. Perhaps consider responding with a written statement rather than an on-camera interview.



Mostly Cs:

Zip It!

In this case, silence actually is golden. The outlet has a small reach, the reporter likely isn't reputable or trustworthy and you're being asked misleading questions. It's time to say PASS or nothing at all.



We're Here to Help

If you are still having trouble deciding whether or not it's in your best interest to respond to that media inquiry, we can help! Reach out to Julie Donald, APR, and we will schedule a time to discuss your particular situation at length.

Shoot us an email at julie@covalentlogic.com to discuss the next best move for your organization.