
The real reasons Brits sell their real-life stories to the national press - top ten motivations revealed in a new survey -

In an era where people are increasingly selling their own real-life stories to the press for cash, you'd be forgiven for assuming that the majority are salacious "kiss-and-tells", with the tale-tellers seeking instant fame and a quick buck. However, recent research* reveals that Brits' motivations for sharing their experiences in national newspapers and magazines are often far more admirable – in fact, almost **ONE THIRD** of those wishing to sell their stories were hoping to warn other people of dangers they had faced first-hand, ranging from the criminal (such as identity fraud and date rape), to the medical (including gastric band disasters and slimming pill abuse).

The research, conducted by www.TalkToThePress.com, an agency which specialises in placing real-life stories in the media, also shows that a further 21% hoped to "inspire and motivate others" with their tales of successful weight loss, moving on after heartbreak and recovering from serious addiction or illness. The third most popular reason for selling a story was to raise awareness of an issue (17%) – whether it be promoting disabled sports or talking about personal experiences of illnesses such as anorexia, cancer and dementia. Just 10% claimed to be solely interested in earning cash from their experience while, right at the other end of the scale, only 2% were peddling a kiss-and-tell.

Commenting on the findings, www.TalkToThePress.com's founder, Natasha Courtenay-Smith says, "People contact us daily in the genuine hope that they can prevent someone else from going through a horrific experience or, on the flipside, spur people on to some level of success in their personal or business life. The fact that some newspapers and magazines are often willing to pay for first-hand accounts of true life experiences is seen purely as a bonus by the majority of people we hear from – and who would turn down a fee for their time as the credit crunch bites?"

The survey of people contacting www.TalkToThePress.com with a story to sell unveiled the top ten motivations to be:

1. Warn others of dangers they had faced (31%)
2. Inspire and motivate others (21%)
3. Raise awareness of an issue (17%)
4. Earn cash (10%)
5. Gain publicity for a product/business (8%)
6. Find a missing person (4%)
7. Gain closure on a personal situation (3%)
8. Pay tribute to a lost loved-one (3%)
9. Kiss-and-tell (2%)
10. Pressurise a Government body (1%)

As well as handling serious real-life stories which the press often use to illustrate the latest trends or topical issues, there is a lighter side as Natasha explains, “We see our fair share of quirky stories too – we were recently approached by a woman who hoped to make some cash from photographs she claimed to be of actual ghosts, plus a couple who wanted to tell-all about how they boosted their sex life with a ‘sexerciser’ they bought online.”

Natasha and her team have more than a decade’s experience of writing individual, personal and often emotional stories for UK national magazines and newspapers. Since launching www.TalkToThePress.com in January this year, they have successfully placed a multitude of stories in the national press, including: Britain’s youngest female to male sex-change patient, a couple who survived the recent Chinese earthquake and an anorexia sufferer who fought back from the brink of death to achieve a First at Cambridge.

www.TalkToThePress.com deals with a vast range of stories and can also help individuals who wish to keep a crime in the public eye. People with a story to tell should visit the website or call 020 7229 0023 for further details.

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Media information:

For further information and additional examples of individuals’ specific motivations for selling a story, please contact Lesley Singleton at LS Media on 01234 752 663 / 07852 451 093 or email Lesley@lsmedia.co.uk.

Natasha Courtenay-Smith is available for comment or interview. Previous story-sellers are available for comment or interview and high resolution images of the resulting articles can also be provided.

Notes to editors:

www.TalkToThePress.com was launched in January 2008 by former Daily Mail journalist, Natasha Courtenay-Smith. The agency acts as a go-between for individuals with a story to tell and the newspapers and magazines searching for real-life accounts and case studies.

www.TalkToThePress.com advises people on whether they have a story which may be of interest to the national media, helping them decide which publications to aim for and managing all their contracts and fees accordingly. The market for honest stories and authentic case studies continues to grow and the agency has seen a month-on-month increase in the number of people approaching them with stories they wish to share in the media.

** Based on 150 respondents surveyed by www.TalkToThePress.com during July 2008. All respondents had contacted the agency with a story and were asked what their primary motivation was for wishing to talk to the media about their experience.*