



Study tells flacks: Don't drive press crazy

By **JESSE NOYES**

A new survey has some advice for businesses pitching themselves to the media: Don't call on deadline.

A research report issued by Boston University and public relations firm Howell Communications provided insights on how companies, large and

small, can work with members of the media without driving them crazy.

College students at Boston University conducted an anonymous survey of reporters and editors at major Hub newspapers, radio and television stations and regional papers.

The report gave advice to PR people, such as

avoid calling reporters repeatedly, make senior-level executives available to the press, don't call near deadline times and pitch larger stories or trends — not just your company's product or service.

Some members of the media voiced a distrust and frustration with PR professionals.

"You try to investigate further, you will always be told to simply refer to the press release," said one anonymous radio news editor. "The whole business that PR thrives on is the concealment of certain details, and the overexposure of other details."

Local news outlets often find it easier to work

with small businesses over large- and mid-size companies, the report found.

"The overall attitude amongst the media was that it is easier to communicate with small businesses," the study stated.

Survey respondents suggested area small businesses use a local angle as a newsworthy element.