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## **American CEOs Preparing to be Interviewed By European Journalists Should Expect Different Practices, Reports New Study by PRGN**

Good Chance a European Journalist Will Permit CEO to Review Quotes Prior to Publication

*Don't be Rude to a Spanish Journalist*

**SAN FRANCISCO (May 19, 2014)** – Preparing to be interviewed by a German or Italian journalist? Make sure there's nothing in your personal life that you wouldn't want included in a news story. That's among the findings of a new survey on "European Journalistic Practices in Covering CEOs" conducted by the [Public Relations Global Network](#) (PRGN).

"CEOs who successfully engage in global media relations understand the importance of respecting cultural differences among journalists around the world," said David Landis, president and CEO of [Landis Communications Inc.](#) and the San Francisco member of PRGN. "Even normal, everyday activities taking place in English-speaking countries like the U.S. and the U.K. can vary greatly and any lack of awareness to the contrary could ultimately damage a company's reputation."

PRGN, an international network of independent public relations firms, is about to conduct a similar study in the U.S., surveyed 165 business journalists in 14 European countries during the spring of 2014. Among its findings:

- **European journalists may be more accommodating to their interview subjects than are their American counterparts.** Forty-one percent of journalists said they always allowed the CEO or the PR firm to review the CEO's quotes before publication. 21 percent said they allowed a CEO or PR firm to review the entire article in advance, depending on the relationship with the company or PR agency.
- **The top sources for interview preparation by European journalists were annual reports** (64 percent), news releases (59 percent) and past media coverage (58 percent). Interestingly, social media barely scored as an information source (16 percent), ranking 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Most European journalists prefer to conduct executive interviews in the CEO's office or at a production site** (67 percent), followed by restaurants / bars (55 percent) and telephone interviews (53 percent).



*David Landis, president and CEO of San Francisco-based Landis Communications Inc., the Bay Area member of PRGN*

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- **During an interview, European journalists expect a CEO to demonstrate:** outstanding knowledge of the company and market (92 percent), an engaging personality (86 percent) and a strong track record of performance (72 percent).
- **The biggest interview turn-offs for European journalists are:** arrogant behavior (75 percent), failing to answer critical questions (73 percent) and talking in platitudes (62 percent).

The study also uncovered the following differences in European country practices.

- **Media independence varies from country to country.** Journalists in the U.K., Ireland, Spain, Italy and Portugal are much less willing to allow pre-publication review of quotes or articles, compared to journalists in Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Denmark. One notable exception: While more than half of German journalists permit a review of CEO quotes, 75 percent of them draw the line at reviewing the entire article.
- **German and Italian journalists consider a CEO's private life when forming an impression of him or her.** Forty-four percent of Italian journalists and 42 percent of German reporters said a CEO's private life was important in helping them assess the CEO.
- **Pay particular attention to media coverage in Switzerland.** Swiss journalists, by a large margin (94 percent vs. 58 percent as the European average), rely primarily on past media coverage to prepare for a CEO interview. "It's nearly impossible to change the narrative in Switzerland once a particular story angle takes hold," said Buchanan.
- **British and Irish journalists prefer to conduct CEO interviews by phone.** While on-site interviews are preferred by European journalists as a whole (67 percent), only 33 percent and 43 percent, respectively, of U.K. and Irish journalists prefer them. They would rather conduct the interview by phone.
- **Mind your manners in Spain.** Arrogant CEOs rarely go over well with Spanish journalists. Ninety-four percent of them said arrogant behavior was the worst offense a CEO could commit – a sharp deviation from the 75 percent of European journalists who felt the same way.

"We're no longer working in relative isolation these days, so CEOs must be prepared to engage with media who are based outside of a company's home market," said Landis. "Those who remain ignorant of journalism's cultural differences and practices around the world could significantly impact their – or their company's – image and reputation."

#### **About the Survey**

165 business journalists from 14 European countries completed an online survey in March and April 2014. PRGN will conduct a similar survey of American business journalists this summer.

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### **About Landis Communications Inc.**

Winner of two national Bulldog Awards and called “the Bay Area’s communications experts,” Landis Communications Inc. (LCI) provides strategic communications, digital, integrated marketing, social media, media training, video production and overall public relations services and counsel to help businesses grow and stand out. Celebrating nearly 25 years, LCI is based in San Francisco and represents leading national consumer, technology and business-to-business clients. With its trademarked Promised Results© program, LCI delivers the right results that promote clients’ success to achieve their goals.

This year, TopPRAgencies.com named LCI the 3rd best social media agency in the country. In 2013, LCI launched Giant Step Digital, a national digital marketing brand in partnership with The Castle Group in Boston. LCI is the San Francisco member agency of Public Relations Global Network (PRGN), with nearly 50 offices worldwide. Follow LCI on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and Google Plus. For further information about LCI, please visit: [www.landispr.com](http://www.landispr.com).

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### **About Public Relations Global Network (PRGN)**

The Public Relations Global Network ([www.prgn.com](http://www.prgn.com)) is one of the world’s top four international public relations networks. Nearly 50 independently owned and operated PR firms in 80 markets belong to the invitation-only network. Collectively, PRGN firms have revenue in excess of \$110 million, employ more than 900, and operate 65 offices.

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