

Briefing IT industry analysts

@cote | 23 April 2015

Context & why you should care

- Your job is to inform analysts, answer their questions, and help them
- The analyst's job is explain what it is your company/product does, how it fits relative to competitors, and how well your company meets standard criteria for applying IT to solve business problems
- Briefings are the main interaction you'll have with analysts – they are simply presentations explaining yourself

A good briefing

- Figure out who the analyst is, what they cover – is there a specific ask?
- What information does the analyst need to know to understand your product, story, “message”?
- In general: the more the analyst talks, the better things are
- Be about “medium” depth in technical content & details
- Get feedback from the analyst on what they thought, or free associating of related items of interest
- Leave them thinking there’s a chance for further engagement in the future, be that (new) business for their firm or information trading

What the analyst is looking for

- Pure information – new features, numbers, etc.
- Gardening the relationship
- Evolving industry trends, customer stories, anecdotes
- BigCo: the company is “smart” and, thus, can innovate tech & strategy
- BigCo: the company is getting new business, not just “washing” old business
- Leads for future business, engagement, conferences, etc.
- To get off the phone

The Presentation

- **Who you are** – chances are the analyst doesn't know or has forgotten who you are
- **Company overview**
 - Startups: we have a good shot, are really smart, getting traction
 - BigCos: we can innovate, are very stable, can crush competitors, customers like us
- **Momentum** – as detailed as you can be
- **Problem being solved, how it's solved** – hole and shovel
- **Strategy & how your business works** – channel, partners, direct, etc.
- **The announcement, actual product details** - e.g., features in a new release
- **Road-map** – what's next, this is what you can expect
- **Vision, and future**

Content

- Bullet points are better. Your presentation is a *document*, not a presentation. Slides with one picture and one word are useless.
- Be as specific as possible – “cloud applications” vs. “any applications”
- Avoid macro/software is eating the world/Uber dross
- Align expectations/agendas: if the analyst asked for something(s) specific address it! (AR’s job, but check with them)

Presentation tactics

- Send presentation ahead of time, use a WebEx if you must
- Be in a calm place. Your chaos bleeds into brand sentiment.
 - Bonus: don't use a speaker phone
- Plan for 30 minutes of talking, have 45 minutes of content ready.
End early if there's no discussion (it's OK!)
- Speak with a unified voice on your side, pre-coordinate
- Coordinate in IM, let main speaker bring in secondary speakers

“I get paid to talk”

You say:

“We’d like this to be a two way conversation”

Analyst hears:

“Rather than pay you to tell me what you think, I’d like it for free.”

Talking and decorum, 1

- “Feel free to ask any questions you have as we go through this or tell me other things you’re interested in.”
 - Let the analyst interrupt and talk as much as they like
- In general: don’t prompt the analyst to talk (unless you know they’re an introvert dying for you to ask them to interject); they’ll talk if they want to
 - However: check about “moving on” and about every 15 minutes see if there’s any questions if the analyst has been quiet

Talking and decorum, 2

- Summarize slides and whole points if they don't seem relevant
- Always offer to follow-up, send more information, meet again, invite to conferences, etc. Offer up whatever you can
- Avoid asking “are you going to write about this?”
- If possible, defer any nuts and bolts, procedural stuff to AR

Secrets, NDA, etc.

- In general, you can tell analysts secrets IF you tell them to keep it a secret. Check with AR if in doubt.
- Only tell secrets that advance your cause – ranges of revenue, names of customers, future plans, etc.
- The phrase “NDA” often evokes all sorts of reactionary paranoia from analysts so use it judiciously. “Embargo” is better.
- Don’t ever say something that makes your company or product look bad, even as a secret

Finally...

- If you know what you're doing and know the analyst well, do what feels right and helpful
- Long-term, the goal is to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the analyst and yourself, regardless of which company either of you works for. Establishing & nurturing a good *relationship* is more important than anything else, for both parties.
- When all else fails, say "I don't know" or defer to AR before opening your mouth
- If you have money, buy re-print rights, consulting, "bullet-proofing," etc.
- Just be polite, like you're at a neighborhood dinner with people you actually want to be friendly with

More...

See a broader perspective on dealing with analysts here, though it lacks BigCo perspective:

<http://cote.io/how-to-deal-with-analysts-for-startups-record-ed>

Thanks!

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Slides: <http://www.slideshare.net/cote/briefing-it-industry-analyts-01>