

## Analyzing the Analysts – Part II

In the first article in this series, I described the technology analyst firm landscape and provided a general overview of the important role these firms play in US technology buying decisions. In Part II, I will share advice on how to target initial analyst contacts, schedule meetings and conduct your first briefings.

The best way to identify the right analysts to target is to ask prospects which firms they rely on for advice. If you don't have access to prospects, use other industry contacts to triangulate. You should also do web research, read blogs, and read trade magazines to see which analysts are quoted in the articles. Visit your competitors' web sites to see which analysts cover their companies.

Once you've identified your initial targets (ideally, 3-6 to start), read up on their existing research if you can get access to it. Most firms tightly control access to their full reports, which are reserved for paying clients, but you should be able to access research summaries at their web sites.

Before you reach out to any of the firms, get your story straight. Perfect your key messages and your US value proposition. If you are in a competitive market, be prepared to explain why you think the market needs another vendor, and how your company is different and better. Line up customer references (at this juncture, they are likely to be non-US – that is all right, but try to use companies who are recognizable in the US if at all possible). Anticipate questions the analysts will have about your US operations (where you are based, what kind of funding is available for your US expansion, who your key executives are) and formulate answers. A good PR firm can walk you through all of this and help you prepare.

Map out the location of each target analyst, and if it's possible, consider doing an analyst tour where you travel to different cities to meet with analysts in person. Boston has a high concentration of technology analyst firms, and is always a stop on such a tour. New York and San Francisco are also common stops. In-person meetings will allow you to make a better connection with each analyst.

When you have all of this in place – not before – you can make initial outreach to the analysts. In some cases, firms will have online “vendor briefing request” forms that you must fill out in order to get a meeting. It's crucial that you put your best foot forward when filling out that form, as it will ultimately go to an analyst who will then have the choice of accepting or declining the meeting.

Some smaller firms will not have a structure in place for arranging vendor briefings. In that case, it's best to approach your target analyst directly, first via email and then with a telephone call.

I should note that all of this can take place without your being a client of any of the firms. After you meet with your initial analysts, you may want to consider signing on as a client of one or more firms – but don't do that until you're sure each firm and analyst can help you meet your goals (whether they are related to revenue, strategic advice or lead generation).

In Part III of this series, I will discuss what to cover in your briefings, and offer advice for elements of an ongoing analyst relations program.



*[Michelle Goodall Faulkner](#) is Vice President, Marketing and Co-Founder of the Launch in US Alliance. She is also President of [Big Swing Communications](#), an agency that drives aggressive PR and marketing communications programs for technology companies. Michelle has 17 years' experience, on both the client and agency sides, helping companies create and execute marketing strategies in the US.*

© 2009 Big Swing Communications