



**AeroPerspectives' INFLUENCERS**  
2017 – Issue 1

## ***Showtime!***

***How to get your news in the Paris Air Show Dailies –  
and at other major aviation events – advice from Ian  
Sheppard, AIN, and Flight's Murdo Morrison***



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***“We see it almost as a community newspaper for the industry. We’re trying to get the most exciting news, the biggest developments that are happening at the show, really create a flavor of what’s happening at the show that day.” - Morrison***

***“It’s all done on merit, how newsy the item is. We like good PR people who are able to interact with us and highlight who might be the best people to talk with.” - Sheppard***

***By Rick Adams, Chief Perspectives Officer, AeroPerspectives***

If your company’s objective is significant coverage in the show daily newsmagazines for the Paris Air Show in June, this month (March) would be a good time to start contacting the editors about your newsworthy story idea. Next month at the latest. “Paris is in late June, so we will start assigning features to writers in late April,” said Ian Sheppard, Editor, International Show Editions, for *Aviation International News (AIN)*. “We would really appreciate people interacting earlier.”

The long-lead assignments Sheppard is making to *AIN*’s cohort of staff and freelance writers are typically longer features (750-1500 words ... half pages and whole pages) for the “pre-print” portion of the show dailies: analyses of industry segments, surveys, profiles, interviews. Great opportunities to highlight your organisation’s news or thought leadership ... provided you get on the writer’s radar early.

Roughly 50-60% of a show daily edition goes to press well before the show, according to Murdo Morrison, *Flight Daily News / Flight Evening News* Editor for Reed Business Information’s FlightGlobal. The “pre-cook” features are assigned to writers about two months before each show,” he noted. About half of those features will get bonus exposure in the weekly *Flight International* prior to the event. By comparison, “live” news at the show is often limited to about 300-500 words, except for major announcements by OEMs.

Once at the show site, Morrison and Sheppard both advocate getting key company executives to the event a day or two early, which greatly improves the chances for Day One coverage. The weekend before would be ideal, said Sheppard. “We have a lot of writers there on the weekend, getting ready for the show. But once the show is going, it’s very hard to squeeze in interviews. Monday and Tuesday are chock full with press conferences, so there’s no time to do interviews until Wednesday.” Morrison suggested that the Sunday before a major event is also an optimum time for photo opportunities: “One or two companies do it very well,” but most corporate executives tend to arrive at a show as late as possible and leave early, ignoring the best publicity window.

*A few other insider tips for securing show exposure:*

### **Photos**

“Our photographers are geniuses in coming up with a visual idea that’s different, even with the duller things like silver electronics boxes,” said Morrison. At a major show, *Flight* will have a photo editor and perhaps three other photographers. “Send us a press release about the new XZB Mark3 Twiddle box and it’s going to get a paragraph on page 12 the second or third day. But if you can get your marketing director to come on Sunday for a nice photo op, it immediately pushes you up in the rankings.”

### **Embargoes**

“If you send five press releases, all with different embargo dates, that can be confusing,” Sheppard said. (And a too-obvious ploy to game the system.) “You may get one in, and not the important one you really wanted. It’s best to do all the embargoes for one day and leave it to us to decide when to use something.”

“Some people worry that news may get out on social media, but we have very strict systems in place for embargoes,” he added. The *A/N* editor recommended being precise about the embargo timing, including date, time zone and hour when the news can be released to be published online.

### **Press Releases**

“Don’t bombard us with press releases,” advised Morrison. “Some companies send out 12 different press releases.” Don’t send more than two or three; otherwise, they’ll get lost or bundled together into one story.” Also, “try to get a show angle,” Morrison said.

Both publications only use news of companies exhibiting at the event. “It’s not fair to the exhibitors who have paid to be there. If you don’t think it’s important enough to exhibit at the show, why are you sending me a press release?” Morrison asked.

### **Press Conferences**

“One of the biggest problems is that everyone tends to hold their press conference at 10 or 11 on Tuesday morning,” Sheppard lamented.

### **The Editor’s Shoes**

During a show, editors get 200 or more emails a day. Corporate press releases are rarely used as submitted – news announcements are parceled out to a team of writers, and each item is rewritten, perhaps with additional research for context. “Don’t get fussy about the prose in press releases,” Sheppard said. “We’re going to rewrite them. There’s a lot of waffle in press releases, not very news oriented. Don’t just let the marketing guys write something that doesn’t say anything.”

### **Production Timing**

*A/N* and other morning-distribution show dailies, such as *Flight* at Paris and other major airshows, close off copy for an issue around 4 o’clock the afternoon before. “If we don’t get the press release before midday, there’s not much chance of it getting in the next day,” said Sheppard. *Flight*’s editions at EBACE and NBAA, which are published in the evening, go to press around lunchtime, but the bulk of the pages are done the day prior.

Other industry events also have an impact. For example, because of the EBACE business aviation conference in Geneva, Switzerland in May, writing assignments for the Paris Air Show get moved forward to avoid a crunch.

### **Pre-Show Media Trips**

“We can do a press trip just in front of a show, but it may be a struggle to get the copy in,” Sheppard explained. “If the trip is a couple of weeks (or a month) earlier, we have a better chance to swing some space.”

### **Drop In and Say Hi (Briefly)**

“At the air shows, it’s always a good thing to come in and see us. It’s always good to put faces to names. Just don’t expect a 20-minute audience,” cautioned Morrison. “We’re always happy to see people,” added Sheppard. “If you’ve already sent material and come in before the show, we can introduce you to the writer. Bring in a USB with some photos. We wish more people would do that.”



Rick Adams