

11 Entertainment Reporting

Now here you can have style. Furthermore, according to one who knows, you should have lots of it. You should even flaunt your style. Push your style.

That advice comes from the guy who might be looking at you one day for a job. He is Vinnie Potestivo, Director of Talent Development and Series Casting at MTV Networks. Style or a signature, Vinnie believes, is absolutely essential for entertainment reporters.

"When you are dealing with entertainment reporting," he points out, "this is the person who is between the audience and the celebrity. What better way to make a celebrity comfortable than to come from the same world of glamour that they do. The celebrity



Fig. 11-1 Vinnie Potestivo, COURTESY OF CHRISTINE COWAN

"They are more the voice of our demographic," is the way Vinnie puts it. "As they deliver the news, they are delivering opinion, they are delivering style . . . they are the front line in what's happening in the celebrity world."

It's a tone that Vinnie is talking about here. Teaching that tone is part of his job. "Part of the responsibility of my job is overall talent development. So in addition to casting and developing vehicles for talent, part of what I do is making sure talent fits the tone of the network — that there's a unified tone to the network.

"We go over breathing technique, physical breathing technique. Connecting your body to your physical voice. Finding the core

within your voice because that's what's going to carry. And there is the physical presence.

"My biggest obstacle is finding the talent. Now that the talent is there, the next step is taking your talent and fitting it into the tone of what's happening on our network."

That's what the MTV entertainment reporter or anchor sounds like. What does he or she look like? They are not very young — the youngest anchor is about 25 or 26 years old. They are sexier. "The main characteristic that differentiates our anchors from the main networks is style . . . a younger looking, hipper style. It's a style that reflects what's going on in pop culture. A little bit of style, a little personality and a little bit of opinion." But note, even on MTV, you can go too far. It's one of the mistakes he sees.

"Over-styling is a big problem. Reporters who go too far, over-compensate based on what they see on the red carpet. We are fashion forward, we push the envelope and sometimes even we miss."

But not for lack of trying. If they miss, it's because they know style is important to the audience and they err on the side of effort, not on laziness.

Are You the One for MTV?

Who is Vinnie looking to tap as the next on-camera star at MTV? He shared the secret with me for your information. "Here at MTV, for entertainment reporters or news correspondents or news anchors, we look for someone with music or pop culture knowledge. Yet, at the same time, someone who can articulate what's going on within our demographic.

"The skills we look for are: Writing, producing and research. Our news correspondents don't really fall into the category of 'entertainment' because we treat them more as news correspondents. They were on the front lines of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans — any place that is relevant in pop culture. It's not limited to just entertainment what we do here."



W. Miller

Fig. 11-2 Sorry, you don't get to keep them.



(From Vinnie):

-
- Don't be stuffy.
 - Don't show off in an interview.
 - Stay on the point of the piece.
 - Don't overdress or underdress.