



BlackBallotPower

Press and Public Relations

Q: Who are the media?

A: Basically there print (newspapers, magazines), radio, TV and on-line news. The media, due to technology, are changing rapidly.

Q: Why use local press?

A: Local press includes local newspapers and magazines, local radio stations and some local television stations - especially cable TV. Legislators use local press outlets to keep in contact with their home districts.

Q: Why is media important?

A: Media is free publicity and can get your message out to the widest audience as possible. The media also help to legitimize our work to a wider audience that we normally don't come in contact with. Once there is an article in the local paper, or an interview on the radio, it makes our work that much more tangible to a larger audience. One good article in a well circulated newspaper is more valuable than a literature drop to thousands of households.

Q: What are reporters looking for when they decide what to cover?

A: A newsworthy story. What they publicize is usually a combination of what happens and what will sell papers or increase ratings. Ask yourself:

1. Does our issue affect large numbers of people?
2. Does our issue affect a specific group, such as seniors, youth, Blacks, immigrants?
3. Are their public figures involved in our work?
4. Do we have moving stories to tell?

Q; How do I find out who the media are in my area?

A: Start putting together a Press Contact list. What do do people read, what radio stations do they listen to? Google search or aall the outlets and get the names of editors, writers, community service liaisons. Include names, addresses, phone, fax and email addresses in your list.

Print:	Local papers Local high school and college papers Newsletters for major nonprofits in your area
Radio	College and university stations Commercial stations
Television	Local Stations Cable access programming
On-line:	Huffington Post, Politico, Roots – there are many, which ones do your constituents read?

Q: What is a press release?

A: A press release can announce any newsworthy event. The key here is that you are providing news. A press release should be brief if it is an announcement. You can make it longer if you are looking for an article that will quote you. A Successful press release will include quotes from people living with the problem or public figures who recognize your work. Do not forget to include the names and phone numbers of contact people for more information.

Q: What is a media advisory?

A: A media advisory is used if you actually want the press to show up at a particular time and place - an announcement of an event or press conference. The media advisory includes time, date, place, and a brief description of the event. In the first paragraph try and cover the 5 w's (who, what, when, where, and why).

Q: How do we get a press release or advisory out?

A: Fax and email the advisory to an individual and follow it up with a phone call. Phone calls two hours prior to the event are strongly recommended - ask for the name of the reporter and photographer covering the event.

Q: What is a Public Service Announcement (PSA)?

A: It is a federal mandate that all commercial radio stations and television stations reserve a certain number of minutes each day for what are called PSA's. These are 30 to 60 second spots read by the DJ's or played on video that inform the audiences about events and organizations that benefit society as a whole.

Q: What is a Calendar Listing?

A: Just as it sounds, it is a way to inform and invite the general public to an event. A calendar listing include, time, date, place and admission cost. Most media sources have a calendar listing of events as well as listings of volunteer opportunities. Most require a 2 week minimum lead time. Some as long as a 6 week lead time.

Q: Who are the best people to speak for the organization

A: People who know the program best and are good public speakers. Avoid loose cannons - people who may be fantastic sometimes but have their own agenda and you can't control them. You should balance your speakers. When doing an interview always have at least two people available for balance. Make sure gender and ethnicity of those being interviewed reflect the diversity of your program.

Q: How do we get on talk radio

A: Target your programs. Listen to the programs and figure out what type of stories they are looking for. Call the stations and find out who the program manager is. Get them on the phone and have a chat with them about their program, the work you are doing and pitch him/her some story ideas and people to interview.

Q: What is a local angle?

A: A local angle is what will get you covered in your local press. People want to read about what is happening in their backyard. The more statistics that are specific to your locale, the better. Get local residents to give you a quote on the importance of your program. If you can pair up a board member with a city councilor and a student as the spokespeople – even better!

Q: What is a Photo Op?

A: Think about the photo on the front page of the newspaper. If you could design whatever you wanted to benefit your organization, what would it be? A banner with the name of your group, children, activists, something exciting and colorful. Create the photo opportunity to your benefit. Make sure it is representative of all the people in your program. You can never make the photographer take the exact photo you want - but you can offer them good material. Or take photos yourself and send them to the local press. Few local papers will send out photographers.

Q: What is a press packet?

A: A packet of materials to make available to the press at a press conference, interviews, or special events full of background information on your program, a fact sheet, brochure, list of funders, board members and copies of relevant press clips. With this press packet they should have enough information to write a story.

© Union of Minority Neighborhoods