Brazos Progressives Fall 2004 Workshop
"Working with the Media: Getting Out Your Message"

Special Thanks to:
Marilyn Martell – featured presenter
The Alternative Media Dinner Panel

Thanks to the Fall Workshop Planning Committee for a successful workshop.
Specifically, thanks to:

Krista May
Beatriz Arnillas
Katy Stewart

Price Guide

Bryan- College Station

4th Qtr

	Daytime 6A-4P	Early Fringe 4P-7P	Prime 7P-10P	Late Fringe 10P-12A	Overnight 12A-6A	ROS 6A-6A
P						
CNN	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
ESPN	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
FNC	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
HGTV	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
LIFE	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
TLC	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	$17
TNT	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
USA	$10	$16	$33	$15	$3	N/A
C r						
A&E	$8	$12	$25	$10	$2	$17
CMDY	$3	$5	$10	$4	$2	$9
CNBC	$5	$8	$12	$7	$2	$9
DISC	$8	$11	$22	$9	$2	$17
ESPN2	$4	$7	$15	$9	$2	$10
FAM	$3	$5	$10	$4	$2	$9
FXSP	$5	$9	$18	$8	$2	$11
HLN	$3	$5	$10	$4	$2	$9
MTV	$6	$11	$22	$9	$2	$17
SPK	$8	$15	$25	$10	$2	$17
TBS	$6	$11	$22	$9	$2	$17

Version: August 2004

* Special Events and Sports Programming priced separately
* Fixed Position Spots = 20% over Prime Rate
* :60 Commercial Rate 2x :30 Rate
•Less than :30 Rate is 75% of :30 Rate when Available
•Partial Weeks = Rate * 1.5
•6 Month Agreement = 10% Discount
•12 Month Agreement = 15% Discount

Cox Media * 201 Quality Circle * College Station, TX 77845 * 979-690-6500 Phone* 979-690-6938 Fax

BRYAN – COLLEGE STATION

4th Qtr

Select

	Daytime 6A-4P	Early Fringe 4P-7P	Prime 7P-10P	Late Fringe 10P-12A	Overnight 12A-6A	ROS 6A-MID
ANPL	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
BET	$2	$5	$10	$4	$1	$9
E!	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
FOOD	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
FX	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
GAC	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
GALA	$2	$5	$10	$4	$1	$9
HIST	$2	$4	$8	$3	$1	$5
NICK	$2	$5	$10	$4	$1	$9
PAX	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
SIFI	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
TOON	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
TRAV	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
TVLD	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
TWC	$2	$3	$6	$3	$1	$5
VH1	$2	$5	$10	$4	$1	$9

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Price Guide

Special Programming

Bryan – College Station

4th Qtr

Network	Program	Day/Date(s)	Time(s)	Rate
A&E	*Biography*	T-W	7-8p	$30
CMDY	*Dave Chappell Show*	Tues	9-9:30p	$30
CNN	*Larry King Live*	M-Sun	8-9p	$40
DISC	*Surprise by Design*	M – F	12-2p	$15
	Monster Garage	Mon	8-9p	$30
	American Chopper	Mon	9-10p	$30
ESPN	*SportsCenter*	M-F	5-6p	$35
	SportsCenter	M-F	10-11p	$45
FNC	*O'Reilly Factor*	M-F	7-8p	$40
	Hannity and Colmes	M-F	8-9p	$40
FOOD	*Emeril Live*	M-Sun	7-8p	$20
FX	*Nip/Tuck*	Tues	9-10p	$30
FXSP	*Sunday Night Fights*	Sun	8-10p	$20
LIFE	*Missing*	Sat	9-10p	$35
	Strong Medicine	Sun	8-9p	$35
MTV	*Newlyweds*	Wed	9-9:30p	$30
	Real World	Tues	9-9:30p	$30
	Road Rules	Mon	9-9:30p	$30
SPK	*WWE Raw*	Mon	8-9p	$25
	WWE Raw Zone	Mon	9-10p	$25
TBS	*Friends/Seinfield*	M-F	5:30-7p	$20
	Sex and the City	Tues	9-10p	$35
TLC	*Trading Spaces*	M-F	3-4p	$30
	Trading Spaces	Sat	11a-12p	$30
	Trading Spaces	Sat	8-9p	$45
	Trading Spaces	Sat	9p-12a	$35
	While You Were Out	Fri	7-9p	$35
USA	*Monk*	Fri	9-10p	$35

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Commercial Production Rates

Editor's Package

This package is ideal for simple or information driven commercials, creatively utilizing on-screen text, voice-over, simple cuts, and still photography or video library backgrounds.

$225

- In-house pre-production meeting
- Script
- Color Video background library or client provided photos
- Cuts only editing
- Character generated text
- Professional Voice-over
- VHS copy
- Music Library

Director's Package

This package utilizes on-location video taping, a professional voice-over editing effects, graphics, and library music to create various commercial styles, from subtle elegance to high-impact traffic drivers.

$350

- Pre-production & script review meetings
- Concept & scripting
- Single location shoot
- AVID non-linear editing
- Character generated text
- Professional voice-over
- Library music and/or sound effects
- Digital logo enhancement & movement
- VHS copy

Producer's Package

This is our custom production package, for when you want a unique visual concept to sell your message. From multiple location shoots and professional talent to dynamic moving graphics and powerful special digital effects, we offer high production quality at affordable rates. Rates vary by concept and complexity.

$ Per Project

- Pre-production & script review meetings
- Concept & scripting
- Single or multiple location shoot(s)
- Character generated text
- Photoshop graphics & logo enhancement if necessary
- Computer animation
- Library music & audio effects
- Custom music & jingles
- Professional voice-over
- AVID non-linear editing w/ effects.
- VHS copy

concept

script

shoot

edit

Note: Package rates include some refinement. Additional revisions may incur incremental fees according to published ala carte rates.

Ala Carte Services

Production

- DVCPro camera pkg w/operator (M-F 8a-5p) $125 hr/day
- DVCPro camera pkg w/operator (Weekends & After) $200 hr/day
- In Studio Shooting/Chroma Wall $150 hr/day
- Scripting and concept $50 hr

Post Production

- Editing with AVID $175 hr.
  Media Composer Adrenaline w/effects
- After Effects $280 hr.
- Photoshop graphics $50 per page
- Logo enhancement $50 hr.
- Video burn to DVD (:30) $35 ea.
- :30 Professional voice-over $25 ea.
- Music library $35 ea.
- Beta SP copies (:30) $35 ea.
- 3/4 copies (:30) $35 ea.

5 to 10 second commercial tags

- Tag with one element $25 ea.
  Ex. Character generated – text only
- Tag with two elements $50 ea.
  Ex. Logo and character generated text
- Tag with three elements $75 ea.
  Ex. Voice-over, logo and character generated text

concept

script

shoot

edit

COX Media.

Note: Ala Carte services are 1-hour minimum charges. VHS or 8mm footage is not acceptable for commercial production. Rates subject to change.

“Getting it Right to Get the Media to Write: Media Relations & Public Relations for Non Profit Organizations”

Presented to Brazos Progressives

By Marilyn M. Martell

November 14, 2004

“Getting it Right to Get the Media to Write: Media Relations & Public Relations for Non Profit Organizations”

PRESENTATION

I. Introductions

II. The Basics

III. “Getting the Word Out” - Determine Why to Publicize

IV. Designing a Publicity Plan

V. Public Service Announcements

VI. Press Releases

VII. Media Lists

VIII. Contacting the Media

IX. Creating a Media Event

X. Other Publicity Options

The Basics

Press relations is an ongoing cultivation process. Your agency strategy for press coverage needs to go beyond trying to land one big story -- you want the press to know that you are THE agency to contact whenever they are doing a story on a subject that relates to your mission.

Therefore, don't think that every press release is going to result in a story -- it's not. But sustaining regular press contact will build recognition of your agency among reporters, and result in ongoing payoffs down the road. As stories and listings for your agency do appear, you won't just be reaching new audiences -- you will also be reaching current volunteers, supporters and clients, reminding them of what your agency is doing and what they have chosen to be a part of.

First off -- who the heck is your agency, anyway? Is your mission statement the perfect brief description of your organization? If not, revise it before you approach the press. If you don't write a good, brief description of your organization and have it displayed prominently on your Web page and letterhead, in press releases and brochures, etc., the press will make up one themselves -- and it may or may not be accurate.

As a follow-up to step one -- everyone at your agency should be able to recite that mission statement from memory. If it's too long for staff and board members to easily remember, it's too long for the press to remember as well.

Media relations needs to be fully supported by your agency and you need policies and procedures around your agency's press relations. Answering these questions is a start:

- Who is responsible for press relations at your agency (writing press releases, answering calls from the press, inviting press to events, etc.)? Does the person who answers the phone know to refer ALL calls from the press to that person?

- Do all staff members and volunteers (including board members) know what to do if they are contacted by a press representative? (Do they talk with that person and then let the agency's public relations director know they have done so, or, do they refer the reporter to the public relations director FIRST before any interviews take place? Decide a strategy and make sure it is communicated to everyone).

- Who at your agency needs to know that a photographer or camera crew is showing up at your agency or event? ALWAYS notify people they are going to be (or might be) photographed or filmed BEFORE it happens! You don't want someone throwing a fit for the evening news.

- The person who answers your phone, or anyone who signs anyone up for an activity at your agency (volunteers, donors, people who attend events, etc.), should ask these people who call how they heard about your agency or activity. This will help you see how effective your outreach activities are, and help you plan strategically for the future.

Why publicize your organization or event?

- Educate Public
  - Issue or complaint? Service? Fill public need? If community doesn't know about it, can't participate, support, benefit or care.

- Credibility
  - Public responds better to organizations its familiar with
  - Building name and mission recognition paves the way for later action and activities

- Membership recruitment/fundraising
  - Same as credibility; if no one knows about you, who will want to join you or give money to you

- Attendance at event
  - The death of a great event is no publicity and no turnout.
  - Never assume "if you hold it, they will come"
  - Must repeat the message many times and generate interest

- Leadership development
  - Active promotion of the organization causes members to care about the organization;
  - Forces members to know and understand organization; Involved members stay members

- Morale
  - Feels good – members stay involved and motivated when associated with positive publicity

Worksheet #1
Getting starting – ask yourself why

Organization Name: _____

Title of event: _____

1. Why do you want publicity for this event?

_____
_____
_____

2. What outcomes do you want? (list them)

_____
_____
_____

3. How will you measure success of publicity?

_____
_____
_____

Notes

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Designing a publicity plan

GOAL: REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME FOR THE RIGHT PRICE AND THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF EFFORT

Must know five essentials for success:

A. Target Audience
   Who to reach? Constituencies – people, organizations, businesses
   Analyze your market and target your message

B. Budget
   How much money is available? What are essential expenses? (Facilities? Printing brochures? Food? Supplies?)

C. Labor Pool
   How much staff is available to assist?
   Many volunteers to divide duties or just you?

D. Timeline
   How much time before event? What kind of lead time is needed? How much time is needed to be effective
   Always best to plan ahead

E. Newsworthiness
   To get media coverage, think like a journalist
   Is the event newsworthy? How does it tie in with news events?
   Are there creative ways to communicate your message?

Again, gather all info first, then can make strategic decisions

Worksheet #2
Designing a publicity plan

1. Who is your target audience? Who do you want to hear your message?

_____
_____
_____

2. Budget: How much money do you have to work with?

_____
_____
_____

3. Labor Pool: How many workers do you have?

_____
_____
_____

4. Timeline: How much time is there between now and the event?

_____
_____
_____

5. Describe the event's newsworthiness: why is worth publicizing?

_____
_____
_____

Notes

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

The essential information for a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or a Press Release you want to include are the details about "who", "what", "when", "where", and "how". Simply, the answers to those questions should be included. But that seems to be where many organizations trip themselves up. They leave out some portion of the essential information. Since many local media people are usually pressed for time, releases that don't include some of the vital information will likely be tossed in the trash because they don't have time to follow up to try to get a correction.

- Find out what kind of PSAs the station runs, what rules apply, what their time limits and formats are, and whom and by when PSAs should be submitted.

- Your nonprofit's name should be heard and seen at least twice during a PSA (some stations are very particular about identifying your 501(c)(3) status; always check in advance). Be sure to include your contact information.

- Your PSA should be short: no more than 28 seconds when read aloud.

- Read your PSA out loud and consider how it sounds. Consider how the announcer would likely read it; sometimes your PSA may be read word for word.

- TV PSA's may require certain formats; ask the station what format they prefer (Beta SP or one-inch tape are the most frequently used formats). Leave three to five seconds at the end of your PSA for your logo (called tagging).

- Submit your PSA at least one to two months before a specific event date. Include a "kill date" (the date when your PSA must be taken off the air) on your PSA.

- Cable Television: Remember that seventy-five percent of American homes have access to cable television! Advertising on cable television allows you to control your program content, air it during prime time, repeat it frequently, and is a very effective way of getting your message across to a broad spectrum of people.

- Your nonprofit could air educational videos, public service announcements, or other programs to publicize projects and campaigns.

Format (for PSA Copy)

- Type PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT at the top of the page so the journalist immediately knows what she's reading.
- Type on only one side of the 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper - never print copy on the back side of the paper.
- Double-space the entire PSA so that it can be easily read.
- Mark the end of your announcement with "###" (centered and without the quotation marks) to signal that no additional copy follows.

Sample PSA

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
Junior League of Bryan-College Station
Sheila White : 774-4759

Kill date:
April 6, 2003

If your child vanishes, will have you have all the important information ready for the police, right at your fingertips? You can: The Junior League of Bryan-College Station will distribute free Child ID kits Saturday, April 5th at AppleTree, located at Briarcrest Drive and East 29th streets in Bryan, from 10am – 4pm. Again, the Child ID kits are free. Join the Junior League in protecting our kids. That's Saturday, April 4th at AppleTree in Bryan. For details, call the Junior League at 774-4759. That's 774-4759.

###

Worksheet #3

Publicity Options
Writing a Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Kill date:

WHO:

WHAT:

WHEN:

WHERE:

WHY:

MORE:

Radio PSA – Written

Writing Press Releases

The biggest challenge is understanding what reporters consider genuinely newsworthy. This is generally due to a lack of perspective. Being as close as you are to your organization's daily struggles, you might think the whole world ought to care as much as you do about the organization's every success. Find out what is most relevant to the medium's audience and craft your message accordingly.

1) COLLATE AND ORGANIZE YOUR FACTS.

Contrary to what most people think, a journalist actually spends the bulk of his time in collating information and facts. When everything is ready, it is not uncommon for journalists to finish writing the story in just half an hour.

How should we go about collating all the information and facts surrounding a particular event? A simple rule of thumb is to find answers to questions pertaining to the who, what, when, where, why or 5 Ws of the event. These must be presented in the right perspective relative to newsworthiness. You may have to undertake some research by going through past newspaper's reports.

2) IDENTIFY YOUR STORY'S ANGLE.

Now that you have collated all the relevant facts and figures, the next step is to identify the "angle" or headline of your story.

This story angle must be presented in the first paragraph as well as the headline of your press release. Most newspapers employ an "inverted pyramid" format that presents the most important information in the opening paragraph, followed by other information that supports or develops the key points raised in the first paragraph.

3) CREATE A CATCHY HEADLINE.

By all means, keep your headline short and simple using less than ten words. It should convey the key point raised in your opening paragraph in a light-hearted manner that catches people's attention and imagination.

4) WRITE IN THIRD-PERSON VOICE.

Unlike an emailed newsletter that is written in a personal voice, a press release must be presented objectively from a third person point of view.

- remove "you", "I", "we" and "us" and replace them with "he" and "they"
- provide references to any statistics, facts and figures raised in the press release
- refrain from expressing personal opinions, unless they are done in quotes
- draw conclusions from facts and statistics only - not general opinion

5) PROVIDE "QUOTES" WHEN APPROPRIATE

Put your most important message down into a quote to add an authorative voice.

Press release structure

Press release style may vary somewhat, but most follow a specific structure

NEWS RELEASE FORMAT:

- Keep your press release to one page or 250 words maximum.
- Use standard press release format
- Use 8 1/2" x 11" white paper with 1" margins (organization letterhead is best)
- Use a font like Courier or Times
- In the upper left corner in capital letters write FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
- Double space and give your name and all contact information, including how to reach you in the evening at home. Do you have an address, home and office telephone numbers, a fax number, an email address, and a web site? Include them all if not on letterhead
- Two lines down type your headline in boldface. Capitalize the first letter of each word except for a, an, the, of, to, and from
- Two lines down from the headline, type in your city and the date you are sending the press release. Follow immediately on the same line with the body of your press release.
- Use only one side of the paper, which should not be a problem if you have kept your word count down.
- The last line is three ###s centered.

Worksheet #4
Publicity Options
Writing a Press Release

This news release will: _____

1) Why would the publication print your release or grant you an interview? What's in it for them?

_____
_____
_____

2) Make your title do double duty; capture the editor's or producer's attention and give a clear idea of what is to follow.

Title: _____

3) What is newsworthy about this event?

_____
_____
_____

Who: _____

What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

What active words, strong verbs and visual descriptions apply to this event?

_____
_____
_____

ONLINE / INTERNET PRESS RELEASES

Writing made-for-print press releases and sending them via email ignores the two chief constraints of reporters and editors - lack of time and the fact that they must read your information from a computer screen. What's needed is a made-for-the-Internet news release format. Think of the electronic news release as a teaser to get a reporter or editor to your web site for additional information. Here's how the Internet -ready news release should work:

- The lead paragraph of a release should state its point in 40 words or less. Of those 40 words, no more than six words should be used to describe what your non-profit organization does.

- Additional material about the organization that is not directly related to the point of the story can be compiled in a separate paragraph below the lead or at the bottom of the page.

- Writing style? Think of how you'd describe the story to a friend on a 30-second elevator ride. Pay attention to the way the stories on the nightly news are described during a 10-second commercial break on an earlier show. Listen carefully to the way radio news broadcasts relate the top stories of the day.

- The lead should stand on its own as a description of the story. To learn how, study the home page of the online New York Times; page one of the interactive Journal or Yahoo! News Alerts. They all manage to tell what each story is about in a sentence or two. So can you.

- Make your entire release a maximum of 200 words or less, in 5 short paragraphs.

- Use the bulleted points "Who? What? Where? When? Why?" as paragraph headings

- Write only two to three short sentences in each of the five paragraphs.

- Above the headline or at the bottom of the release, be sure to provide a contact name, phone number, email address and URL for additional information.

It's not easy to write tight. Mark Twain summed it up best when he said "If I had more time I would have written less." Writing is about re-writing. And re-writing. Writing well takes time. Respect today's reality: take the time to write less and make it mean more.

Sample: Email Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 31, 2003

FREE Child ID Kits Provided by Junior League

BRYAN – As the number of child abductions rises, parents must have vital information in one safe, convenient location. To help parents prepare, the Junior League of Bryan-College Station will distribute free Child ID kits on April 5th.

What:
The Child ID kits contain space for a recent photograph, dental records, personal information, physical description including hair sample, and fingerprints.

Who:
Free to all parents

Where:
AppleTree at Briarcrest Drive & East 29th Street in Bryan

When:
Saturday, April 5th, 10 am to 4 pm.

Why:
"The disappearance of a child is a parent's worst nightmare," said Marilyn Martell, Junior League of Bryan-College Station. "During the crucial first moments after a child is discovered missing, parents are often too emotionally upset to remember details such as the child's height, weight, and blood type. Child Identification Kits condense this information into a compact file that can be simply handed to the first investigators on the scene."

Nearly 10 million Child Identification Kits and Stranger Safety Products have been used by individual parents, law enforcement agencies, corporations, civic groups and schools across the United States and Canada since 1996.

# # #

Contact: Marilyn Martell, President – Junior League of BCS: (979) 845-2957, mmartell@tca.net or visit the JL website: www.jlbcs.org

Worksheet #5
Online/Internet News Release

1. Lead paragraph: what's the point of this news release?

_____
_____
_____

2. Six words or less that describe your organization

_____
_____
_____

3. How would you describe the story of this event to your friend?

_____
_____
_____

4. What lead can stand on it's own to describe the story? (One sentence that summarizes the news release)

_____
_____
_____

Who Should Receive Materials – Media Lists

Sometimes radio and television stations assemble basic media lists and make them available to non-profit groups.

Your library may have media references such as Bacon's Publicity Checker or other specialized media lists. A caution: be prepared to update the names on your list with regularity as assignments can change fairly frequently.

It may be helpful to make two copies of your list: one set up to create labels and another which carries telephone numbers and notes about insertion deadlines.

Don't be discouraged if you get minimal or no interest in a given story. It is extremely rare for 100 percent of the media to be interested in a story; and even if they're interested, sometimes a reporter just can't be available at the right time.

Finally, every P.R. person's recurring nightmare is that a spectacular fire will erupt 30 minutes before their "good news" event is set to begin. If that happens, kiss the cameras goodbye.

Remember, reporters do file releases for future use in "round-up" stories (those which include a number of organizations' activities). And even if you can't sell your first story, you will have made a valuable media contact and have improved your chances for the next time!

How to Pitch Reporters Over the Telephone: Every Second Counts

You've got a terrific story idea. You've researched the medium you're pitching to, and you know that the reporter doesn't mind story pitches over the phone.

You dial her number and wait patiently for her to answer. When you hear her voice, you suddenly freeze up. You've rehearsed what you'll say at least a dozen times, but she sounds busy and angry. So you start babbling. "What exactly do you want?" she asks brusquely. Suddenly, you realize you've blown it. Another opportunity lost forever.

Pitching reporters over the telephone is one of the most difficult tasks in media relations. That's because the reporter on the other end of the line can be easily distracted by others in the newsroom, might be working on deadline, or just doesn't want to talk you. You make the problem worse when you call unprepared, don't have notes in front of you and try to pitch "off the cuff," then get rattled when you hear a response you aren't expecting.

Here's a roadmap on how to do it right. The best way to start is to assume that you will have no more than 30 seconds to explain who you are, why you are calling, and to convince the reporter that your story idea is worth pursuing. Most people have no idea how to talk to reporters over the phone. Many of them launch into long-winded explanations. Others beg and plead for coverage. Others simply present lousy ideas, then act offended when the reporter isn't interested. Your story pitch might be the twentieth that day. And if you want coverage, it had better stand out from all the rest.

It's time to create the "30-Second Pitch."

1. Identify who you are and why you are calling.

2. Ask if this is a good time to talk. If it isn't, ask the reporter to suggest the best time you should call back. Never ask a reporter to return your call. If it is a good time to talk, proceed to the next step.

3. Let the reporter know you are familiar with the stories she writes about.

4. Explain the idea in a sentence or two.

5. Explain quickly why readers will care.

6. Ask if the reporter is interested.

7. Close the conversation.

<u>The "30-Second Pitch" Sounds like this:</u>

Reporter: "Newsroom, Jane Smith speaking."

Volunteer: "Good morning Jane, this is Pat Jones calling to suggest a story idea. Is this a good time to talk?

Reporter: "Yes, but I've only got a minute. Can you make it quick?"

Volunteer: "You bet! Jane, I know you cover the minority community here in Chicago. I teach English as a second language at the South Side Community Center. We are receiving twice the number of requests from the business community for tutoring in local factories. In fact, we are adding four counselors, directly as a result of U.S. Census figures that show a huge increase in the Hispanic population. Your readers might want to know about this in case they need tutoring at their companies, too."

Reporter: "That's interesting. I'd like to talk about this when I have more time. How about tomorrow? Can you call back then? Say sometime between 10 a.m. and noon?"

Volunteer: "Sure, I'd be glad to. Thanks for your time."

Worksheet #6
Publicity Options

The "30-Second Pitch"

1. Identify who you are and why you are calling.

_____
_____
_____

2. Ask if this is a good time to talk. If it isn't, ask the reporter to suggest the best time you should call back.

_____
_____
_____

3. Let the reporter know you are familiar with the publication or with stories she writes about.

_____
_____
_____

4. Explain the idea in a sentence or two.

_____
_____
_____

5. Explain quickly why readers will care.

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6. Ask if the reporter is interested.

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7. Close the conversation.

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Conducting a Press / Media Event

Hosting a "media event" – a scheduled event purposely designed to attract media to a particular location at a particular time – can be effective in getting a reporter's attention.

1.) CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS.
Media events come in many shapes and sizes. The best media events provide reporters with photograph and interview opportunities, work off a story angle that is intriguing to area reporters, or they coincide with the key topic areas of the publication (i.e., alternative publications or professional publications typically have stories that follow specific content guidelines).

2.) THINK STRATEGICALLY
How can you create an intriguing media event that also benefits the community in your area? How can you invite media to the event by using little to no money (i.e., email invitations, electronic-based press kits, phone calls, meet with the reporter before the event, etc.) Consider the location of the media event. Is the location strategic – does it offer photo opportunities? Is the location free from excessive noise? Does the location offer good lighting for photographers? Will the location protect reporters and attendees from poor weather?

3.) CONSIDER YOUR STORY ANGLE
The right story angle helps get your story published. Consider recent news in the media, major issues within the community, or other things that can help you shape a story "angle" for your media event or article. Your angle is what makes the story newsworthy at that particular time and place. The story angle you choose will help you determine which publications will be interested in your story.

4.) FOLLOW THE MEDIA "RULES"
When you host a media event, it's important that the event is open to all media. Inviting just one or two reporters may upset the publication that was "left out of the loop."

When creating your event invitation list, try to identify specific reporters who cover your type of story. If you're not sure which reporter covers your type of story, call their newsroom, describe your media event briefly and ask them to identify which reporter would be best to cover that story.

A reporter's time is valuable. An editor may choose to send a reporter to your event because they believe the reporter will obtain information there that cannot otherwise be obtained with a news release or a phone call. In your event invitation, try to be as accurate as possible about the type of information, interview and photo opportunities reporters can expect at your event.

5.) BE PREPARED

Designate one person in your organization to serve as your "spokesperson" at the event. This person could be your promotion coordinator, or simply someone who has media relations experience and/or is knowledgeable about your organization.

Tips for an Hosting a Media Event

- Create a written agenda for your event to ensure that the reporters' valuable time is well-used, and that you convey the information you'd like. Be sure to offer time for questions and answers, interviews and photographs.
- When creating your media event, and preparing your remarks, consider what information is important for your reporter. Why is this story newsworthy? Why is this information timely? What information are you providing at this event that couldn't be obtained in a news release?
- Create some talking points that highlight your main points and your organization and provide these to your spokesperson. Be sure your spokesperson is prepped to relay accurate, useful and relevant information to reporters.
- Create a press kit to distribute to any attending media. Be prepared to have one press kit for each reporter who has been invited and about five extra kits just in case.
- Remember that anything anyone says at the media event is "on the record," and can be quoted by the reporter.

6.) FOLLOW-UP THE MEDIA EVENT.

- If reporters attend your media event, watch their publication to see if your story is published
- If reporters choose not to attend your media event, try not to get discouraged. Follow-up your event by sending them a media kit (drop it off in person or send by email). Be sure to let them know that you're available to answer questions if needed.

- If or when your story is published, consider sending a thank you note (email or handwritten) to the reporter to continue building a positive relationship.

Creating a Press Kit

A press kit is simply a press release and supporting documents in a package. Yet these practical tools of the PR trade are consistently overused, overstuffed and overweight. To make a good press kit, keep these six tips in mind:

1. Use them only when necessary. Press kits are only necessary when a press release is of sufficient substance and complexity to require supporting documents.

What are these supporting documents?

- Non-Profit Organization Information (from front to back on the left side of the folder)
- Mission statement
- Brief organizational history
- Organization brochure
- Feature articles on the organization or lead staff
- Board list
- Business card for media contact

Specific Event Information (from front to back on the right side of the folder)

- Press release for the event
- Photos or artwork related to the event
- Event postcard or flyer
- Event program

2. Include only what's necessary. More isn't always more. The less you can include in a news release (while providing everything a reporter would need), the better. Overstuffed press kits scream "amateur" to the reporters who receive them. If a news release doesn't warrant a press kit, don't include it.

3. Send it to the right person. Make certain you have the appropriate contact for your press materials.

4. Meet deadlines. A press kit with all the right information packaged beautifully still won't get noticed if it contains out of date information or information that will become out of date by press time. Make certain that you meet a publication's deadline, including time for a reporter to follow up and write the story.

5. Think like a reporter. Think about the recipient: what information might he or she find useful? Include a sheet listing the contents of the press kit and put it on top of the left-hand pocket stack. Put the news release on top of the right-hand pocket stack. Enclose the business card of an organization contact – someone who can answer any questions reporters may have. Include times and dates available for interviews, and include after-hours numbers as well. Reporters often work irregular hours and may need to follow a story on evenings or weekends.

6. Use the right packaging. Press kits don't have to be fancy: A simple folder with pockets on each side will work nicely for most purposes. You may also consider packaging your press kit onto a CD, with explanatory information on the CD jacket and a business card tucked inside. Reporters will appreciate the thoughtfulness, and you can include more information, including video and audio where appropriate.

"Other" Publicity

Letters to the Editor

- Call the newspaper and ask to speak to the editorial department. Find out where to address letters and if there are any limits on length.

- In the first paragraph of your letter, refer promptly to the article or position you are writing about. State why you agree or disagree and proceed to give your group's position on that particular issue.

- Send with an editorial letter addressed to the appropriate editor. Opinions to the Editor (Op-Ed Pieces)

TV and Radio Interviews

- Focus on no more than two or three major points to make during an interview. Have two or three good facts to back up each point. Don't let the reporter's questions get you off track; keep coming back to your major points. Don't forget the reason you're there!

- Don't use technical jargon and avoid long sentences; remember, you want to be quoted. Be friendly.

- Remember that you represent your organization. Don't give personal opinions that might compromise your group.

- Try to avoid flashy clothes. Stripes, checkered patterns, and white general don't look good on TV. Don't wear dangling jewelry. Don't fiddle on camera; assume that the microphones are on at all times.

- You want the media to rely on you as a source of nonpartisan facts; therefore, if you're unsure of a fact or figure, DON'T USE IT!

Conclusion

- The key to effective communication: communicating in a way that your audience understands; so always analyze your audience and craft your message to meet its needs.

- Many ways to "eat an Oreo" – find the one that works best for your organization