

Media Advanced

NOTE: Have you reviewed Media 101– found online at www.michigan.gov/mcsc?



Why the Media Ignores Some Stories:

- Not deemed newsworthy at the moment.
- Media releases are poorly written.
- Information provided is too long or too complicated.
- Information provided is not believable.
- The story is not localized.

What Makes a Good Story...From the Media's Perspective?

- The story appeals to emotions.
- A real-life, heartwarming story.
- The readers identify with the story.
- The story has a very clear point.
- The story has some sort of drama that is played out.
- The story is about people, not an organization.
- The key players are identified in the story (not just the contact person listed on the news release) are accessible.
 - The key players are ready and willing to be interviewed.
 - You need to make sure the key players back up your story and believe in your cause.

ITEMS TO USE:

Feature Releases

- Typically feature “Soft” news.
 - Not necessarily pressing news or relevant to issue affecting community currently. Think about the typical “Life” section of your local newspaper for examples.
- Human interest stories about volunteers or program activities.

Photo with Caption

- Can be great fillers for newspapers to have on hand.
- The photo tells a story.
- Must be an interesting photo and of good quality.
- An interesting caption must be provided.
- The Format:
 - Submit the photo as an electronic version.
 - Be sure to include a caption, background information (if available/ necessary), and contact information.

DON'T FORGET:

Your Organization's Media Policy

- A media policy is the procedures your organization follows when interacting with the media.
- Know your organization's media policy.
- If you don't have a media policy – develop one!
- Make sure all staff members/volunteers are aware of and familiar with the media policy.
- Some thoughts for what should be in a media policy:
 - Identify a specific staff person to be the media spokesperson.
 - Every staff member will keep a written log of all media contacts. (Develop a media contact sheet for staff members to use to record media contacts.)
 - Have a designated staff member maintain a media database.

Building a Relationship with the Media

- Get to know a little media lingo:
 - Stop saying “press release.” Instead use the generic term “media release” or be more specific and say “feature release,” “news release,” “media advisory,” etc.
 - Understand the difference between Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and media releases.
 - Media releases are written.
 - PSAs are audio or visual tapes created for radio or television. They are usually aired with no cost to the organization, but there is usually a cost associated with creating them. They are usually 60, 30, or 15 seconds in length.
- Build a relationship before you have a story to tell:
 - Become familiar with local newspapers, radio, and television.
 - What are they covering?
 - Who are their community and feature writers?
 - Why does your story fit in with today's news?
 - Make personal contact – call or email your media representatives.
 - Make the contact brief.
 - Introduce yourself and explain your program.
 - Ask what kinds of stories about your program interest them.
 - Find out their deadlines.
 - Find out how they like to receive information (fax, email, other).

News Release/Media Advisory Distribution & Follow-Up

- Find your local newspaper, radio, and television news contacts. Look for email addresses and/or fax numbers.
- Good website: www.mondotimes.com/world/usa.html.
- Track your media efforts.
 - Sign up for Google Alerts

- Make sure the contact person and other key players identified in the release are available and prepared to talk with the media.
- If media do call, respond ASAP.
- If you can't get the information they need right away, let them know.
- If the media does cover your story, send a quick thank you.
- If inaccuracies are printed or aired, correct them right away.

Media Dos & Don'ts

- Do learn how to help them do their job.
 - Let them know when your story ties with what's going on in the community.
 - Help them tie your story to national news.
- Do be available for the stories THEY want to cover, as well as your own.
- Do approach them when you have interesting, relevant stories to tell.
- Do offer exclusives whenever possible.
 - You don't have to send your story to all of the media in town.
 - Talk with a specific media outlet to see if they are interested in your story as an exclusive.
- Don't complain about the media publicly OR privately.
- Don't call the media when they are on deadline.
- Don't bombard them with stories.
 - Send a good story once every three to six months.