

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TIPS

This online resource provides excellent information about a number of communications and media-related topics designed for the community. It is the Community Toolbox from the University of Kansas School of Journalism.

### **How-to Article: How to get your press release noticed:**

<https://www.inc.com/john-hall/5-press-release-tips-to-get-consistent-media-mentions-in-2019.html>

This link provides good tips. However, unlike in the article, I would recommend putting the contact information at the top, which should be included in the press release template.

Additionally, I recommend having the headline differ from the lede, which is just a different way of spelling lead, which is just a fancy way of saying "the first sentence." For instance, the headline could read "Methodist congregation organizes march to protest Church's stance against LGBTQ equality" while the lede could read, "On Wednesday, members of the United Methodist Church will march from City Hall to the First United Methodist Church to send a message to leaders that they support same-sex marriage."

Press releases are inverted pyramids with the most important information at the beginning at the details toward the end.

Beyond press releases, I recommend also using targeted news pitches, some examples of which you can read about here. It is important to do your research on the publications or news outlets that you think would be the most likely to cover your event or news, and to send the press release or email directly to them.

If you are having an event that you want news outlets to cover and show up at I would recommend doing media calls the day of. Most news outlets do roundtables around 8 a.m. where they decide where they are going for the day so I would make the calls somewhere between 7 - 7:30 a.m. Confirm that they have received media invite and ask if they plan on attending. Most likely they will ask you to resend the media invite/press release so make sure to have that stuff handy so you can send it to them right away.

## **How-to Article: Press interview how-to:**

- If the interview is live, ask the interviewer beforehand where you should be looking
- Answer questions in full sentences. For instance, if the interviewer asks, "What's your name, respond with "My name is Jane" rather than just "Jane." This provides better soundbites. If a reporter asks, "What are your priorities?" start your response with "Our priorities are..."
- Know what your key messages are and continue to go back to them. Try to hit on at least one of your key messages during each response.
- Most on camera interviews are pre-recorded. Take your time and start over if you think you could provide a better soundbite.
- Dress comfortably, but also professionally. The interview will likely be mostly a tight shot that includes just your face down to approximately your collar bone. Make sure you are not wearing a low-cut shirt and preferably wear sleeves.
- Do not be afraid to wear make-up. That goes for men too. The camera washes you out, and a little powder can go a long way.
- Practice. Go through your key points at least three times so that you get used to saying them, and do not hesitate enlisting a friend to help you practice.
- Do not be afraid to say that you do not have the answer to a question rather than reach for an answer. You can always follow up with the reporter.
- Broadcast reporters are on a tight deadline. If they request an interview, be prepared to meet them in the next two hours and provide any follow-up information immediately after the interview. If a print journalist reaches out to you, respond to them within 12 hours, but ideally 3-4 hours.
- If they ask you if you have any final statements, always say yes and use your prepared responses.

## **How-to Article: How to maximize exposure when the press arrives**

- Have a designated spokesperson who is familiar with the talking points and is prepared for an on camera interview
- Provide suggestions about where to stand to make sure that protesters are in the background
- Position the best signs and most eye-catching members of the protest group behind the media spokesperson. Direct the activists not to look directly at the camera. Candid shots will always be more appealing to reporters.
- The best angle for the camera often means you will be looking at the sun. Do not wear sunglasses, and just do your best not to squint.
- Once the article hits, make sure to share on social media and give the article as much exposure as possible in the first 48 to 72 hours.