



## Effective Media Communication (Revision date 1-12-2013)

### Some simple rules:

- Create a title that will attract your readers.
- Summation of event in a few words.
- Make it “edgy” to attract immediate interest.
  - The media must pick and choose how they will spend their time on any given day.

### First Paragraph

- **What** – describe the event in just a few words (e.g. 9/11 Remembrance).
- **When** – date and time.
- **Where** – specific location address with driving directions.
- **Why** – succinctly stated reason for event’s existence.
- **Who** – event sponsor by name and a brief description.
- **How** – specific instructions to potential participants (how to sign up, buy tickets, where to report, etc).

### Next paragraphs(s)

- Further embellish important elements in paragraph one.
- Pyramid effect:
  - Think of the release as an inverted pyramid with the most important information at the top and then the more unnecessary information to follow.
  - Usually about one third of a one-page pyramid is what determines if action will be taken.
- In these paragraphs, if there is other information through web links that would be helpful in media decision-making to cover your event, then include them as a hyperlink.

### Length

- Succinct yet complete (choose words carefully that vividly tell the story).



- First paragraph has all needed information for media to act.
- Aim for no more than one page (more than that usually doesn't get read).
- Top of page:
  - Repeated, familiar logo (sort of like a signature of your organization—constant recognition).
- Next, on the left: Main Contact person's name.
- Under contact person's name:
  - Contact person phone number
  - Contact person's email address
  - Website address
- Indicate under all this information (in parentheses) whether or not this information can be published.
- Right hand side of page under logo: alternate contact person information.
- End of message in release:
  - Centered under the last line of the release type the following:
    - - 30 -
  
    - ###
  - This indicates there is no more information after this.
- In lower right hand corner repeat the initial priority contact information

### **Sending the release**

- Phone the media outlet(s) you have in mind for local events to verify their fax and press release contact email addresses AND to familiarize them with who you are.



- Send your press release via fax with a follow-up phone call – again verifying receipt and another opportunity for them to hear who you are.
- Send the press release via email then check your email for a reply.
  - Most editors have an automatic reply.
  - Make a follow-up phone call within the hour asking if they received it and if they need any other information – again, this is a way of putting yourself in front of them so to speak.

#### **Timing: Daily newspapers:**

- Send no more than two weeks prior; any sooner they won't use it and it may get lost in the shuffle.
- Follow up with another (and make a phone call as well) two or three days prior to event:
  - Include any up-to-date information that needs to be added—that often happens with TP events.
- Right up to the day before or day of the event, if you tweak the title a little to make it even more “attractive” to the media, they will make a decision to act when maybe they weren't going to act on it prior.
  - It's somewhat of a psyche game with the media—remember we aren't their priority venue to cover.
  - Sometimes your event may be the best news story out there at the time—that's something to think about when planning an event.

#### **Timing: Weekly or Bi-weekly publications:**

- Determine their deadlines for submission and be sure you meet those deadlines.
- Follow the same instructions as above for Newspapers and Daily publications.

#### **Media Contact Information:**

- All papers have a list of contacts for various depts.—use as first source for contact information.



- GEBBIE Press All-In-One Directory is an annual publication that has listings of media across the U.S. in the following categories:
  - Daily newspapers
  - Weekly publications
  - Radio stations
  - TV stations
  - Consumer magazines
  - Business press
  - Trade press
  - Black press
  - Hispanic press
  - Farm publications
  - News syndicates
- The fee is approximately \$100 but is somewhat negotiable
  - Go to: [www.gebbiepress.com](http://www.gebbiepress.com) to purchase one.

### **Designated media person(s)**

It is recommended to have one or two people who will be the media “face” of your organization, so the media will know who to call for first-hand information. This person should not be the leader of the group who is virtually in charge of “everything” because that person isn’t always accessible for mere time reasons

Additionally, it is also recommended that the media person(s) be kept well informed, well in advance whenever possible, of all functions that need to be publicized. There are deadlines that cannot get met (thus lost marketing opportunities) if there isn’t advance knowledge.

Media committee functions would include:



- Write and send press releases.
- Write and send letters to the editor.
  - Oversee volunteers who want to help with this.
- Establish relationships with local newspaper, radio stations and TV stations personnel responsible for releases and op-eds.
- Establish and maintain an up-to-date database of media contacts.