

HOW TO WORK WITH THE MEDIA

ELEMENT 1:

Identify your media goals

What do you want to accomplish with your PR efforts? i.e., introduce a new product or invite community to farm field day.

ELEMENT 2:

Create your compelling story

Identify your strengths, unique characteristics and what makes your business and background special.

ELEMENT 3:

Develop a media list

Compile a list of media contacts, including the names of writers, journalists or producers who regularly cover related topics. Start a file of articles published or aired by those journalists, since this might be a way to make an initial contact.

TIP

When contacting someone it often helps to note an article that you enjoyed that they wrote.

ELEMENT 4:

Write a press release

Modify the press releases and fact sheets in this kit to suit the audience you would like to address and the message you'd like to convey. Follow the standard press release format.

ELEMENT 5:

Time your press release

Most magazines work ahead from three to six months (or more) when covering a story. In contrast, television and newspapers look for stories about one to two weeks in advance. Often radio programs consider stories two to five weeks in advance of their air date. Request an editorial calendar that lists upcoming article topics since publication issues may have themes which you might be able to tie into.

ELEMENT 6:

Submit your release to the media their preferred way

Contact them regarding their preferred means of receipt (fax, e-mail or mail.) Then follow up with a telephone call about one or two weeks after that to make sure they received it. Ask the assignment editor, producer or journalist if the story has been "assigned," or if it is still being reviewed.

ELEMENT 7:

Accept and manage the interview (and photography session)

The interview or meeting can be the most enjoyable part of working with the media. Relax and just be yourself. Your enthusiasm will carry the interview, but don't forget to share the key items you care most about. Feel free to use the Fact Sheets provided in this kit, either for your replies or to copy and give to the reporter. Avoid "going off the record" about anything and minimize detailed or complex issues.

TIP

A little warm hospitality goes a long way with journalists; send them home with some of what you grow, or offer a meal during their visit.

ELEMENT 8:

Offer thanks for the media coverage

After an article or story has run or aired, send a thank you note and keep in touch as future story ideas arise.