

## How to Get Media Coverage: Press Kits, Releases, and More

Great media coverage is possible. With the right planning, marketing strategy, and newsworthy messaging, your story can reach millions.

To write a good press release, first create an attention grabbing headline, followed by a sharp lead paragraph that states very quickly the who, what, where, when, and why of the press release. In the second or third paragraphs, write the background, including facts, quotes, or other newsworthy information on your organization's story or event.

### **How to Generate Media Coverage:**

Media coverage is a wonderful way to get your story heard. It is the amplifier, the microphone, to speak out about what you believe will help the world. It is a way to shape the expression of your organization that the public receives in the news and media. It is a tool of empowerment to promote the positive changes that you are seeking.

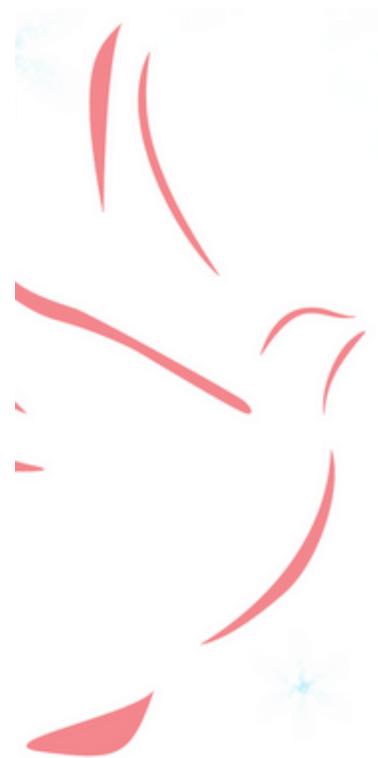
If you can take the time to be open to learning the right practices and techniques of obtaining media coverage, you could be picked up by just the right newspaper or channel, and find yourself sharing your story with more people than you ever imagined possible! Your story has the potential to go viral.

But you must be honest with yourself. Let go of any subconscious resistance to change, and become fearless of the potential you have for real results and true success!

There are several tools that organizations may choose from in order to generate media coverage. Your goals and budget, and how you want to present your cause, will determine which tools are right for you. Three examples below include press conferences, press kits (also called media kits), and press releases:

Press Conferences are a great way to make your initiative a new story instead of just a feature story. However, they can be more expensive, and, if promoted improperly, have the risk of little or no attendance. It is very important to have a media strategy, video clips, and a press kit to give to reporters or potential partners in attendance.

Press Kits can be used to generate ongoing coverage and a dialogue with reporters. The contents are determined by the focus of the most recent event or coverage. For example, if the kit will be provided at the time of an event, it should include the event agenda, background information, and news release covering background who, what, when, where, why, and how.



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Press kits also often include:

- Biographies of the main players of the organization
- Information about the organization's mission and cause
- Most current press
- Sample story ideas
- Media, including artwork, photographs, logos, and (if available) footage or imagery of the organization. One strong photo is more effective than a series of smaller photos. Photo captions are read almost twice as often as body copy, which makes them an effective way of expressing key points.
- Informational fliers or brochures
- Copies of articles or testimonials from which to extract quotes

Market and media experts tell us that there are several important things to keep in mind when trying to obtain media coverage.

## **Top Media Coverage Tips to Get Your Story Heard:**

Use a pyramid structure used by journalists: Include the most important information at the top of any informational material. Place it at the beginning of the story so it cannot be missed or skimmed over when readers are going over information quickly. Then you may follow the first paragraph with progressively less important—but nonetheless interesting—information.

You must create a media strategy using marketing messaging that supports your goal and objectives. Your strategy should answer the following questions that reporters will be looking for when they decide what will make a good story:

- What is the problem?
- What is the solution?
- Who has the power to make the necessary changes?
- Who must be mobilized to apply pressure for change?
- What message would excite action in those with the power to act for change?
- Why is your story interesting and important?

“To get the media's attention, you can't just say something; you have to DO something.”  
—*News for a Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media*

You want to be sure to break the problem down into easy, simplified pieces that readers can relate to and recognize. Then describe what the solution will be and what you and your organization are doing about it. Speak about where changes are being made, how and through whom they are happening, and how other people can add their energy.

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In addition, you want to keep in mind your target audience. Once you know your target audience, be sure to speak of things relevant to them in your media coverage. Ask yourself, What is on their mind and in their hearts? Your answers to this question will then be used to guide your marketing framework and messaging. For example, if your target audience is youth, you will want to make your piece active and full of youthful energy. It should leave readers feeling energized and inspired.

Know what is being talked about in the news that relates to your cause. Being aware of interests and time sensitive issues relevant to your target audience can be the doorway that allows you to enter into their lives in a meaningful and lasting way.

Here are some additional things that will help you make a newsworthy story:

- Highlight an individual's story
- Present relevant statistics or interesting social facts that support the story
- Bring attention to celebrities or famous supporters of the cause
- Present scientific breakthroughs or NEW research discoveries
- Implement irony or humor
- Include seasonal or timely events, such as anniversaries or holidays, that you can tie into your story

Remember, if the audience doesn't find your story newsworthy enough, it simply will not get covered. Try performing some research to see what interests are prevalent in your area and target audience.

**[see sample press release below]**

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## Sample Press Release Template for Nonprofits:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(CONTACT NAME) name of spokesperson for this event or coverage

(TODAY'S DATE)

(CONTACT'S PHONE # and/or EMAIL)

HEADLINE: SHORT w/ CAPITAL LETTERS

Paragraph 1:

What: 2-3 sentences on what is happening

When: date and time

Where: address

Who: name of people or organizations involved

Why: 2-3 sentences that highlight why the event is important

Paragraphs 2-3:

Quote(s) from an expert(s) or testimonial emphasizing the significance of the newsworthy story or event.

Paragraphs 4-5:

Additional details on the newsworthy event or topic (including photo opportunities, details about the speakers or organization, and any further helpful quotes).

### symbols to indicate the end (usually limited to one page, but if you need to add an additional page, indicate MORE at the bottom of the page so they know to continue reading.)

### Where to Submit Your Press Release:

Internet dissemination is a quick and effective way to cover a large span of the country with one click. Often, an internet wire press release site will share with others, thus spreading your press release overnight. You may also choose to target local newspapers in your area, especially those relevant to your news coverage, thus also building a better relationship with local media.

[www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com) is a great site that allows other media sites to pick up on topic-related content, quickly sending your press release to audience relevant to your cause.