

Using Free Media in Event Promotions

Sourced from Hawkesbury City Council, NSW

The key features of any publicity campaign that includes the media are the Media Release and the Media Kit.

Media Releases

A media release is an announcement about your event with a bit of 'whizz and bang' in its composition.

You will need to include the following information:

- What is the event about?
- When is it on?
- Who is involved?
- Where is it being held?
- Why is it on?
- Draw attention to any special or unusual features of the event. For example, is it the first event for your community? Are there special activities within the event?; Are there any special guests/performers?
- Always credit your main sponsor/s. Include a quote from the event organiser or Chief Executive Officer, and perhaps the sponsor if appropriate.

Basic Rules for Media Releases

- Give your media release a title
- Keep the body of information short (max one page.)
- Keep paragraphs short.
- The first paragraph should clearly indicate WHAT the press release is about, then make sure you cover the basics of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY.
- Check the spelling and grammar in your media release. Some publications will rewrite them, some won't, but initially no-one will have as much information about your event to compose from as your own organisation.
- Be objective when re-reading your media release. Ask yourself, does the tone of your press release say "so what?" If it does, throw it away and start again.
- Meet deadlines. If a deadline is midday Friday, then get the copy in on Thursday.
- Always put a contact name and telephone number at the end of the release, including after hours numbers.
- Advise if photo opportunities are available for press, or filming for TV, or if you have photos/footage available. Photos can often be attached as jpegs. Use high resolution – 300dpi - for print production.
- If you have an extended publicity campaign then you will need to have several media releases during this time. Encourage your local newspaper to have an event lift-out or event edition of the paper.

Media Kits

A media kit contains several media releases and may also include photos, information about the program and information on sponsors.

The media kit should also include several story angles. For example, special guests, unusual performances.

Media kits should be sent out to the editors of all papers, local and metro as appropriate, and any industry-specific publications such as 'What's On' guides etc., magazines, radio stations and TV stations. Try to address them to the correct people if you can and if you don't have specific names, send them to the editor of a publication or to the producer of a programme.

Photographs

- Photographs for media kits should preferably be high contrast, black and white or colour photos. They are usually supplied in jpeg format at a 300dpi resolution. They must have a large enough mg size and cannot be lifted from a website. Contact the newspaper for their Specification sheet to check all details.
- A good photograph is more likely to get into the newspaper.
- Before the event, get photos of artists or performers or high profile personalities associated with your event.

Suggestion:

If you can't get a good photo from any of these people you may be able to create a photo session by calling some of the event participants together and getting a professional photographer to take photos of them in costume, at one of the event venues or at a rehearsal or pre-event activity. You may have to pay the photographer and the performers for their time involved in attending a photo session.

Contacting the Media

Gauge the scale of your media release to the size of your event. A local event designed to attract 200-300 people does not warrant 15 media kits about it sent to major media groups.

Focus on the bigger media publications and organisations if your event is bigger. Send information and storylines about local performers to the respective local papers.

For smaller events, make up a general media release and mention that other story angles and photos are available. Provide contact details.

Consider sending your media release to:

- Community Radio
- Ethnic community TV programmes and radio shows.
- Community and school newsletters in the local area

Remember:

- The press generally will not come to you!
- Allow plenty of time for contacting the media - keep in mind that some publications (such as monthly magazines) have deadlines that are several months before the publication comes out.
- Make individual contact with the right person at each media source or publication office that you wish to use.
- If possible meet with those people individually and develop a working rapport.
- Find out when the deadlines are to get information to each media source and find out what each media source needs and when.
- Tailor your media releases to the sort of material the publication wants (eg, serious journalism, fashionable society articles, or community news.)
- Then send out your media releases and follow them up with a phone call.
- As new aspects of your event present story opportunities, resend your write-up of these stories.

Free Media Listings

Make sure your event is included in registers of events and in free entertainment listings in newspapers. These include 'What's On' publications distributed in tourist centres and shopping malls, free listings in local and national newspapers, and gig guides in community and other special interest magazines as well as community newsletters. There is also a growing number of online directories offering free listings, E.g., www.artfiles.com.au

Radio Announcements

Many radio stations have a Community Noticeboard segment in their programming, where short factual bulletins about local activities and community events are announced. Approximately one week's notice is required. Post or fax your media release or a brief synopsis with the important details of the event.

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If you need to develop some publicity for your next event then Contact Us at **Jump Marketing**. We are experienced in managing and promoting events.