



How to Prepare for Media Promotion

Media promotion provides an opportunity to increase the profile of your group in the community, raise funds, attract new members, inform the general public and promote your group's events and meetings. Incorporating a media strategy into your organisation is an essential step in achieving these objectives. With a little formal planning, your group may become well recognised for its contribution to the community.

Before you start searching for media coverage, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Why are we seeking media coverage and why now? Do we want to publicise a meeting?**
- **Who are we trying to target? Build a profile of the type of person you hope to reach.**
- **What will promotion do for our group? Will it help us raise awareness?**

1. Develop a Press Pack

You never know when there will be an opportunity to provide information about your group, so develop a Press Pack.

A Press Pack is a folder of information about your group and its activities. A cardboard A4 document wallet is a smartly presented and simple way to store and carry your documents. You may want to include good quality photographs of events, articles that have been written about your group, Media Releases you have written, testimonials or references and copies of newsletters or brochures. Provide these to media personnel when possible and to others who may help promote your group.

2. Appoint a Media Spokesperson and a Media Coordinator

You should have a Media Spokesperson who will be the public face of your group. They will be quoted in Media Releases and called upon to take part in interviews, so will need to be well informed about your group, confident, well presented, credible and able to think on their feet. They should also be prepared, practised and enthusiastic about your organisation and its activities in order to sell your message effectively.

A Media Coordinator is someone who spends time making contacts with the media and organising media promotion. They send the Media Releases, keep the Media Contact Book up to date and cultivate those important relationships with the media, professionals and other community groups. They need to be able to promote a positive image of the group, be proactive in getting the word out and constantly keep on top of new ideas and angles for stories. One person may, in reality, wear both hats, but it is best to have a checklist for both sets of tasks. Remember, editors, journalists and station managers are very busy, working within strict deadlines so always be polite, well prepared and accommodating when dealing with the media.

3. Create a Media Contact Book

Whatever form of media you choose to promote your organisation, it is essential that you keep an accurate record of media contacts. Media Directories can be purchased from large-scale bookshops or you can make up your own Media Contact Book.

A simple Media Contact Book lists the types of media, postal, email and website addresses, telephone numbers, and key contacts such as Chiefs of Staff, News Editors and Journalists. Build a profile of all your media contacts, noting best time slots, what type of issues with which they deal and other information relevant to promoting your group. It is essential that you keep your directory up-to-date, and remember to double-check the spelling and titles of your media contacts. Recording all media details in one book will provide a useful reference for any member of your team. One of the most effective ways of keeping a record of media contacts is by using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, or alternatively you could use a standard Word document.

How to Handle Media Misreporting

If you determine that you have been misquoted or your story has been misreported, write a letter to the editor and request a correction or suggest that they clarify the issue in a follow up story. Stick to the facts and do not make any personal attacks. Stories are filtered through a media 'production line', so the mistake may be an honest one and have nothing to do with the particular journalist in question. If the truth has been deliberately distorted, you can make a formal complaint to the journalist's employer or the Australian Journalist Association (AJA). Ensure you have all the facts and evidence to back you up. Failing settlement, you can choose to take the matter up with the Australian Press Council. The Council cannot levy fines or take legal action, but does retain the power of Public Censure. The Australian Press Council can be contacted on 1800 025 712 or visit www.presscouncil.org.au.

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