



Spreading the Word: A guide to publicizing your club's news

Many of you may have been in the unenviable position of trying to get newspaper, periodical, social media, radio or TV coverage of an event, only to have little success while other organizations seem to do better.

What's their secret? Short of actually owning the media venue, there is no secret as such. However, there are things to do – or to avoid – to increase your chances of spreading the word to the public at large.

This guide is no guarantee you'll always be successful in placing your club's news and information, but it is guaranteed to greatly increase your chances of success. Feel free to share it with others in your club.



DO

- ... **BE QUICK ABOUT IT.** In this era of instant communication, news and notices get stale very quickly. There's always something new coming along, so take the early initiative before your activity becomes yesterday's news.
- ... **TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE.** If you are trying to reach a younger demographic, lean heavily on social media – Facebook, Twitter, etc. For a more mature audience, use print. If your club doesn't have multiple social media accounts, get some!
- ... **KEEP YOUR CONTACTS FRESH.** While you may have had luck building a relationship with someone at a newspaper or TV station who has helped get your message across, remember that staffs always change. Keep your contact list up to date, and quickly build new links with new staffers.
- ... **DISCOVER A "HOOK":** Keep in mind the sorts of information that grab your attention in print or online? A human interest angle? A record effort? A public service? When crafting your news release, always look for a "grabber."
- ... **KNOW YOUR TECHNOLOGY.** Print and online news venues have different technical requirements. You can send out low-resolution images to electronic publishers, but print publishers need high-resolution images.
- ... **INCLUDE THE BASICS.** Be sure you have it all covered – who, what, where, when, why. And, include a contact person who can answer questions. Plus, proofread,



DON'T

- ... **SUBMIT GRIP-AND-GRIN PHOTOS.** Most news media prefer images showing some action. People shaking hands or presenting checks while grinning into the camera are nothing special, so your news item may be considered nothing special as well. If you're donating money for a specific item, service, or facility, get a photo of your people and theirs in a setting that makes an impact.
- ... **FORGET TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** You may be proud of your news release, but think before you distribute it. Why? Well, what are the chances of seeing it published by "Newspaper A" if an editor there already has seen it published in "Newspaper B"? To avoid that fate, look for tweaks you can make to turn the same basic news release into something special for each recipient -- a hyper-local angle, involvement of a local person or organization, a local trend ...
- ... **ASSUME THEY CAN READ YOUR MIND.** Are you looking for inclusion in an ongoing calendar listing? Suggesting coverage of an event? Providing information you think can lead to a feature story by the publication? Seeking public input for a project? Remember that editors are inundated with requests for publicity day after day. Help them quickly make a "use/no use" decision by being specific in a headline atop your news release.
- ... **RELY ON ONE PERSON TO DO IT ALL.** Not everyone connects with others in the same way. That's true, too, of building connections with media. Yes, have one person with overall responsibility for your club's voice, but share the workload – and the techniques.