

Terracom Tips

Top 10 Tips for Expanding Your Audience through Media Relations

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1. Consider your marketing objectives.

When deciding which media to pursue, let your marketing objectives be your guide. Which audiences do you need to target, and which media outlets reach them?

2. Study the media you've targeted.

Who covers your topics? How do they cover them? Do they use local news? The reporters you pitch will appreciate knowing that you've read their work.

3. Always remember: People in the media have no time.

When calling, ask if the reporter/editor has a minute. If not, ask when would be a better time to call back. If so, give your information in a nutshell - aim for 30 seconds.

4. Practice thinking like a media person.

Don't think about how the media should cover something. Instead think about what might interest them. Reporters and editors are more interested in the people you serve than your organization itself.

5. Be concise.

Media advisories should be one page. Press releases should provide the five W's: who, what, where, when and why. Succinct fact sheets can supplement press releases.

6. Target, target, target.

Tailor your pitch to a particular reporter, media outlet or beat. Since you've studied the media you want to reach, you'll know how to best target your pitch.

7. Build relationships.

The saying, "The more personal you are, the more universal the result," applies in media relations. Calls are an important way to build rapport. Building relationships also includes hustling to accommodate requests from reporters.

8. Listen, listen, listen.

Whether pitching a story or following up on a press release, listen closely. Even if a reporter isn't interested initially, you might learn how you can re-orient your pitch and still place the story, or better target your next pitch.

9. Engage in an ongoing PR effort, rather than publicizing occasional events.

An ongoing effort helps ensure that warm media contacts don't turn cold, pending stories have a chance to come to fruition, and target audiences continue to see your organization's name and message.

10. Invest in a media directory.

Use a media directory, but update your contact information often. The Community Media Workshop offers one focusing mainly on Chicago-area media.