

THE MEDIA QUIZ

Before you start to develop your media relations program, take this quiz to find out what you really know about the media (or what you think you know). Remember that often the answers are not black and white, but grey (depending on the time, the message, and the medium). See if you can answer the following questions (true or false):

1. It is more worthwhile to promote one special event than to pursue publicity for a number of events and activities throughout the year.
2. It is necessary to know someone in the media to get publicity.
3. Publicity campaigns are not successful if you do not get coverage in major publications or on well-known television stations.
4. Reporters and producers appreciate you calling them when you think of a possible story idea.
5. It is not necessary to send invitations to the media for events, since no one ever responds to them.
6. Organizations and companies that advertise are offered free publicity according to how much money they spend on advertising.
7. Sending gifts to the media is an accepted way to get coverage for your organization or event.
8. When you have been misquoted or an article is incorrect, you should make sure you get a retraction or correction from the writer.
9. The morning is the best time to hold a news conference.
10. During an interview, you should tell the writer that you must see the completed article before it goes to print.

R.A.C.E. FORMULA

R = RESEARCH

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

1. **Know and describe your organization or company.**
This is the fact-finding stage. It is a chance to listen to your key publics and provides an objective look at your company or organization. It also indicates trouble spots, problems, and potential crises.
2. **Review research sources, such as studies and polls**
3. **Conduct employee and customer research: through mailed**
questionnaires, sample surveys, telephone interviews, comment cards, focus groups, and personal contacts. Look at attitudes, opinions, and reactions of key publics to your organization or company.
4. **Media audit:** look attitudes, awareness, and behaviour through media questionnaires, reports, and media content analysis.
Review past media contacted and coverage: type, extent, placement, and tone. Examine past advertising.
5. **Identify and describe** all of your “publics” and assess importance of each public.
6. **Analyze your competitors:** look at their past and current advertising, publicity, promotions, and events.

STEP #2: A = ANALYZE: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

1. **Assess your organization’s reputation** with key publics, based on your research results.
2. **Describe the media relations program (action plan)** for your organization or event.
3. **Develop stated goals and objectives:**
Does it really address the situation?
Is it realistic and achievable?
Can success be measured in meaningful terms?

TWO KINDS OF OBJECTIVES: INFORMATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL

Informational Objectives: educate, increase public awareness of an issue, event, or product and deliver key messages

Motivational Objectives (bottom line oriented): change attitudes and opinions and modify behaviour, such as increase product sales, sell-out crowd at your event, increase donations to a charitable organization, get people to eat healthier

3. **Design** your “key messages”.

4. **Assess** your key publics (the targeted audiences) and list in order of priority:
5. **Discuss strategies** (the basic methods of attack). Suggest advertising, advertorials, and promotional tie-ins with media.
6. **Determine tactics (the specific vehicles or tools)** you will include in your media relations program. Consider the following:
 1. Invitation
 2. Media list
 3. Media information on Internet Site
 5. Media sponsorships and partnerships
 6. Media events
 7. The Media Kit
 8. Media Interviews
7. **Develop a Budget (estimated). Anticipate fees and expenses.**
8. **Design a Timetable** (over what period of time will media relations plan be implemented)?

STEP #3: C = COMMUNICATE: HOW CAN WE GET THERE?

This will involve using the tools you devised in Step #2 to dramatize your chosen course of action to your key audiences. This is the communication phase of your program.

STEP #4: E = EVALUATE: HOW DID WE DO?

9. **Describe media follow up and monitoring** of media coverage.
10. **Use evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of your program with your key audiences**, such as opinion surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, etc.
11. **Measure and evaluate the program**, based on the objectives set in Step 2 and including effectiveness of tools in Step 3.
12. **Create a Final Media Report**, including public relations and publicity evaluation.
13. **Document all of your tools**, such as media kit, media list, photographs, media coverage, etc.
14. **Arrange a wrap-up meeting.**
15. **Plan for the future and return to Step #1.**

DEFINE YOUR TARGET MARKETS

Employees

Current attendees

Past attendees

Potential attendees

Suppliers

Partners

Board of Directors

Associations

Competitors

Sponsors

Donors

Government agencies

Visitors

Tourists

Special interest groups

Media

Local community

National/international

Internet community

20 REASONS TO ORGANIZE A MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

1. To **increase sales, enhance profits, attract financial support**, and raise funds.
2. To **heighten credibility and awareness** of your organization and its products and services.
3. To **educate** the public on how to choose, buy, or use products and services.
4. To **project a warm, human feeling** for your organization, through your spokesperson.
5. To get audiences to **take action**.
6. To generate **national interest**.
7. To **create interest** in your special events.
8. To **attract** the best personnel, new clients, members, donors, shareholders, sponsors, and volunteers.
9. To **expand** your market or test market a new idea.
10. To **diversify** your organization.
11. To **build a new, favourable image**.
12. To **launch** a new program, service, or product.
13. To **become a well-known expert** in your industry.
14. To **generate** good will, prestige, trust, and approval from key markets.
15. To overcome **resistance**
16. To **counteract misconceptions**.
17. To **clarify issues, such as the environment**.
18. To support other aspects of your marketing program, such as **advertising and sales promotion**.
19. To help **to insulate your organization during a crisis and avoid attacks**.
20. To **evaluate** public attitudes.

UNDERSTAND WHAT THE MEDIA WANT: Think Like A Reporter

Before you approach the media, ask yourself: “what is the news hook or angle”? This is also referred to as “the legs” of a story. What is the impact of your story on the media’s audiences?

1. Is the information **timely**? Can it be tied in with a major story, a national or international event, an issue, a personality in the news or an industry trend? Can it become a national story tied to local media?
2. Is the information **of consequence or benefit** to the audience? The first? The last? The latest? The biggest?
2. Is it tied into **an issue that is currently “hot”**, such as fraud, unemployment, the environment, the impact of technology, government deficits and debt, employment equity, training and education, and corporate contributions to local communities.
4. Is it **“new”**: facility, services, product, or program?
5. Does the information **concern people**? (Look at People Magazine). This includes success stories and the winning of awards and scholarships by employees, volunteers, and customers.
6. Contests and created events, such as the Crayola contest to select new colours
7. Will you **educate** readers and viewers on “how-to”: choose, buy, and use products or services?
8. Do you have a **credible spokesperson and third party sources** who can be interviewed and quoted? Third party sources are very important to media, since they are often considered credible, objective sources.
9. Is it a story that will **engage and entice** the audience?
10. Can you provide **back-up**: great anecdotes, quotes, and statistics?
11. Does it involve **special events**, such as open houses, seminars, community events, or charity events?
12. Does it concern **legislation** important to your organization and/or industry?
13. Does it portray your company or organization as **a leader**?

14. Is the information easy for the writer or interviewer to **check out**?
15. Is it **accurate, truthful, and complete**?
16. Is the information blatantly **self-serving** (does it sound like an advertisement for your organization?)
17. Does the information have “legs”? That is, it is likely to generate follow up information and details for coverage in the future.
18. Is the story **visually-interesting**? Can the subject form the basis for a Television interview?
19. Does it “hit” the reporter’s **interest**?
20. Will it impact on the economy and **create jobs**?
21. Does it involve:
 - secrecy** (news about whatever you want to hide)
 - conflict** arising from one or more of the following sources: Insiders (disgruntled employees), outsiders (competitors or competing interest), organized opposition, or unprepared spokespersons
 - mistakes** - When business errs
 - effect** – When the result is death, injury, homelessness, or personal harm
 - surprise** - When things turning out differently than planned

THE NEWS RELEASE

HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE

Always use 8.5" x 11" letterhead for first sheet; a plain sheet for second page (if it is two pages).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**CONTACT: NAME AND TITLE
COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION
PHONE**

HEADLINE

Make your "headline" an attention-grabber. It should summarize the "news value" of the release and catch the interest of the reporter. It should describe what is special about your story. Use caps and keep it to two lines or less. Reporters see a lot of releases and you have to get their attention early. Always include a verb in your headline.

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Place

A well-written release will reflect a news-style of writing. The **five W's** (who, what, where, when, why) and **H** (how) should all be contained in an interesting opening statement. The remaining information - who wins, who loses, and who cares - should be answered in the subsequent paragraphs.

PARAGRAPH 2 AND THE REMAINING PARAGRAPHS should include quotes from spokespeople and third party sources (from one to three quotes per release), background information on the organization and/or event, information on sponsors, event registration, statistics, survey results, etc.

Releases are usually not reprinted verbatim. A good release will provide the essential information for a story to be written, and will also encourage the reporter to seek out more. Keep your writing tight and uncomplicated.

Always use the third person in your release – never use the word "you" to talk to the reader.

Avoid personal opinions, except in direct quotes. Use simple language and don't use tech speak or jargon.

A news release is NOT advertising copy – don't try to sell the media in your release.

BOTTOM OF PAGE 1

If two pages, type "...more" at the end of the first page and number the second page.

-30-

(a symbol that means "end of story")

THE MEDIA ALERT/PHOTO OP

Often called a “Media Alert”, this is a type of release that is faxed to media one day before your event to remind the Assignment Editors, Reporters, Producers, and Photographers about the event. It uses short, bulleted items, instead of the paragraph format of the News Release. The Media Advisory gives the media a quick overview of the five W’s and H and suggests photographic features of the event.

FORMAT FOR A MEDIA ADVISORY:

WHO:

WHAT:

WHEN (date and time):

WHERE:

WHY (THEME OR TOPIC):

VISUALS:

CONTACT:

THE FACT SHEET

DEFINITION: A **FACT SHEET** is a one-page summary of basic information related to an organization, a product, or a program. It talks about the organization or company's areas of expertise and the names of spokespeople to provide authoritative material in its field. A Fact Sheet is a resource document, which can be used to provide a quick overview of an organization, and it is often kept on file by the media.

For a special event, a Fact Sheet can be included with a news release or media kit, providing details of your special event: schedule of activities, list of participants, photo opportunities, etc.

SAMPLE FACT SHEET

NAME OF THE COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION

Address
Telephone and Fax
e-mail
Web site address
Key contacts, with telephone numbers

DESCRIPTION

The focus of the organization, including unique characteristics and areas of expertise. Describes key target markets, geographical reach, etc. Can include mission statement.

BACKGROUNDER

A brief history of the company or organization, as well as the owner. This should include information on growth and expansion of company.

SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

A comprehensive overview of all products, services, and events offered by the company, listed in point form.

SPECIAL FEATURES

This would include free consultation, guarantees, etc.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Contact _____ at _____.

NOTE: Mail an updated Fact Sheet on your organization to the media when the information has changed.

STORY IDEAS

These are “**hooks**” or “**angles**” you provide to the media to encourage them to create a longer piece or segment. Each story idea should be 2 to 3 sentences - enough to give the media a flavour for what makes your story different and interesting for their readers or viewers.

Create story ideas based on the following themes:

PROFILES

FINANCIAL

ISSUE OR PROBLEM

TREND

