

## **Media Messaging: Establishing relationships & working with the news media**

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### KEY POINTS:

#### **Getting Ink/Air**

1. Local newspapers/weeklies/magazines
  - a) letters-to-the-editor
  - b) op-ed/commentary
  - c) feature articles/press releases
  - d) news alerts/backgrounding info.
2. Links to websites, blogs, other online outlets
3. Newsletters (*Broadsides*, professional associations, other organizations, etc.)
4. Alum publications
5. Local radio/television programs
  - a) Guest appearances (esp. on Access or local broadcasts)
  - b) News tips/alerts/backgrounding
6. “Partnering” with other orgs. ...in any of the above
7. Set up meetings. Have face time. (contact the right reporter, sit down with Ed. Board, ask questions).

#### **The Prep & Afterglow**

1. Be prepared. A quote is an inviolate truth, sacrosanct stuff!
2. Assume you're *always* ON THE RECORD.
3. Plan sound bites, breakout quotes. Paint a picture, tell a story. Show your passion.
4. Watch out for errors of omission. Don't leave out a critical fact, point or qualifier.
5. Be sure you have **NEWS** [an event happening now; announcement; discovery; effects people's lives; effects where people live, places people care about; conflict; VIP involved]. Monitor coverage for newsworthy angles.
6. Be aware of journalism's culture:
  - a) Professional skepticism [If your Mother says she loves you, check it out.]
  - b) Competition [exclusives are sometimes OK]
  - c) Story angle, sources and deadlines [Ask!]
  - d) Be friendly and professional.
  - e) If corrections are needed/errors in reporting, contact the reporter directly...and be nice.
  - f) “Offer” to be a background source “on-call” and direct the journalists to other sources.
7. For TV:
  - a) Avoid wearing black/white/shiny/busy patterns, no large/dangling jewelry.
  - b) Powder your nose. Follow your “host's” lead.
8. “Frame” good coverage/clips and display!