

Working with Media Relations – Getting The Word Out

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The news release is an effective tool for communicating with various audiences, but only if done correctly. By following a few tips, you can help provide the needed information in a timely manner and increase the chances that the release will make a difference.

1. Use Your Modules. Sometimes the best way to get the word out is to use the channels you already have available, like your website and your social media accounts.

2. Timing is important. If possible, share information at least two weeks in advance. If you are promoting an event, you increase the chances that your audience will see it in time to participate and that the media will see it in time to cover it.

3. Use Visuals. If you add an image to your text description, your news piece will be more likely to attract attention and to be clicked on and shared.

4. Create a MAP: Message, Audience and Purpose. What is the message you want to convey? Who do you want to see the message? What do you hope to accomplish with the release?

- **Know your message.** The message can be as simple as giving the details of an event or more complex such as announcing a new program. Knowing your message will help you focus on the important information.
- **Knowing your target audience** is important in determining how and where you present the information. Who do you want to see your release?
- **Why do you want to issue the release?** Are you looking for someone to attend an event? Do you want to impress prospective parents and community partners with an achievement? (Keep in mind that while releases can help increase awareness of events, they do not take the place of more targeted marketing techniques.)

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5. Provide information. Some required information differs with each release, but the basics remain the same: who is involved, what is going on, when will it take place, where will it happen, why (a big one) and how can someone find out more.

6. Provide a contact willing and available to answer questions.

7. Write like a journalist. If you are providing the information in the form of a written release, try to present it in a journalistic style, aka inverted pyramid. That means putting the news, or most important information, first, followed by supporting information. Attention spans and news space are both in short supply, so skip the fluff and get right to the news. And keep it simple. Technical jargon may be impressive to your peers, but are they your audience? If not, write so everyone can understand.

8. Have reasonable expectations. Not every release will make the front page (or even the newspaper for that matter). Media Relations has a host of venues for news, so don't be disappointed if you don't see your release in the daily newspaper. It may still be found online, in blogs, etc. Also, we encourage you to repost information to your website. If someone is looking for information about your program, they are more likely to search your website, not a news site.

9. Provide links to additional information when possible. Links in releases give audiences the opportunity to find out more, plus they encourage traffic to your website.

Source: modified from WKU Office of Media Relations,
https://www.wku.edu/mediarelations/pr_guide.php

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