

## **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA – TEN KEY RULES**

- **Maintaining an effective media profile is good for business.**
  - It increases awareness....which can lead to more business
  - It gives you standing within the community you operate in
  - It allows you to convey information effectively
- **Think about why you want to engage with the media...what's the angle?**
  - Special events
  - New products & services
  - Employees or members
  - Topical issues
  - Business News
- **Prepare a media release**
  - Keep it brief!
  - Have a clear understanding of your message and know what you want to say
  - Use short paragraphs and short sentences...20-25 words max
  - Allow for editing in your layout. Use double spaces between paragraphs with broad left and right margins
  - Avoid the spin or overly emotive language. Stick to the facts!
  - Use a heading that summarizes the nature of the release
  - Ensure the most important / substantive information is upfront in the first paragraph.
  - Have someone other than the person who composed the release, proof it before sending. A spelling mistake or typo in a release conveys a lack of care.
  - Ensure your release is dated and include a name, title and at least contact numbers, and ensure you keep your mobile switched **on**
- **Include a short backgrounder with your media release**
  - This is a brief summary about your business
  - Contains key facts: when your business started, number of employees, turnover, ownership etc.
- **It's a good idea to make contact with a journalist at the media organization before sending your release.**
  - It allows you to "pitch" your story. Ask yourself, why would I be interested in knowing about this story? It's the same for the journalist; he/she often has to sell it to their editor. The more background information they have about the story, the more they can evaluate and understand the news angle.
  - It allows you to gauge their level of interest in the story and any other information that they require if they plan to run the story.

- It also creates a point of contact for both parties which can be useful for the future.
  - Allows you to establish how they want to receive the release, generally by email, but some journos still prefer fax.
- **Sending unsolicited media releases to generic email addresses or fax numbers is generally a waste of time!** Media organizations receive a large numbers of releases on any given day and there is almost a 100% likelihood your release will be skipped over if it's not directed at someone specific.
- **Don't issue non-news media releases as a way of gaining publicity.** It's only a waste of your time and resources and ultimately gives your organization a bad name.
- **Tip: Your local paper or radio news service will have journalists allocated into what are generally known in the business as "rounds." Try and identify the person from your reading / listening and maybe tie in your story with something you've read / heard them report.**
    - For example, a story on local business conditions getting tougher...but you've just hired three new staff. Journalists are often looking for the "balance" in the story but don't always know where to find it....particularly when they're facing a deadline!
    - Or make contact with them to give feedback on something they're written. Surprisingly, journalists often get little in the way of feedback.
- **Think about the distribution of your release**
    - Local papers
    - Local radio
    - Local TV news
    - Trade press
    - Local Council, Chambers of Commerce etc generally all have regular newsletters that require content to fill!
    - Online publications
- **Create a "media" section on your company website and post your releases**
    - Allows journalists to easily gain access to previous releases
    - Visitors to your site can get an understanding of your development as a company
    - Creates an effective archive of your business activity for future reference