

A presentation for the NWPPA

Northwest Public Power Association

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Publisher



Effective Communication

Agenda:

1. Media landscape
2. Media differences
3. Our mission
4. Markets are different
5. Press releases
 - Tips for success
 - Building relationships
 - Why didn't my release run
 - Expectations
 - Post mortem
6. Disasters/Breaking stories
7. Questions
8. Anything else?

Media Landscape - Myths

- **Myth: No one reads newspapers anymore**
Reality:

More than 104 million adults daily, 115 million on Sunday, more than watched the Super Bowl (94 million)

Newspapers and their websites offer the largest reach of any mediums in your markets

- **Myth: Young people no longer read newspapers**

Reality:

61 percent of 18-34 year olds read a newspaper
in an average week

65 percent if you include newspaper websites

- **Myth: Newspaper readership is tanking**

Reality:

-Newspaper readership off a mere 1.8% last year and 7% from its peak in 2002. With the internet reaching more people than ever before.

- **Myth: Many newspapers are going out of business**

Reality:

The majority of newspapers remain profitable – margins in the teens. All bankruptcies are debt related nearly all closures have been in two-paper cities

Media Landscape - Realities

- Resource starved – All media have fewer bodies and time due to reduced revenues
- Space starved – smaller news hole for print, reduced number of news broadcasts on tv/radio
- All media is still trying to find a profitable online business model

Media are different

- Commonality is all are in the news and information business
- Online bloggers – all about speed. Want to break news and move on. Also comment on stories from other media
- TV news – built around speed too, but heavily dependant on visuals. Need to leverage the visual angles to make story appealing
- Print – speed and visuals are often important, but not necessary. Also can take the time and space to explain in depth

Seattle Times Company Mission

- To be the voice of each community by providing high-quality, community service journalism
- To be the primary source of news and information for each community in print, online and wherever else readers want us

Markets are different

Seattle Times Company – three dailies

- Seattle – Major metro newspaper serves region of more than 2 million people
- Yakima – Mid-size daily newspaper serves a valley of more than 225,000 people
- Walla Walla – Community newspaper serves a valley of more than 70,000 people

Press Releases

- Who – story about?
- What – story about? Is the event/description?
- Where – story take place?
- When – story take place?
- Why – is the story important to readers?
- Name of organization (s)
- Contact information
- One page or less ideally

Tips for Success

- Think like a reporter or editor – Informing readers is what we do. Why is this a story?
- Email, not snail mail
- Work in advance – deadline business

Tips for success

- Learn organizational hierarchy - Call and find out which reporter or editor to send your release to – who covers your industry
- Set up an appointment (more at smaller papers)

Tips for success

- Communicate:
 - Find out what they're looking for
 - What their deadlines are
 - What would increase your chances of having your story published
- Follow-up by phone, but don't pester
- Reporter calls you - be available and be prepared

Building relationships

- Ideally all organizations treated equally
- Reality is due to the fast pace, having a good relationship may help
- Professional only – strict policies against bribes, credibility is our business

Why didn't my press release run

- “old news”
- Local angle not obvious
- No space – particularly prevalent at larger papers
- Newsroom is working on a larger story that incorporates the information

Why didn't my press release run (more)

- Got sent to the wrong person
- Got lost in the hectic pace of the newsroom
- Got stuck in the mail or spam filter

Should I expect my releases will ALWAYS be used

- No - based on “newsworthiness”
- Press release may just be a starting point – especially at larger metros
- Chances increase at smaller papers
- Multiple “publishing” vehicles depending on information – newspaper, Lifestyles magazine, business monthly, website, etc.

Post Mortem

- Take a deep breath – no angry emails to the publisher if don't agree with coverage
- Communicate with the reporter – find out why not and learn from it for the future. Have a right to talk to someone.
- Ask for a correction if it is warranted.

Post Mortem

- Be respectful – being combative will not help your cause now or in the future.
- If not getting response work your way up – editor, then Publisher

Disasters/Breaking Stories

- Alert attorneys, then employees, then media
- Establish communication parameters and at what levels
- Do not lie
- Do not speculate
- Everything will be used
- Don't prolong the pain. Release everything
- Talk in plain english – no jargon
- Media want to get it right

Questions? Anything else?

Thank you!

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