



Catholic Foundation

1988 - 2016

PRESS RELEASE PLAN

Determine to whom the press release should be directed

Visit the websites of local media outlets to determine to whom press releases should be directed. Record their name, email and phone information for future reference. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and introduce yourself under the premise of setting up your media list and verifying you have the correct contact information. Every three months you should verify the person you have listed is still with the news/media outlet. There is great movement within media outlets.

After selecting appropriate media outlets, figure out which reporters are likely to cover the information you want to share. Do this by talking to them directly, probing into their story interests and following them on the air, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as well as their written articles in the local print.

Be mindful of your target audience

Choose your audience as carefully as you choose who receives press your release. Know the distribution demographics of the media outlets and include that in your tracking spreadsheet for quick reference.

Initial press release contact should be via email

More than 80 percent of reporters prefer to receive pitches by email, according to a survey conducted by Cision, a public-relations technology firm. Save your phone pitches for breaking news or for a reporter who has responded to your email with interest.

Be brief

Give very specific, concise details in the press release. Do not send wordy descriptions, the reporter will not read it anyway. Remember you are one of many press releases they receive every hour of the day. Make your subject catchy and keep your details specific.

Include several ways for the reporter to reach you

The most efficient and effective way to send your press release out is via email but that may not be the best way for the reporter to reach out to you. Be sure to provide your phone number and full name so they can reach you immediately – they could be in the area already and be willing to stop by to cover the event/story.

Pictures

If you are publicizing an event that deals with a guarded population, for instance students in a school, be sure to do your homework first – know specifically who cannot have their picture taken before you send the press release. This way you will be prepared if they arrive without much notice. You do not want to take time from the filming/interview to clear students from a room to avoid them being photographed. Another consideration is to have filming done from the back of the students so their faces do not appear on camera.

Plan ahead

Make sure whomever you intend to be part of an interview is well prepared ahead of your press release. Again, time management is key, a reporter does not have time to wait around for you to find someone to agree to be interviewed.

Also, have talking points available for the persons to be interviewed and give these to them ahead of time. You will also want to provide the talking points to the reporter for guidance in their questions during the interview.

Timing is key

If you have time sensitive information make that clear by specifying the day, date and time.

Review the news of the day before sending any media releases that are not immediate and time sensitive. All it takes is one big news story to break and your press release is forgotten. Keep in mind too that just because a media source conducts and interview it is never a guarantee that it will be publicized. Again, one big news story and your press release and interview are set aside, many times permanently. This is where the personal calls and building of a relations with media sources can pay off in the long run.