

PR101
Public Relations

HOW TO GET YOUR AFA
CHAPTER IN THE NEWS



The Mission of the Air Force Association is to:

- 1) educate the public about the value of aerospace power;
- 2) advocate the need for aerospace power and a strong national defense; and
- 3) support the Air Force and the Air Force Family.

PR101 Guide

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WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Introduction

The purpose of this guidebook is to discuss public relations, communications and media relations to help you generate good public relations and positive publicity for your Air Force Association (AFA) chapter. If your chapter does not have a Vice President of Public Relations, select someone who has good communication skills, good people skills and enthusiasm.

Public Relations Defined

First, exactly what is PR? Here are some descriptions of Public Relations:

Public Relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.

☐ "Effective Public Relations" by Scott Cutlip, Allen Center & Glen Broom

"The purpose of public relations in its best sense is to inform and to keep minds open...."

☐ John W. Hill

"Good or bad, every organization has a reputation. Public relations helps you manage that reputation."

☐ Dawn McDowell

"Public Relations is a planned and systematic two-way communication process to encourage public involvement and earn public understanding and support."

☐ National Chapter Public Relations Association

"Public relations affects almost everyone who has contact with other human beings. All of us, in one way or another, practice public relations daily. For an organization, every phone call, every letter, every face-to-face encounter is a public relations event."

☐ "The Practice of Public Relations" by Fraser P. Seitel

In a nutshell, public relations is communicating with people, relating to the public, and building relationships. The GOAL of good PR is to connect with the community by building positive relationships and promoting two-way communication.

PR is effective, two-way communication, used as a vehicle to build partnerships, trust, confidence and support for chapter activities. Effective PR increases community awareness, builds and maintains relationships, creates better understanding and support for AFA issues, and helps form positive public opinions.

Public relations includes ongoing activities to ensure the chapter has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the chapter and its products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc.

BENEFITS OF GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Builds stronger links between AFA chapter and its members, base, and community
- Encourages involvement in the chapter activities
- Increases support and recognition of chapter accomplishments, thus encouraging membership and creating interest of non-members
- Closes the gap between perception and reality
- Increases member pride in chapter endeavors
- Increases public understanding of chapter programs and available resources and services
- Develops effective and cost-efficient public relations / communication channels
- Gains and maintains chapter visibility
- Good PR practitioners know how to generate effective:
 - News Releases for print and broadcast
 - Post publicity
 - Special Events
 - Internet/Web Public Relations
 - General Publicity
 - Media Kits

EVERY MEMBER HAS A ROLE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS!



NINE STEPS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLANNING

1. Establish a public relations role in your chapter.

This is the easiest step in the process! At all times, the chapter leadership must be committed to the PR function. PR must be treated with the same respect given to leadership development, membership, veteran's affairs and other chapter roles.

2. Define the objectives of the public relations program.

What do you hope to accomplish? A good tool to define objectives is a chapter officers' brain-storming session. This will result in objectives the leadership is committed to supporting. For example:

- a) Communicate to the Air Force and its family how AFA provides support
- b) Promote an understanding and recognition of the work of the AFA chapter and the importance of the chapter.
- c) Enhance the image of the chapter on the base and the community at-large.
- d) Enhance the prestige of the Association and its members.

3. Define your publics, AKA stakeholders, target markets or target audiences.

Who do you wish to reach with your message? Current members, potential members, base leadership, young airman, military retirees, other community organizations, and the media are all target markets.

4. Define the message.

What are the important issues? Identify these and know which stakeholders are concerned about what issues. Create clear, key messages that you wish to communicate. The message will vary depending on the audience.

5. Develop your strategy(ies).

The strategies are a key element of your plan. These are your tools used to reach your target markets and convey your messages, as well as forming the basis of your PR plan. A list of strategies might include:

- a. Continually develop public relations materials.
- b. Use a broad spectrum of media to convey the message.
- c. Build and develop media contacts.
- d. Work to position your VP of PR as a credible, reliable source of information for the media.
- e. Work to position the President and VP of PR as spokesperson for the AFA.

Nine Steps for Public Relations Planning

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f. Coordinate with other chapter officers and members.

6. Set goals.

What do you want to accomplish through public relations? You may wish to:

- a. Build membership
- b. Change attitude or behavior
- c. Inform the public about special events
- d. Recognize award winners
- e. Communicate scholarship opportunities
- a. Increase visibility on base and in the community in general.
- b. Effectively promote AFA programs.
- c. Enhance the image of AFA.

7. Coordinate with other timetables or appropriate people.

To be effective as a VP of PR, you must be informed of what is happening within your chapter. Attend meetings, read communications such as emails and newsletters, and ask questions. Know what other chapter officers have planned and know their timetable. You cannot communicate what you don't know about.

8. Develop strategies and timelines.

What strategies are required to achieve your communication goals? Develop a written plan that details actions needed, when. Prepare a PR calendar based on the chapter event calendar. Information should be sent to the media one to two weeks ahead of the event. Also, identify required resources and develop a budget.

9. Implement the plan. Just do it!

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Effective PR is about...

- Reputation management
- Customer relations
- Customer service
- Quality response
- Relationship building and maintenance

*Doing something good and not letting anyone know about
It is like winking in the dark..”*

-- Larry Ascough

COMMUNICATION

Introduction

Good communication skills are vital for a successful public relations practitioner! Communication is the vehicle through which relationships are fostered. The more emphasis you place on being an excellent communicator, the more you will naturally be successful!

Communication skills are some of the most highly prized and sought-after skills in business, and they are equally essential at home. With good communication skills you are able to let others know what you think, feel, or want to accomplish. Communication enables you to build partnerships, motivate others, or resolve conflict.

We communicate all day. Whether speaking in a meeting, presenting to a group, or sitting at our desk, we are always communicating to the people around us. When we communicate, other people form impressions and perceptions. Those impressions are their reality.

Perception is reality!

To improve communication, it is helpful to understand how people form perceptions. Albert Mehrabian, a psychologist who conducted research in how people communicate, found that perceptions are formed in three ways:

- ◆ Words;
- ◆ Tone of voice; and
- ◆ Body language.

How perceptions are formed face-to-face:

- Gestures/Body language: **55 %**
- Voice Tone: **38 %**
- Words: **7 %**

How perceptions are formed over the telephone:

- Gestures/Body language: **0 %**
- Voice Tone: **83 %**
- Words: **17 %**

“Public relations is the shaping of perception, through communication, for the achievement of positive goals.”

– Art Stevens

ARE YOU COMMUNICATING CLEARLY? 7 TIPS

Listed below are ways to measure whether or not your conversations and presentations are clear.

1. If you **speak clearly and concisely**, your listeners:

- respond warmly and attentively: they lean toward you, raise their eyebrows, and their eyes are rounded;
- give you more eye contact;
- give verbal attends such as nods and gestures;
- ask fewer questions for clarification;
- appear more relaxed: smiling, shoulders down, hands relaxed.

2. **Read body language or nonverbal signals.** Confused listeners often:

- avoid eye contact;
- tilt their heads;
- squint their eyes;
- close their mouths;
- lower their eyebrows;
- cross their arms and legs;
- turn away from you.

3. **Avoid vague words**

Another way to speak clearly is to avoid unclear words such as *it, that, this, those, they, he, she, them, and we*. Unfortunately, you may use these words because you feel sure that your listeners know what you are talking about. For at least a few weeks, avoid the words above in your speech. For example:

NOT: It would be great for them. Using the process will make a difference.

INSTEAD: The new distribution process will reduce your costs by at least 12%. If you eliminate excess forms, you will reduce wasteful paper handling dramatically.

Expressions can also be vague: *other areas of interest, some things, none of the above.*

Are You Communicating Clearly? 7 Tips

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4. Stop repeating yourself

When you note that others do not understand you, you may repeat yourself time after time, hoping to "get through" to your listeners. This technique seems logical, but the large volume of speaking caused by repeating compromises success. This "recycling" of information and comments is not effective. One way to reduce speech recycling is to change your thinking about speaking. More is not better. Instead, program yourself to realize that you need to say only a few sentences in a conversation before giving your conversational partner a turn.

5. Say one thought in each sentence

The desire to "say it all" also may plague you. If you recognize yourself as a "say-it-all" type, then you probably speak in very long, overloaded sentences. Research shows that **the average adult listener can hold only 16 words in short term memory**, so do not be surprised when your listeners do not remember your 30 word sentences. Try to say only one idea per sentence, then end the sentence and start a new one. Rather than just starting a new sentence immediately, insert a pause between sentences so that you can think, edit, and observe the reactions of your conversational partners.

6. Start in the right place and stay on track.

You may start too far ahead of either what your listeners' remember about the subject or how much your listeners know. You may waste time providing excessive background information and off-topic comments. You need to remember to provide brief introductions to your topics to warm up and orient your listeners. "Brief" means two to five minutes for a presentation and a short phrase for an e-mail or voice-mail message. You should always start each conversation with a few sentences to review previous conversations and to remind your listeners of information that they will need to understand the rest of the conversation or presentation.

7. Tips and Techniques

Finally, here are a few quick ideas to eliminate rambling.

- Finish each idea before proceeding.
- Tolerate silence. "Pregnant" pauses are very attention-getting.
- Shorten your sentences.
- Put the most important information in your sentences at the beginning or end.
- Slow down by as much as 70% to allow more time to think.
- If action is needed, at the end of the conversation, summarize specific follow-up actions and specific follow up dates.

IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS

When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.

--Ernest Hemingway

We have two ears and one mouth for a reason: we should listen twice as much as we talk! When one discusses communication, usually the discussion focuses on speaking. The truth of the matter is, though, that on average, about 53% of our day is spent listening. Successful people are avid listeners.

One way to greatly improve communication skills is to practice active listening. In addition, if you are doing the talking, you are not learning anything new. The following lists ways to become a more supportive and effective listener.

- ✦ Be fully present whenever you are in communication with another. Give the speaker your undivided attention. Focus on what he is stating-- not on how you will respond.
- ✦ Be curious. Conscious listening is fueled by curiosity.
- ✦ Listen openly and with empathy to the other person
- ✦ Judge the content, not the messenger or delivery; comprehend before you judge.
- ✦ Use multiple techniques to fully comprehend. Ask questions, repeat what you heard, and paraphrase what the other is saying to make sure you understand it and check for understanding.
- ✦ Minimize interruptions and distractions. Don't check email or answer the phone. Close the door and fully focus your eyes and attention on the speaker.
- ✦ Pay attention to your and the speaker's body language, not just words.
- ✦ Stop talking! Do not interrupt. Let the other finish before responding. Be patient.
- ✦ Respond in an interested way that shows you understand. Ask the other person for details, opinions and suggestions.

FIVE TIPS TO IMPROVE AFA COMMUNICATION

1. *Develop a new member packet* that contains a membership list, upcoming activities, AFA chapter brochure, and other important information.
2. *Establish a plan to welcome new members*, such as assigning a veteran member to personally invite new members to chapter meetings and activities. When a new member is recruited, email the membership and ask them to extend a welcome.
3. *Ensure the members are well-informed* about chapter matters through emails, newsletters, phone calling trees, flyers and meetings.
4. *Publish a monthly calendar of events*.
5. *Establish a Key Communicators network*. This is a way to ensure accurate information reaches the opinion leaders on your base and in the community. It can be used to build good will through communication, to help control rumors, and to gain feedback. Opinion leaders and “movers and shakers” should be included. You might include the following: local AFA members, base leadership, legislators, city council members, county commissioners, business partners, Chamber of Commerce Board, and members of the clergy.

“Short words are best, and old words, when short, are best of all.”

-- Winston Churchill

MEDIA RELATIONS

Introduction

Successful Public Relations persons use many ways to communicate their messages to the media and public. This PR101 guide focuses primarily on communicating with the media in an attempt to generate positive publicity for the chapter and AFA in general.

In addition to the media, keep other people informed: legislators, members of boards, business people, civic and religious leaders, local associations, etc.

DEVELOPING A MEDIA LIST

One of the first tasks to accomplish is to create a media list. This is the beginning of your relationship building with reporters and editors. A wonderful tool to begin with is the Media Guide, a resource on the AFA website, <http://capwiz.com/afa/dbq/media/>. At this site, one can find and contact local and national media. The search engine allows searching by either zip code, individuals such as editors, reporters and producers, and by organization such as newspaper, radio or TV station. One may also search by state. Shown below is what was generated for the Perry, Georgia zip code.

Zip Search Results for: 31069

Click here for [Explanation of Zip Search Results](#).
To send a message, select your recipient(s) and click "Compose Message" below. **Please limit the number of selections to 5.**
For more information about an organization, click on its name.

National Media Organizations

- [Los Angeles Times](#) - Los Angeles, CA
- [Chicago Tribune](#) - Chicago, IL
- [USA Today](#) - McLean, VA
- [New York Times](#) - New York, NY
- [Washington Post](#) - Washington, DC
- [Wall Street Journal](#) - New York, NY
- [ABC News](#) - New York, NY
- [CBS News](#) - New York, NY
- [CNN News Group](#) - Atlanta, GA
- [Fox News Channel](#) - New York, NY
- [MSNBC](#) - Secaucus, NJ
- [NBC News](#) - New York, NY

Developing a Media List

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[Public Broadcasting Service \(PBS\)](#) - Alexandria, VA

Newspapers

- [Cochran Journal](#) - Cochran, GA
- [Dodge County News](#) - Eastman, GA
- [Dublin Courier Herald](#) - Dublin, GA
- [Macon Telegraph](#) - Macon, GA
- [Sandersville Progress](#) - Sandersville, GA
- [Union-Recorder](#) - Milledgeville, GA
- [Warner Robins Daily Sun](#) - Warner Robins, GA

Online Services

- [Central Georgian](#) - Lizella, GA
- [Macon Area Online](#) - Macon, GA

Television Stations

- [WGXA \(Fox 24\)](#) - Macon, GA
- [WMAZ \(CBS-13\)](#) - Macon, GA
- [WMGT \(NBC-41\)](#) - Macon, GA

Radio

- [WMVG 1450 AM / WKZR 102.3 FM](#) - Milledgeville, GA

Compose Message

This web-based option is just one tool. The media change quickly, and it is very difficult to maintain an up-to-date national listing. It is best to use this list as the beginning of a master list from which one can contact each media and ask the best person to send AFA news releases, photos and media advisories.

Next, make a comprehensive list of all the media that are within your area. Be sure to list all print and broadcast media:

- newspapers (including dailies, weeklies, and the base paper),
- magazines,
- TV stations and
- radio stations.

Developing a Media List

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For each media, identify the:

- contact name (get both the assignment editor's name and the military or government affairs reporter's name),
- title,
- address,
- phone number,
- fax number,
- e-mail address,
- deadlines for calendars,
- deadlines for news releases,
- communities covered,
- size of audience,
- for radio, call letters,
- for TV, call letters and national affiliation
- for radio and TV, broadcast time for Public Service Announcements.

Create an extended media list and a one-page quick reference. Contact your media representatives at least annually to update the lists. Use the page that follows as a template.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to build media relationships is to request a meeting to discuss your ideas and the editorial policies. The purpose of this initial contact is to get acquainted and to learn what will interest them in the future. Follow up on your conversation with a brief letter and background information on AFA.

SAMPLE MEDIA LIST

Type	Description	Contact	Position	Phone	Alternate #	Fax	Email
	Robins Rev-Up	Geoff Janes (Jeff)	Editor	926-2137		926-9597	vance.janes@robins.af.mil
	Robins Rev-Up	Angela Trunzo	Assignment Editor	926-2137		926-9597	angela.trunzo@robins.af.mil
Magaz	Air Force Magazine	Frances McKenney	Asst. Man. Editor	1-800-727-3337	ext. 5828		fmckenney@afa.org
Radio							
TV							
Atlanta							
Misc							

10 MEDIA RELATIONS TIPS

1. An interview is like a business meeting. Know what you want to accomplish before it begins. Develop three or four talking points and be sure you make them during the interview.
2. Learn what the reporter is seeking to accomplish and set ground rules before the interview begins. If there is something you cannot comment on during the interview, make sure that is stipulated up front. While it is inadvisable to speak off the record, if you plan to do so, make sure that it is stipulated clearly - and the reporter agrees - before you make off-the-record or background comments.
3. Learn to talk in brief sound bites, usually 25 to 40 words, and focus on the points you want to make – your key messages. Redirect negative questions to the point you are trying to make without repeating false or damaging assertions by the reporter or her sources.
4. Never hide facts. You don't have to volunteer information, but always be honest and forthcoming when you have the information requested.
5. Be aware of reporters' deadlines and schedules.
6. Familiarize yourself with the media outlets you wish to influence.
7. When on television, talk directly to the reporter -- not the camera.
8. If you don't know something, say so. You could either answer, "That's a question for so-and-so." or find the answer and get back to the reporter as soon as possible. If you don't, the story is almost certain to be published or aired without that information or, worse, without your explanation.
9. Create releases only for newsworthy items. When considering a topic for its news value, ask yourself the following questions:
 - ◆ Is it timely?
 - ◆ Is it local?
 - ◆ Is it important or interesting to the general public?
 - ◆ Does it have consequence, conflict or is it controversial?
 - ◆ Is it new, novel or different?
 - ◆ Are the people involved community leaders, high visibility citizens or ordinary people?
 - ◆ Does it have human interest? What makes it unusual?
 - ◆ How will it affect the average person?
 - ◆ Is it on the "cutting edge?" Is it something few people know about?
 - ◆ Is it odd, unusual, the biggest, the smallest or is it outstanding in some way, shape or form.
 - ◆ Does it relate to a "hot" news item? Is the media already interested in the topic?
10. There is no such thing as a dumb question. Don't talk down to reporters, don't demean their questions and don't act as though you are too busy to accommodate them.












IDEAS TO KEEP YOUR CHAPTER IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ Anniversaries or association milestones
- ⇒ Date of founding and anniversary
- ⇒ Retirement of prominent members
- ⇒ Awards to the chapter/division or members
- ⇒ Outstanding contributions of chapter/division members
- ⇒ Annual conference, regional conference, awards banquets or special events
- ⇒ Annual meeting
- ⇒ Membership meetings
- ⇒ Fundraising events
- ⇒ Speeches
- ⇒ Contests or promotions
- ⇒ Cooperative agreements with other associations or organizations
- ⇒ Interviews with prominent members on current topics
- ⇒ Visits of Association leadership
- ⇒ Elections
- ⇒ Number of members--all time high
- ⇒ Accomplishments of a member or training completed
- ⇒ Awarding or receipt of scholarships
- ⇒ Results of a survey



HOW TO GET YOUR CHAPTER IN THE NEWS

General Tips

-  Look for a "hook" or a unique angle in a story. Reporters want to write stories about things that are one-of-a-kind or out-of-the-ordinary.
-  Don't flood a reporter with reams of paper each week. Send items that are timely, interesting and newsworthy to the general public.
-  Plan ahead. Send your news release to the media one to two weeks prior to your event. Do not wait until the last minute!
-  Telephone the day before the event as a gentle reminder. Ask for the assignment editor. Don't ask them to commit (they cannot), but just say you called to remind them and if they can cover your event, you'd be most appreciative.
-  Respect a reporter's deadline. If he needs it by Monday, get it to him by Monday.
-  Make sure your news releases are brief and concise; say what needs to be said, usually in two to five paragraphs.
-  Double-check your facts. It does no good if the media comes to your event on the wrong day or at the wrong time.
-  Always be honest with a reporter. Lost credibility cannot be regained.
-  Remember that every good reporter wants to get a story before the competition. To show that you're being fair with the timing of your news releases, distribute to all at the same time. Document when the releases were distributed.
-  Tell a reporter when you believe he or she has done a good job on a story. Write a thank-you note for coverage you received. Copy your letter to the general manager or the publisher.
-  If your event is not "covered," attempt to gain post-event coverage. Modify your original release to summarize the activity. Again, specify who, what, when, where and why. Photos with captions and quotes by those involved help make the release interesting and increase its chance of being published. If you send 35mm photos, identify the chapter, date, student/teacher names and grades on the back of the pictures in case they are separated from the release. Use either a post-it note or a marker made especially for photographs. Sometimes the photo will be published, but the release will not, so be sure that the caption can "stand alone."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



News Releases

Print: newspapers and magazines; broadcast: radio and TV



Public Service Announcements

Print: Newspapers and magazines; broadcast: radio and TV



Media Advisories



Fact sheets



Photographs (a picture is worth 1000 words!)



Letters to the Editor



Op-ed pieces



Interviews/Features



Chapter newsletters



Special events such as conferences or 5Ks



Web sites



E-Mail



Audiovisual materials such as PowerPoint presentations



News Conferences

HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE

Writing a News / Media Release

A news release is about genuine news, and is a statement of facts about an event or issue. While a news release is an essential tool in public relations, it is one of many. It is usually the primary way you communicate your news to the general public. You may write a release on the election of officers, special events and programs, and awards, to name a few.

A news release tells readers what the event or issue is, why it is important, when it is pertinent, who is involved or making a statement about the event or issue and how readers can get more information. The media receive multiple news releases every day. Your news release should be simple, concise and factual, while catching the attention of busy readers. If your readers are media persons, they may use the release word-for-word as an article or they may cover the event and write a longer article from their perspective.

Practice makes perfect. There is a knack to writing a news release. The following basics and tips will help.

CRAFTING A NEWS RELEASE

Quick Guide

- I. Have a standardized format
 - a. Make it clear that it's a News Release
 - b. Include all necessary contact information in header














- II. Include the five "W's"
 - a. Who
 - b. What
 - c. When
 - d. Where
 - e. Why or How

- III. Find an angle or "hook"

- IV. Keep it simple






- V. Include background material if necessary
 - a. Statistics
 - b. Diagrams
 - c. Charts

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING A RELEASE

-  Create the news release on AFA chapter letterhead.
-  Begin the release with “News Release.”
-  Next write "For Immediate Release:" and the date. As an alternative, write “For Release Upon Receipt:” and the date. If it needs to be held, use "Embargoed Until (insert date)," or "For Release After (date)."
-  Next list the contact name, title, phone number and e-mail address.
-  Write a headline that generates interest and summarizes the story. Type the headline in bold, larger font letters. This is one “hook” that encourages the reader to read on. Use at least one action verb.
-  Try to keep your release to no more than one page, but if it is more than one page, write "more" at the bottom of each non-final page.
-  A well constructed and clearly written release is broken into two general parts: The lead and the body. The first or "lead" paragraph will be short, but will contain all basic information: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. It is vital to have those questions answered in the lead.
-  The second paragraph of a release will tell in-depth why something is happening and provides specific information on the sponsor or the people the news is targeted for.
-  Don't type the release in all capital letters and don't underline.
-  Place a key word or short phrase (slug) that identifies a story on the top left-hand corner of each page after the first.
-  On the last page, at the end of the release, type “-30 -,” “# # #,” or “end” to signify the story is over.
-  Avoid jargon or explain it.
-  Use the most precise word in every case, and omit needless words.

Nuts and Bolts of a Release

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-  Proofread the release. It helps to solicit the input of a critical friend.
-  Limit paragraphs to six lines and seldom put more than two sentences in a paragraph. Frequently the lead paragraph will contain only one sentence. Keep sentences to 25 words or less.
-  If you send attachments, itemize at the end of the release.
-  Send a photograph if appropriate.
-  Send the release to several media outlets (not just one).

An old PR adage is to never get into a shouting match with someone who buys ink by the barrel!



WRITING BETTER NEWS RELEASES



Begin the release with a catchy phrase, sentence or even a question. Editors only invest a few seconds to determine which news releases to read, so your story's lead paragraph is one of the most critical elements. That first sentence or two will either grab the editor - or it won't.



The most important aspect of the event, or the most significant fact, should be the most prominent in your release.



Include a number where people can call for more information. Make sure it's a number where someone is usually available. Listing two numbers is even better.



If appropriate, include the "best time to be there" in your news release, rather than having a photographer wait through the entire event. This helps editors determine how long a reporter and photographer will be away. Indicate if there will be good video or photo opportunities.



Editors cut from the bottom of stories, so use the inverted pyramid style of writing. Put your story's most important information in the first paragraph, and give details in the rest of the release in order of descending order of importance.



The last paragraph typically includes a statement about the chapter, such as address or mission statement.



Ensure that your facts, figures, dates, titles and names are accurate. Check and double-check.



If the event is after-hours, include an after-hours contact name and number. If you're listing your chapter number, a frustrated reporter may hang-up before the person answering the phone can decide whom he or she needs to talk with! Tell your staff to anticipate a call or inquiry from the media.



When you make reference to the day, date, time and place, **bold** that information - it makes it easier for the assignment editor to get the information at a glance.



Do not be disappointed if your news release does not result in coverage. Even if the media do not carry the story, they have been exposed to information that may influence when and how they cover subsequent stories.















If your chapter or department location is not well-known or easily accessible, include directions and/or a map.



Leave wide margins (1 to 1.5 inches on both sides) for media readers to edit.










Writing Better News Releases

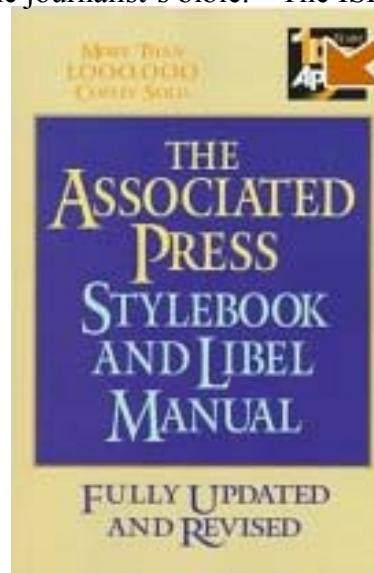
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-  If any of the names listed in the release are difficult to pronounce, spell out the phonetic pronunciation for broadcast media.
-  If you're looking for post-publicity, send the media a photograph, but make sure it's a quality photo. Identify the chapter, event, date and persons in the photo. Make it easy for the reporter to get the information correct. List names left to right, front row to back. If you send a printed photograph, *do not write in pen or pencil*. Use a "blue tone" pen (specifically for photos) or attach the names with a post-it note. Photographs may be sent to newspapers and TV stations.
-  When possible, use quotes to liven up the story and increase the impact of your points. Quotes are sometimes picked up verbatim. Short quotes can be effective leads for a news release - but only if they are catchy.
-  Avoid self-serving comments and phrases, unsubstantiated opinions and superlatives associated with marketing a product. If announcements are being made, or opinions are expressed, they should be attributed to the person who is saying them. Anything that can be argued should not be stated as fact without attribution.
-  After your story appears in your local paper, city magazine, community newspaper or newsletter, please send a copy of the story to your state affiliate communications office.
-  Keep sentences to 25 words or less.
-  Get to know your local reporters and assignment editors.
-  Determine the best way your local reporter likes to receive news releases: snail mail, E-mail, or fax.
-  If you must use snail mail, do so as early as possible.
-  E-mail your release at least 10 days ahead of your events. Flag to follow-up. Be succinct in your subject area—never leave the subject area blank or vague. Place your main points and contact information near the top.
-  Send an accompanying "fact sheet" to provide context for your release. NOTE: If you send attachments, itemize them at the end of the release.
-  It helps to prepare a handout or packet of background information for distribution at the event.

Writing Better News Releases

Page 3 of 3

-  Send a photograph with your release if it's appropriate.
-  Do not send your release to more than one editor per publication. Determine the receiver in advance.
-  Send the release to several media outlets (not just one).
-  Define acronyms the first time they are used, abbreviate afterwards. For example, Air Force Association (AFA).
-  Know the deadline and publishing or broadcasting schedules of your local media outlets so that you time your release or event appropriately.
-  If there is more to the story, other information can be added as attachments (Fact Sheets, Biographies or Brochures).
-  Do not be disappointed if your news release does not result in coverage. Even if the media do not carry the story, they have been exposed to information that may influence when and how they cover subsequent stories.
-  Quotes are important in a release. Usually it's best to quote the head of your organization or the person responsible for the program being announced. Quotes give more meaning and add color to the story. They should sound natural. Use quotes to add adjectives and express an opinion or a position. The release itself should be factual.
-  Get “The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.” This stylebook defines proper news writing and is considered “the journalist’s bible.” The ISBN is 0-201-33985-4, and it is published by Perseus Books.



SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE



Carl Vinson Memorial

Chapter 296, Air Force Association

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: October 19, 2004

Contact: Beth Conley Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296, AFA, 478-988-3373, elizabethburris@msn.net

Local AFA Member and Warner Robins Resident Jack Steed Elected Southeast Region President of AFA



HOUSTON COUNTY – Jack Steed of Warner Robins, Ga. was elected President of the Air Force Association (AFA) Southeast Region. This region encompasses Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina and represents over 10,000 AFA members,

The Association held its annual convention in Washington, DC September 2004. During the convention's business meeting, Steed was elected to this prestigious position.

He began his one-year term the first of this month and will serve through September 30, 2005. Steed commented, "I look forward to working with the other region presidents, state and chapter presidents and the national president in making the Air Force Association the premier Professional Military Association (PMA) and the Southeast Region second to none. We will work to increase our membership and thus create a stronger voice in dealing with the Congress and the Administration. Our core values - Integrity, Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do - will be paramount in all of our activities. These activities include but are not

Steed Elected Southeast Region President of AFA / Page 2 of 2

Contact: Beth Conley Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296, AFA, 478-988-3373, elizabethburris@msn.net

limited to: Educating the Public About the Critical Role of Aerospace Power, Advocating Aerospace Power and a Strong National Defense, Supporting the Air Force and the Air Force Family, Strengthening AFA Field Operations and Achieving AFA Operational Excellence.”

The AFA has a three-fold mission:

- 1) to educate the public about the value of aerospace power;
- 2) advocate the need for aerospace power and a strong national defense; and
- 3) support the Air Force and the Air Force Family.

Steed retired from the U. S. Air Force after more than 30 years of service. He retired as a Chief Master Sergeant and was the senior Non Commissioned Officer at Robins Air Force Base. He has been an active member of the AFA for over 30 years.

He is employed by Nichols, Cauley and Associates, a local accounting firm. Steed and his wife, Betsy, reside in Warner Robins, Ga. For more information, contact Steed either at 478-929-3888 or jsteed@nicholscauley.com.

The AFA is an independent, nonprofit, civilian organization that promotes public understanding of aerospace power and the role it plays in national security. The AFA website address is www.afa.org and the organization's phone number is 703-247-5800.

###

Note to Media: A JPEG photo is attached.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Media publish Public Service Announcements (PSAs) as a service to the community. PSAs are normally reserved for nonprofit organizations, and are used when scheduling permits. News releases written for broadcast must be shorter than releases written for the print media because they are designed to be heard rather than read.

PSA Tips



Transform regular media releases into PSAs by timing them while reading them out loud. Edit your story down to 20 to 30 seconds reading time, omitting extra words per sentence.



Use short sentences for broadcast releases. Limit them to 10 to 15 words per sentence.



Spell out phonetically any names difficult to pronounce (for example, Yalowicz (yah-loh-wits.))



Offer public service directors a choice of two to three lengths for your PSA. Send PSAs that are 20 seconds, 30 seconds or 60 seconds in length.



Limit your PSA to one main point for maximum impact.



Remember that your audience is more than likely busy doing other things in addition to listening to the radio or watching TV. Grab their attention immediately with a catchy phrase or something of interest to the average listener and viewer.



If you prerecord your PSAs, make sure they are exactly 10, 15, 20, 30 or 60 seconds long. Use only professional quality recording equipment.

Sample PSA

Public Service Announcement for Broadcast

Sample 15 second PSA

For Immediate Release: October 11, 2005

Contact: Beth Conley Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296, AFA, 478-988-3373, elizabethburris@msn.net

Time - :30

AFA Hosts Thank-a-Vet Run

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE -- The Air Force Association Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter is sponsoring its 5th annual **5K run and dedication ceremony** on **Saturday, November 12, 2005**. The Thank-a-Vet-Run will be held at the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base.

Capt. Bill Robinson, USAF, Retired, the longest held POW during the Vietnam War, will be the guest speaker for the awards ceremony. Check-in time begins at 7:30 a.m., and the Thank-a-Vet 5K run begins at 8:30 a.m. To register or for more information, visit the AFA website, cv-afa.org.

END

MEDIA ADVISORY

A media advisory is a separate single-page document that gives journalists the logistical details about your event: when, where, and how they can cover it. The focus of the media advisory should be on making it as easy as possible for reporters to find and cover your story.

Sample Media Advisory

MEDIA ADVISORY

October 10, 2005

Contact: Beth Conley Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296, AFA, 478-988-3373, elizabethburris@msn.net

For Planning Purposes Only

AFA to Hold News Press Conference

HOUSTON COUNTY – Lynn Morley, President of the Air Force Association Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter, will hold a press conference on **Monday, October 17, 2005, at 10:00 a.m.** at the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base. She will unveil a new Museum exhibit.

- WHO:** AFA Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter President Lynn Morley
- WHAT:** Press Conference
- WHEN:** Monday, October 17, 200r
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
- WHERE:** Museum of Aviation, Hangar 1
Highway 247, RAFB
- WHY:** Unveiling of new Museum of Aviation exhibit

###

SAMPLE FACT SHEET

Example for Media Kit

AFA Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296, Robins AFB, Georgia

The mission of the AFA is three fold:

1. Educate the public about the need for aerospace power and its role in a strong national defense.
2. Advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense.
3. Support the United States Air Force and the Air Force Family.

Air Force Association membership is open to active duty military, civil service workers and retired military or civil service. Businesses are also invited to join as a community partner.

Benefits of membership include:

- a monthly AFA magazine
- yearly Air Force Almanac,
- financial services,
- group insurance,
- travel services, and
- education / career assistance.

More importantly, however, is the support the local chapter provides Robins Air Force Base and the Houston County community. Initiatives of Chapter 296 include:

- sponsorship of at least five \$500 scholarships to young airman assigned to the base;
- Family Science Nights in local elementary schools in support of the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center;
- *USA Today* Visions classrooms in local Houston County schools, providing teachers newspaper and curriculum to encourage aerospace education
- hosting annual and quarterly awards programs for base employees, local teachers and Air Force Junior ROTC cadets, and
- an annual "Thank a Veteran" 5K run with revenues used to support a POW/MIA memorial at the Museum of Aviation.

Interested persons may complete a membership application online at www.cv-afa.org.

An AFA Fact sheet is posted to the AFA website, afa.org.

A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS

Post-event Coverage

Your chapter can obtain a lot of publicity by submitting photographs to newspapers and magazines. This is a wonderful way to build goodwill with your membership and the general public. And when you are recruiting new members, people are more likely to join a group that they are familiar with.

Submitting photos are valuable for post-event publicity. If the media does not attend your event, just modify your original pre-event release to summarize the activity. Again, specify who, what, when, where and why. Photos with captions and quotes by those involved help make the release interesting and increase its chance of being published. Digital photos are excellent to use because they may be emailed to multiple media representatives quickly and affordably. Write an interesting cutline (caption) to describe the event and identify the AFA chapter, date, names of persons in the photos. If you do, however, mail 35mm photos, give the information on the back of the pictures in case they are separated from the release. Use either a post-it note or a marker made especially for photographs. Sometimes the photo will be published, but the release will not, so be sure that the caption can "stand alone."

PR CLINIC: TIPS FOR BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Great photos are one way to make your publication or Website stand out. Photographs also increase the chances of your news release being published.

When using photos to enhance printed materials, follow these tips:

- Try to get an action photo.
- Avoid group pictures when possible. When a group picture is expected, take one, along with the candid you want, and give the group shot to the chapter. Use the candid. You're the editor.
- Have as few people in the photo as possible.
- Take more than one photo. It's better to have too many pictures than to miss a photo opportunity because you didn't take enough.
- Keep subjects as close together as possible.
- Don't ask subjects to look directly at the camera.
- Identify everyone.
- Caption all photos.
- Look for unusual angles for group pictures. Get on top of a table or look up from underneath; change your usual perspective.
- Avoid collages and odd-shaped pictures in your publications. Look at magazines and newspapers for ideas on layout and creative use of photos.
- Photograph people in their environment rather than using head shots.
- Watch out for detail. For instance, be alert to reflections off eyeglasses and check the background so that objects do not seem to be "growing" out of someone's head.
- Shoot tight. Many pictures are spoiled because the subject is too far from the camera.
- For digital, it is always better to shoot at the highest resolution and reduce later for printing if necessary.
- Save photos as JPEG or Bitmap files and attach to the e-mail instead of embedding in the body of the news release.
- A 5.1 megapixels will produce good quality photos. 5.0 MP is ideal for prints up to 11" x 19". 2.0 MP is ideal for 5" x 7".
- Digital photos allow easy cropping and color correction.

CRAFTING AN OP-ED PIECE

Most newspapers include a page opposite their editorial pages for outside opinions, called an “op-ed.” A great way to gain credible visibility is for your principal to have an opinion piece published in the newspaper. In an op-ed, the strongest point up front, then the rest of the op-ed is used to prove the case, with the opinion supported by facts.

Op-ed Checklist

- In your first paragraph, focus on one issue or idea. Be succinct.
- Express your opinion, based on factual, researched or first-hand information.
- Be personal and conversational; it can help make your point.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue. Don't equivocate.
- Provide insight, understanding: educate your reader without being preachy.
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action. Don't philosophize.
- Don't ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay.
- Use clear, powerful, direct language. Emphasize active verbs; forget the adjectives and adverbs, which only weaken writing.
- Avoid clichés and jargon.
- Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.
- Use humor if it suits your topic.
- Write 750 double-spaced words or less (fewer is always better).
- Include your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the end.

YOU'VE AGREED TO GIVE AN INTERVIEW, NOW WHAT?

You have two goals. You want:

1. the audience to perceive you as competent, and
2. to be perceived as likeable and trustworthy.

Your main goal is to win people over. Perception has replaced reality. Take control of the interview with the following lessons learned:

Lesson I: Pause before answering, and while pausing, figure out what the question would be if asked by a friend.

Lesson II: While pausing, don't go - uh...uh...uh...it makes you look like you are stumbling.

Lesson III: Don't lie, if you don't know the answer, say so. Don't guess or speculate.

Lesson IV: Always acknowledge a problem. Say, 'this looks like a problem we will look into.'

Lesson V: Never use "no comment." Smile and say you don't have sufficient information to comment, or say it would be inappropriate for you to comment.

Lesson VI: Beware of jargon; be brief, clear, and concise. Stop the "ize" words. Instead of utilize, say, "use."

Lesson VII: In addition to facts, statistics and abstractions, tell stories and anecdotes and draw word pictures.

Lesson VIII: When being interviewed, align your mind, face, body and voice. Principles to keep in mind include:

- Relax and breath correctly,
- Do not talk until your mind is ready,
- Make positive statements,
- Open your face...smile,
- Stand erect, hands quietly at your side,
- Use gestures, but make sure it's natural, and
- Vary pitch and rate of your voice.
- Remember the old proverb: Tell me and I forget, show me and I might remember, involve me and I understand.

You've Agreed to Give an Interview, Now What?

Page 2 of 2

Prepare for the interview. Always...

- * Have background information on hand.
- * Determine your key message before you talk with reporters. Rehearse how you want to start and end your statement. Repeat your message at every opportunity.
- * If it's to your advantage, give the narrowest possible answer.
- * Always tell the truth, but don't elaborate.
- * When the interviewer stops talking, you stop talking. Remain silent or ask, "Have I answered your question?"

AN AWESOME MEDIA INTERVIEW

Prepare yourself to succeed when dealing with the media. Prepare yourself, or your designated spokesperson, to conduct an interview so that you are **quoted accurately and often**.

While some might consider media interviews a painful task, they are important marketing opportunities because they provide immediate access to a very large audience. Media interviews are your chance to get your messages out to your key audiences: active duty and retired military, business partners, and community members.

Remember that:

- The interview is not a conversation; it is an exchange of information in which the reporter's job is to ask questions and yours is to communicate key messages.
- Write down your key messages - just one or two. Stick to them and repeat them often.
- Stay professionally friendly.
- Regardless of the reporter's attitude, provide messages and answers directed at your key audiences. Speak through the reporter, not to the reporter.
- Keep the interview short -- just 10-15 minutes
- The interview is not the time to educate a reporter. Stick to the topic at hand and stick to your messages. Short interviews help keep quotes on topic.

An Awesome Media Interview

Page 2 of 3

How do reporters define the news?

- * News is whatever is new or different and affects lots of people.
- * Stories are often based on conflict, controversy, and crisis. For example, a reporter might focus on the differences of opinion among Board members.

How reporters work

- They are not your friend and they are not your enemy
- Their job is to ask questions and write stories that will of interest to the public
- The way they ask questions can often irritate us (in a rush or in an attack)

How to influence the interview

While you may not be able to control the crisis at hand, the interview topic or the questions asked, there are some things you do control (and these can influence the interview and the story):

- * You have complete control over what you say.
- * You can decide the time, place and length of any interview.
- * Your attitude.

When the reporter calls, or shows up

First ask some questions! Why are you calling? This tells you the topic and lets you know if the person to respond is you or someone else. Why are you asking about our finances or that chapter? This tells you the angle the reporter is taking. It lets you know if someone is complaining or gives insight to a concern.

What is your deadline? This tells you how much time you've got to get ready. Reporters will always try to get you to respond immediately. This is usually unnecessary. Get the time you need. Tell him/her you'll call back or meet with them at a time you set so that you can prepare and meet their deadline.

An Awesome Media Interview

Page 3 of 3

Prepare for the Interview

The chance for a successful interview increases greatly when you prepare your key messages.

In your mind, develop the headline you'd like the read in the next day's paper.

Develop messages based on the interests of your key audiences. Think in terms of benefits. That's what your audiences will understand.

Make each message very, very brief. Use quick phrases, not long sentences.

Test your messages: Do they urge the listener to arrive at your headline? Do they flow logically from one to the other? If the answer is no to either of these questions, reconsider and redraft your messages.

If you have time, find a colleague and practice these messages against sample questions. Now you're ready for your media interview.

About The Interview

It starts the moment you see the reporter. Just because you don't see a notebook, camera or tape player doesn't mean your comments aren't registering in the reporter's head.

- There is no such thing as "off the record." If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it.

A media interview is not a conversation. It is a stylized exchange of information where the reporter's job is to ask probing questions, and your job is to get 1 or 2 key messages across.

- Write these messages down and keep them in front of you

Stick to your key messages and repeat them over and over (it's surprising how long it takes for some key ideas to sink in)

- Stay professionally courteous

- Answer every question with a one-two punch:

1) Answer every question with a direct, honest and concise response. For example, "yes," "no," "I don't know," or "that's not the issue," etc.,

2) Deliver a key message or two **every time** you answer a question

Remember: Unless it's live, reporters almost never run their questions, only your answers, so concentrate on giving the answers you want!

HOW TO APPEAR RELAXED & CONFIDENT DURING A TV INTERVIEW

If you are about to do a TV interview, in the "easy-to-say, almost-impossible-to-do" category, the first piece of advice is: RELAX. The worst thing you can do during an interview is to appear nervous. If you think you're going to collapse during an interview, the best option would be to let someone else do the interview. Your best asset is to be totally prepared. Know (from memory) the who, what, where, when, and why, plus a phone number where people can call for more information.

Appearances Can Be Deceiving

Men:

- ★ Always put on your coat and straighten your tie.
- ★ Pull your shirtsleeves down after you put on your coat.
- ★ Double check to make sure your tie is lying flat and not scrunched up.
- ★ If you have an oily complexion, take a minute and wipe it with a handkerchief or tissue.

Women:

- ★ Be prepared to look washed out. A little extra blush and lipstick will help you avoid looking too pale.
- ★ Make sure your face isn't shiny - a little powder will do the job, or blot with a tissue.
- ★ If you're standing up during the interview, do NOT have a purse strap on your shoulder - put the purse down first.

Both:

- ★ Dress appropriately for television interviews. Avoid outlandish colors and styles. Blue shirts and blouses work well. Be careful of patterns that may "dance" on the screen when televised.
- ★ If you are sitting down during the interview and you are wearing a suit jacket, pull down the hem and sit on it so it looks smooth.
- ★ If the media puts a lapel microphone on you, make sure it's not bunching or pulling at your shirt or dress.
- ★ Watch dangling jewelry and beeping alarm watches that make annoying noises that the microphone will pick up.

How to Appear Relaxed & Confident During a TV Interview

Page 2 of 3

Stop, Think, Speak

- ★ Take a deep breath before you say anything. When you're asked a question, take a moment and gather your thoughts, then speak. Reporters will rarely rush you so *take your time*. Pauses also allow "edit points" for editing, which makes it easier for the reporter/videographer.
- ★ Be conscious about blinking rapidly, licking your lips, rolling your eyes or playing with your hair. Don't hold anything in your hands and if you gesture with your hands, make sure they are fairly close to the frame of your face.
- ★ Remember what your best teachers told you - studying for a test is very important. The same principle applies here. Studying for an interview (when possible) is perfectly okay. You don't want to sound like you've memorized anything, but do try to remember a few key phrases.
- ★ Don't use jargon that is specific to education. Reporters hate it and the public doesn't get it.
- ★ DO use media jargon, or at least know what they're talking about. Don't refer to the media as the "press" because that's only newspaper folks; don't say "film" to a TV person because film is obsolete. TV crews use videotape.
- ★ Use phrases indicating passion: "our boys and girls," "our commitment to our children," "our dedication to improving test scores".
- ★ If you don't understand or hear the question, ask the reporter to repeat it and/or explain what she means.
- ★ Be prepared to give background information to the reporter - this could be the first time she's heard of your program or chapter. Newspaper reporters will probably need more details. Television and radio reporters don't have the luxury of all that space.
- ★ The reporter and videographer are a team - talk with both of them. Do not say hello to the reporter only. Videographers are the ones who decide just how good (or bad) you look on camera.
- ★ Smile when it's appropriate for the situation. If you are not enthusiastic about your chapter or chapter system, who will be?
- ★ During television interviews, look at the reporter and not the camera. You'll feel more comfortable and look more natural.

How to Appear Relaxed & Confident During a TV Interview

Page 3 of 3

- ★ If you're interviewed in your office, take a few minutes to straighten your desk. If your desk looks unorganized or messy, it will look three times as bad on video. Pay attention to what's behind you. On television, if you're standing in front of a tree, it may look as if it's growing out of your head!
- ★ During radio interviews, ask if you're going to be taped or if you're doing the interview live. If it's live, write down a few key phrases and then talk from your notes. If you read it verbatim, you'll sound too stiff.
- ★ Remember enunciation, especially on the radio. Speak clearly and don't lean in too close to the microphone. If you're doing a telephone interview for radio, remember that the telephone is the microphone, so don't get too close.



INS AND OUTS OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Press conferences (also called news or media conferences) are only used for very specific purposes and should be reserved for momentous, really big news. All those who are important to the story are gathered together for the media to get quotes, tape, or video -- all at one time. It can be very effective for the media and the news makers. One warning though - the rule of thumb is that if the information can be communicated just as easily in a news release, don't call a conference. The media typically despise press conferences for several reasons:

☹ Reporters are all given the identical story in front of their competitors. Unless a reporter can get a few minutes alone with the superintendent, the story in tomorrow's paper will be very similar to the one in the other newspaper across town, on the 11 o'clock news and on all the local radio stations.

☹ News conferences are often mistakenly called to make announcements that aren't very newsworthy. A reporter might make an effort to get there only to discover that the conference was for a minor announcement that could have been handled a lot easier and quicker with a press release.

☹ Press conferences are usually controlled by the organization that calls them. In other words, it's their show, so they get to make up the rules. Reporters can't yell out questions whenever they feel like it. And if the conference is limited to a specific time period, there may not be enough time to answer all of the questions.

☹ A press conference seldom results in interesting visuals for television. Usually, there's little more to photograph than a bunch of talking heads.

☹ A press conference is often considered nothing more than spin. A company will do everything to put its best foot forward, even if it means refusing to answer certain questions.

But if you have momentous news...

If you truly have a big story and a need for a press conference, than by all means send out your media advisory and invite in the media! It is very time effective for the media. To have a successful conference:

☺ Don't play favorites - invite all media reps.

☺ Notify the media well in advance, at least seven to ten days before the event.

☺ Schedule the conference when it is convenient for the media – mid-week and mid morning, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 timeframe. Reporters get to work late morning and work late into the evening, with deadlines in the afternoon to early evening.

☺ Hold the conferences in a meeting room, not an office. This allows adequate space for everyone, but not so much space the conference would look sparsely attended. Provide plenty of seating and a quiet place for interviews and sound/video recording.

Ins and Outs of the Press Conference

Page 2 of 2

- ☺ State time allotted in advance so that reporters know how much time they have.
- ☺ Keep the speaker away from reporters before the press conference. You want all reporters to have the same access.
- ☺ Prepare press kits (background information, biographies, etc.), releases and copies of speeches to help get your message reported accurately.
- ☺ Let the reporters know when the press conference is about to end. Announce, “One more question after this one.”
- ☺ Have guests available for one-on-one questions away from the other media afterwards. This provides a chance for each reporter to look for unique questions and a unique angle on the story, and for TV to shoot video of their reporter alone with guests. It is also an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings.

Source: “The Practical Public Relations” by Fraser P. Seitel, 8th edition, Prentice Hall

MEDIA DICTIONARY

Like everyone else, broadcast and print media have their own jargon. While you do not have to speak the language fluently, the following terms will help you to work with the media and they will consider you a layperson and not just a typical media reader or watcher.

It is no longer “the press” (note: not even press conference) because the media is not just the newspaper. Refer to them as the **media**; **news people**; **reporters** or a **news** conference.

No one films any more, they **videotape**.

Soundbites are parts of the interview, short succinct phrases, which reporters use in their stories. Keep in mind that most soundbites are less than 7 seconds.

VO stands for voice-over. It generally means that the anchor will read the story while the video is being shown.

A **package** is a full story on television. The package generally includes video of the event, one or more interview and a Stand-up (see below).

A **Stand-up** is what a reporter uses generally to introduce or close out the story; usually done "standing up" in front of the chapter, inside the classroom or walking down a chapter hallway.

Closer video - video used at the end of the television newscast with the credits rolling over it. Generally doesn't have a story, just an introduction as to what the video is. Don't underestimate the power of this - it's a great PR too!

Community Calendar - in television, radio, and newspaper, the area where upcoming events are published or announced.

White Balance - is when a television photographer "balances" the colors on his/her camera. Generally they do this themselves, but sometimes they need help in holding up a white sheet of paper or even shooting off a person with a totally white shirt.

Nat is the natural sound that accompanies the story. For example, if they are interviewing a coach during a football game, you'll hear the sounds of football cheers and people yelling in the background, that's **nat sound**.

Visuals are what television people are looking for - they don't want a lot of talking heads at committee meetings. If you are trying to get TV people interested in covering a story, think of what it will look like on a television screen. Same goes for newspaper photographers: they like action shots as well.

B-Roll is video used to illustrate a story. Reporters sometimes ask if they can get some b-roll even if the students in the video aren't the students they are referring to in the story. It's the extra video used to illustrate the story.

Media Dictionary

Page 2 of 2

Beat is the term used for the assignment area for a reporter, e.g., "My beat is the military." It is the specific area of coverage that a reporter sticks to. Reporters can be very territorial and tend to get mad when workmates tread onto their beats.

On assignment means a reporter is out of the office covering a story.

PSA is a Public Service Announcement. This is usually sent in before the event so you can generate an audience. Different media outlets use different formats, so call and ask their preference before wasting time and money doing it wrong way.

Anchors are the people who appear at the actual news desk during the news show. While some anchors do some reporting, most of the "daily grind" work is done by reporters. Many times, anchors do the reporting work at night. A few reporters may also be weekend anchors or back-up anchors.

Assignment Editors are the people who keep track of story ideas, news releases and board/committee meetings. They also do a large part of the assigning of news stories, so you want to stay on their good side! Keep in mind that in many television stations there are two types of **news directors**: the person who manages and directs the newsroom and the technical director, who actually directs (from studio control) the news show. Don't get the two mixed up. In newspaper, there are many different types of editors. Generally the **assignment editor** is the one you want to utilize, unless you have a specific education reporter. With smaller papers, sometimes you will want to work with the **managing editor** or **bureau editor** to ensure coverage is supported from the highest level in the newsroom. In most radio stations, there is only one news director/reporter.

Headlines are just what the name implies - the written words over the top of the story in a newspaper. NEVER infer that the reporter wrote those headlines, because the headline writer is generally someone else. If you have a complaint about the headline, as opposed to the story, take it up with the editor and not with the reporter. Same goes for "headlines" on television/radio as in "Coming up tonight at eleven...." Television headlines are often written by an anchor or a producer so do not assume the reporter wrote them.

"You'll never read it if you don't say it."

-- June Milton

THE END