

# PR Basics

How to Tell Your Story and Get Results

PRESENTED BY:

Anat Gerstein

# Overview – Importance of PR

## Good Public Relations

- Builds recognition and reputation
- Generates interest and support
- Raises awareness
- Provides 3<sup>rd</sup> party credibility

# Overview- PR Today

- Internet and social media has changed your ability to reach and engage stakeholders
- “People’s experience of the news is becoming a shared experience” (Pew Center)
  - 75% get news from emails and social media updates
  - 37% comment or disseminate news electronically
- More options to target your news
- More competition for space with mainstream press
- Developing your own content is a powerful component of today’s press strategy

# How People Consume News

According to a recent Pew survey

- There is no single source of news for most people. 46% of respondents get their news from 4 to 6 media platforms daily.
- The internet is hot:
  - More people (61%) get their news from the internet than from newspapers (50%) or radio (54%), though TV is still #1, with 78% of respondents saying they get their local news from TV.
  - People visit between 2 and 5 online news sources.
  - Almost a third have news customized based on their interests.
- News consumption has become a social experience that happens anytime, anywhere.
  - 75% of respondents get news forwarded through email or posts on social networking sites.
  - 52% say they share links.

# The Starting Point: Telling Your Organization's Story

- Must convey what you do (the goal), how you do it (the services), who you do it for (demographics), and where
  - A good elevator pitch: Robert Tolmach on [philanthropy.com/article/Video-The-Art-of-the-Eleva/65154/](http://philanthropy.com/article/Video-The-Art-of-the-Eleva/65154/)
- How do you communicate your story? What are your current communication tools? Good examples:
  - Good promotional video: let clients tell the story— [wouldyouhelp.org](http://wouldyouhelp.org)
  - Good Facebook: provide fans with timely and useful information, not just self-promotion – [facebook.com/Downtown.Alliance](http://facebook.com/Downtown.Alliance)
  - Good website: develop and design content for your target audiences, provide new and useful content and links to keep them browsing, give them lots of options to give and get involved – [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)

# Get Ready

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Develop a successful strategy

Create compelling materials

Write your own story

# Develop a Successful Strategy

- Identify the goal of your PR effort? Who is/are your target audience(s) and what is the purpose of engaging them?
- Build a profile of the people you are trying to target (what engages them, what interests them, how do they get information)
- Decide what programs will you promote, sources of on-message stories; plan out communications around events in coming year and leverage industry news and events to tell your story.
- Choose appropriate communications tools and commit to their regular use.
- Develop a clear message that's internalized by staff.
- Build your communications team – media manager, content/communications writer, spokespersons.
- Train staff – each member should have talking points about their area.
- Get the plan on paper.
- Measure the impact to assess the effectiveness and know what working and what's not.

# Create Compelling Materials

Your communications materials must be:

- Clear – about your message
- Clean – in design
- Compelling – in the story
- Consistent – in look and feel
- Current – in content

Materials you must have:

Website, Social Media presence (FB, Wikipedia, LinkedIn), brochure, program descriptions, annual report, newsletter, background information on services and successes, press release template, personal success stories, press clips



# Write your Own Story

Competition for space in media outlets is high. If you've got a story that's worth telling, write and disseminate it yourself.

- Capitalize on your expertise.
- Develop content that's useful to readers.
- Be consistent so people see you as a source of useful information.
- Link to more information about your organization.
- Make it easy for people to act on the information and get involved.
- Promote your content through your website, blog, Facebook, Twitter, emails, newsletters and more.

# Get Set

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Identifying news and content

Vehicle to deliver your story

Craft your story

Effective press release writing

# Identifying News and Content

- New programs or projects
- Advocacy campaigns
- New reports, white papers, data
- New spin on old service
- Client success stories
- Current events angle or impact on your organization
- Special event, fundraiser, rally, etc.

# Traditional Vehicles to Deliver Your Story

Type	Good for (purpose)	Good for (media outlets)	What you need	Downside(s)
Press Conference	Hot news featuring people and data/information that makes for a compelling story.	All types of outlets - it provides access to multiple interviews in one location - but especially good for TV because it provides a visual (also good for print photographers)	NEWS, attendees willing to tell a compelling story, media alert sent in advance, good background location, press release, phone pitching to get reporters to the event.	It's difficult to get people with limited time and resources (e.g., cameramen) to travel.
Press Release (sent to multiple outlets)	A timely, compelling news story, especially when you can't gather participants in one location.	Print and online, unless you could also arrange individual radio and TV interviews.	News with background information and people to quote.	One dimensional, media inundated with releases.
Exclusive	An interesting story that could be of value to one outlet. These are often longer pieces that allow for more background information and data.	Any	Hook, multiple spokespersons, data, background, outside validators, possibly a site visit.	Longer leads, more complicated and time-consuming sells.
Opinion pieces including op-eds, letters to the editor, guest blog posts and blog comments	Conveying your opinion/message on an existing story.	Print and blogs	Very well crafted opinion, often covering problem and solution.	In top-tier media, these are very, very difficult to place.

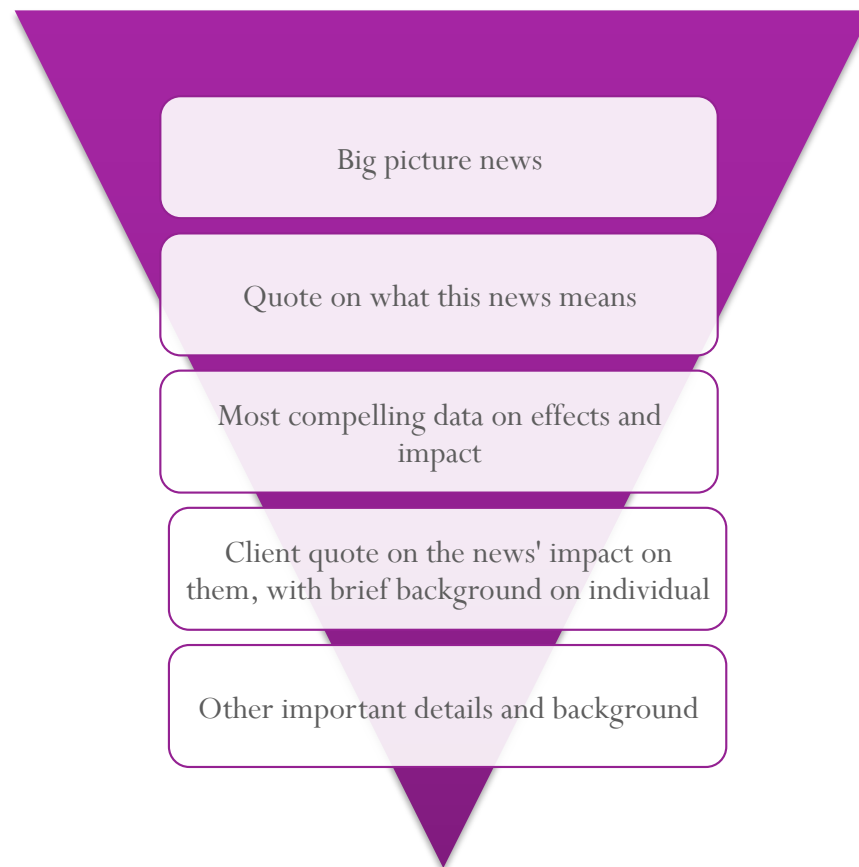
# New Vehicles to Deliver Your Story

Outlet	Content it's good for	What you need	Downside
Website	Everything your organization does and distributes should be made available on your website.	Content that encourages people to repeat-visit and browse. Remember: change content on homepage, use targeted key words and phrases.	Requires people to either choose to visit your site or find it through a web search.
Blog	Topic-specific content that's a conversation starter.	Regular posts on a specific area of interest, the site should encourage people to comment.	Time-consuming
Facebook	Short updates of easy-to-use content, preferably daily. Great for sharing information and links.	Daily information about news, upcoming events, tips, links of interest .	Only good for people who are on Facebook (about 500mm).
YouTube	Promotional videos, Video News Releases, videos from events including news conferences that can be viewed anytime, by anyone. Increases search rank.	A story that is visual with spokespersons, relevant background footage.	Need good quality video that's been edited.
Scribd	All your documents - once uploaded they can be searched and easily shared.	Just to post your documents.	None

Other: twitter, podcasting, foursquare/gowalla, wiki, digg, delicious

# Craft your story

Remember: the shorter, the better; be direct; use strong & compelling language; write like a newspaper article



# Press Release Basics

- What is a press release? A written communication directed at members of the press AND the general public that announces and provides some background and comments about a news story.
- What a press release is used for?
  - News that's happening now (If its happening tomorrow or later, use a media alert first, then a press release day of).
  - News, not advertising (Don't issue a press release to talk about how great your org is, or for a purely self-interest purpose).

# Press Release Basics - Format

- Include contact information at the top, followed by release date or FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [insert date], Last paragraph: boilerplate.
- Headline must convey timeliness, be an attention grabber, communicate the main point of your story.
- Subhead is used to highlight an important point of the story, for example, the effect of the headline's news on a population.
- First paragraph: who, what, when, where, why.
- Quotes: (1) Organization's spokesperson should give a sound-bite opinion or interpretation of the news; (2) Client quote gives the human impact angle; (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> party/expert quote validates the information.



# Press Release Basics - Tips

- Don't use jargon, write for a 5<sup>th</sup> grader.
- Use an active, not a passive voice.
- Include keyword rich language.
- Add links to your website.
- Feature ways to get involved, a call to action, and links that enable the action.
- Add social bookmarking tags to del.icio.us and Digg.
- Upload it onto Scribd.
- Alert your supporters through email, Facebook, twitter, etc.

# GO

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Rules for dealing with the press

Sell your story

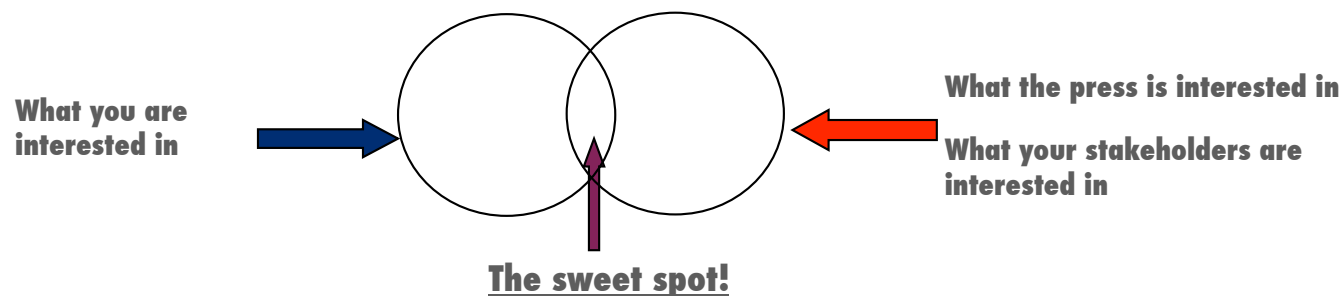
Nail the interview

Capitalize on developing news stories

Getting mileage out of a story

# Rules for Dealing with Press

- Build and establish relationships, integrity, reliability.
- Know what they are interested in, what they cover, and how they report it.
  - Read, watch, listen to the news.
  - Understand coverage area, style and format.
- Craft a story they'll want to write about.
  - What, when, where, why, who.
  - Package everything they'll need – background, facts, interviews.



# Press Rules - continued

- Know when and how to pitch
  - Time to call, way to pitch
  - Understanding deadlines
- What's the news
  - Timeliness to the story
  - Tied to current event
  - Controversy

# Sell Your Story

- Target your story to specific outlets.
- Script yourself – the pitch should fit the outlets format, style and coverage area.
- When pitching a story to several outlets:
  - Try giving the media some lead time by send them a media alert a week in advance.
  - Follow-up the day before (morning of for TV and radio) with another alert and phone call.
- When pitching an exclusive, call, but remember: know the best time, day, way to make contact.

# Nail the Interview

- Everything you say counts: assume there is no “off the record.”
- Never interview unprepared. Have:
  - Talking points that emphasize the main message you want to get across.
  - Notes with supporting data and background info.
  - Possible Q&A: what can the reporter ask, how will you answer.
- Tips for different formats
  - In person: use materials (e.g., program flyers, charts) to help guide the interview.
  - Phone: don't get too relaxed. IT'S AN INTERVIEW. Standing helps.
  - TV: simple, neat appearance, beware of hand gestures, look at the interviewer.

# Capitalize on Developing News

If news breaks about something that could impact your organization or sector, you have a great opportunity to comment because reporters are looking for content to fill out their stories.

- Monitor breaking news on sites relevant to you: blogs (google blog search, technorati), AP, City Room, etc.
- Be ready to respond: this is a race. Be the first to get a quote to a reporter or offer an interview and you'll likely get in the story. Be prepared with backgrounders when possible.
- How to get in the story: (day 1) email a quote to reporters **LIKELY** to cover the story, offer interviews with spokespersons; (day 2) offer a new angle.

# Getting Mileage out of a Story

- Today, people share news and 75% get news via email and social media sites.
- Max your exposure:
  - The day your story, op-ed, interview, blog posting appears, forward it to your stakeholders by linking it to your social networking sites, posting it on your website, emailing it to your list.
  - Give it legs by including it in newsletters, annual reports and other relevant and appropriate materials, include clips in your press and donor packets.



# Crisis Communication

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When things go wrong

# When Things Go Wrong

It's your job to minimize the coverage and damage to your organization. How?

- Be prepared
  - Assemble a response team.
  - Be ready to respond anytime.
- Rules to responding
  - Get all your facts first.
  - Make sure the reporter has the facts right.
  - Admit mistakes, apologize, demonstrate compassion & concern.
  - Develop a corrective action plan and tell the press.
  - Realize when you're in over your head and call an expert.
  - Don't forget to communicate with internal staff and stakeholders.

For more information...

Anat Gerstein

646-321-4400

[anat@anatgerstein.com](mailto:anat@anatgerstein.com)