

Talking to the Press Developing Your Press Lists

You've written the perfect press release. Great. Now comes the hard part: finding out where to send it. Developing an up-to-date and comprehensive press list is invaluable when it comes to getting your message out in an effective manner. Often times, this process involves forming constructive, open relationships with local and national media.

Target Your Journalist

- After you find your angle, decide which beat would most likely cover your story.
- Do your research. Scan news sources for journalists who usually cover your beat. Focus on local media – they're likely to be more interested in stories on their own turf.
- Use other research tools, like Google, to find journalists' names that aren't readily available in the news. Ultimately what you're looking for is contact information: phone numbers, emails, anything you can get your hands on.

Making Contact

- Rule #1: The more lead time, the better.
- Stay on top of the news. ABC's The Note and the AP wire have detailed calendars that will help you stay current and determine whether your event is newsworthy.
- There are a number of services - such as Leadership Directories or The Guardian Media Guide – who compile professional press directories. But before you cough up tons of cash, check the internet and make some calls – you'll be shocked by what you can find.
- Send a preliminary email, and – if you can – attach your press release. Make it short and introductory. Generally speaking, a week and a half

is enough lead time for print stories. Chances are you won't get a response, but it will put you on the radar before you make your calls.

- Do some preparation before you make your calls. Be able to answer questions, and have a set of interesting talking points. Remember: you're *selling* your story.