

I. GLOSSARY

- **A media advisory** informs a reporter about an upcoming event. It should be short (never longer than half a page) and include all the basic information: who, what, when, where, and why. It is sent out before an event happens (usually 1-2 weeks in advance).
- **A press release** summarizes an event that has already happened. It should be written in the style of a news article and should frame the event as you would like the media to cover it. It should include quotes from 2-3 members of your group or notable partners. It should never be longer than 1.5 pages.
- **A pitch email** is a short email to a reporter asking them to cover your event.

II. CHECKLIST: GETTING MEDIA COVERAGE FOR ACTIONS AND EVENTS

Note: not all events and actions will require all of these steps...

2-3 weeks out:

Identify point people for traditional media and social media

Identify: media bottom-liner, on-site spokespeople, off-site spokespeople, people to help with pitch calls in the week before the action, photographer(s), videographer(s), on-site social media, and off-site social media

Begin drafting media advisory, press release, pitch email and talking points

Build or acquire a press list

Identify on-site and off-site spokespeople

Find a media bunker (a location near the action/ event with good WiFi and electricity that you can use as a homebase)

1-2 weeks out:

Finalize media advisory, press release, pitch email and talking points

Train spokespeople on talking points

Consult with photographers and videographers to identify key visuals for the action

Create a hashtag and begin building buzz on social media

Ask allies to share information about the action on their social media accounts

Between 1 week and 5 days out:

Post advisory on your website

Send personalized pitch emails to as many reporters as possible, with a copy of the advisory included in the body of the email

Call all of the print / radio reporters (aim to speak to one reporter and/or editor at every outlet)

Continue building buzz on social media

Meet with all spokespeople to do interview prep

Call all TV stations to confirm the time of their morning planning meetings and the email

address for sending advisory – these are notoriously easy to get wrong and they change all the time!

Day before:

Call all print / radio reporters who said “probably” or “maybe” to make another pitch
Call all print / radio reporters who said “yes” to confirm that they’re coming and make sure that they have all the information they need
Make a first round of calls to TV stations
Do a final round of interview prep with spokespeople

Morning of:

Send out another copy of media advisory to your entire press list
Make a second round of calls to TV stations before their morning planning meetings
Start posting on social media!

During the event:

On-site: post continuously on Facebook and Twitter; answer questions for reporters; make sure photographers and videographers know where to go and what’s happening

Off-site: answer emails and/or phone calls from reporters; re-post content on additional Facebook and Twitter accounts

Immediately after the action is over:

Email press release to entire media list (be sure to BCC!) and post it on your website
Follow up with reporters who didn’t show up to make sure that they got the press release
Follow up with reporters who *did* show up to say thank you and make sure that they have your contact information
Create a meme and share like crazy!
Collect photos and share on your social media accounts and website -- make sure to give credit to the photographer(s)!

2-3 days after the action:

Debrief!
Celebrate!
Continue to collect photos and post on web and social media
Track media coverage using a Google Alert and post media hits on website and social media
Email reporters who wrote stories to say thank you

III. TIPS FOR CALLING REPORTERS:

- **Make sure you know the person you’re pitching.** Take notes in your media list: have they covered divestment recently? Do they tend to focus on environmental

news? Breaking news? Make sure your pitch is tailored to their interests and recent coverage.

- **Try to develop relationships over the course of many weeks or months.** Reply to any email or voicemail as promptly as humanly possible. If you promise to send them information, make sure to follow through. Send them emails or tweet at them when they write good stories, even if the stories aren't specifically about climate or energy. When you've got them on the phone, tell them about a piece of theirs that you enjoyed. Or invite them to get coffee with you so that you can learn more about their interests! Keep track of all your interactions with reporters so that the information isn't lost.
- **Call reporters in the morning, if possible** – in the afternoon, they've often focused on trying to meet deadlines.
- **Be ready to talk as soon as a reporter picks up the phone.** Introduce yourself and ask them if they have a minute. They may be on deadline, so give them a chance to say that they're busy before you launch into your pitch! When they tell you to go ahead, give them a 3-4 sentence pitch. Finish by asking: "Does that sound like something you'd be interested in covering?" If they give you an email address or cell-phone number, make sure to double-confirm it!
- **Remember, you're helping them – not the other way around.** They *need* cool stories – and that's what you're providing! Think about what makes your event or action newsworthy – see the list above!
- **Don't leave voicemails on the first try -- it's better to keep calling back and trying to reach the reporters.** If you don't manage to get them on the phone about 2-3 tries, you can leave a voicemail, but keep it short and sweet. Make sure to send a personalized email as well.

IV. CREATING A MEDIA-WORTHY EVENT: WHAT MAKES SOMETHING NEWS?

- **Bringing together a large number of people** to do something: rally, march, etc. This is the old standby of grassroots organizations. For this to work, you often need a BIG crowd. Of course, the definition of "big" depends on the place and the activity: 25 people getting arrested is news, while 25 people attending a movie screening is probably not news.
- **Someone who is news in their own right speaks for your group:** a prominent politician, a local celebrity, etc.
- **Announcing a new activity.** For this to work, it has to be credible: the press has to believe that you can actually accomplish the goal you've set out to achieve. For instance, if the head of a major wind company announces a plan to build a big new off-shore wind farm, that's news. If a coalition of environmental, labor and religious groups announces a new campaign to pass pro-solar legislation, that's probably news. If one small environmental group announces a plan to impeach the president, that's not news.
- **Revealing new information as part of an ongoing story.** For instance, if you release a report revealing that Massachusetts is ranked dead-last in the nation for wind power during a big legislative fight about wind legislation, that's news. If

you release the same report at a time when no one is talking about wind, that may not be news.

- **An innovative, fun or especially visual treatment of an old story.** Announcing that Republicans favor the rich is not a story. A press conference with a bunch of people dressed like tycoons and heiresses saying that they represent “Billionaires for Bush” is a story.
- **A tie-in with national news.** A small local protest against oil trains might be news if it happens during the same week as a big national debate about oil trains.
- **Strange bedfellows and odd partnerships.** Tea Party activists and environmentalists working together to promote solar is news.
- **Human interest.** Environmentalists promoting clean energy is not news. A small team of young people biking 1000 miles across New England to promote clean energy is news.
- **Timely.** A group of 10 people standing outside the governor’s office protesting a gas pipeline is not news – unless it happens on the same afternoon that the governor is hosting a pipeline conference.

V. 350 MASS SPECIFIC RESOURCES

If you want help or advice in reaching out to the media for a 350 Mass event or campaign, contact: Emily Kirkland – 646 623 5271, Emily@betterfutureproject.org.

You can find a list of TV, radio and print media contacts in your area at:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AqpV70uMG_7kdERmbk9tem8yWlp1dU9KOEZ_xLXZJRHc&usp=drive_web#gid=9

You can find a media list for letters-to-the-editor and op-eds at:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AgCBKQGJpHqGdFUyY2VmX1dHUDAzQWZfX2NMNTktUWc&usp=drive_web#gid=0