

# Outreach

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF  
THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF  
NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATIONS

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## COVER STORY

### Guidelines for effective media relations

*For this issue, Outreach will discuss effective ways to approach and conduct media relations. While this newsletter doesn't cover all aspects of media relations, it is designed to offer CANPA members a quick overview of the process.*

*If media relations had to be summed up in a nutshell, the central idea is to establish a strong relationship with the media. Where do you start? Begin by trying these four guidelines:*

#### 1) Be honest and upfront

- **Don't ever lie, evade, or mislead.** If you do, not only do you risk the credibility of your organization, but you risk yours as well.
- **Don't play favourites.** Announce news to all media channels at the same time.
- **Don't try to "buy" the media.** Expensive gifts and meals for media representatives can be seen as attempts to influence the content of the news.

#### 2) Give service

- **Give background information.** Tell reporters as much about your organization as you can. You know your organization, they don't.
- **Be available around the clock.** If you vanish at 5:00 p.m., so might your story.
- **Answer questions.** Never say "no comment." If you don't know, find out the answer and get back to the reporter soon after.
- **Don't waste their time.** Reporters are busy; don't bother them if you have no news.

#### 3) Don't beg or complain

- **Don't beg to have your stories used.** If they're not worthy, they're not worthy.
- **Don't complain about story placement or treatment.** If you don't make the front page, tough luck. If there's an error in the story though, kindly ask for a correction.
- **Don't use advertising as a stick or carrot.** Never threaten to pull advertising if coverage goes awry.
- **Don't interfere with the editorial process.** The media decides what to write, not you.
- **Don't fight with the news media.** There's an old saying, "you can't win a fight with folks who buy ink by the barrel."

#### 4) Understand how the media works

- **Talk their language.** Do you know what CP style, back-grounders, and camera-ready features are? If not, you might want to find out. Outreach has taken the liberty of defining some of the more common media terms. Please visit [www.canpa.ca/mediarelations/terms](http://www.canpa.ca/mediarelations/terms) for more information.



If this media scrum looks stressful; it is. But with some knowledge of media relations, you can cut stress by communicating more effectively.

#### Quick tip

Keep logs of the reporters in your area. Include in your log their preferred method for receiving information, and then use this log as a quick reference guide.

#### What's Inside?

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## How do you know if you have news?

*News can be defined as a timely report on an event or situation that is important, relevant, and/or interesting to a considerable number of people. Whether a story will be printed or aired depends on how newsworthy it is. The factors that determine the newsworthiness of events and situations are called news values. There seven key news values are:*

- 1) Impact** – Information about events/situations that are likely to affect many people.
- 2) Timeliness** – Information about events/situations that are appropriate to the audience at the time of printing or airing (this value is only newsworthy when coupled with another value though.)
- 3) Prominence** – Information about events/situations involving well-known people or institutions.
- 4) Proximity** – Information on events/situations occurring in the area covered by a particular medium, or that hit “close to home” geographically or psychologically.
- 5) Human Interest** – Information on events/situations that often touch emotions.
- 6) Unusualness** – Information on events/situations that deviate sharply from the expected or the ordinary.
- 7) Interest** – Information about event/situations that are likely to interest many people.

## How to break news

- 1) Prepare your message(s) and distribute it to all internal publics first.
- 2) Assemble any necessary “proof” that is needed.
- 3) Consider testimonials or endorsements from others.
- 4) Decide what you want from the media, i.e. news coverage, commentary, etc.
- 5) Select visuals to enhance or symbolize your message.
- 6) Consider using wire services like Canada NewsWire or CCN Matthews.



- 7) Put information on an online media centre.
- 8) Communicate with the media as needed.
- 9) Pick the right tool or technique that will do the job.

## Opportunities in different mediums

*Both print and broadcast media offer unique opportunities and disadvantages to your audiences; do you know what they are? Here is a quick guide that gives some strengths and opportunities of a few mediums.*

### Daily newspapers

#### Strengths:

- Published daily and offer city-wide coverage.
- Enjoy a large circulation.
- Excellent for targeting select readers in different sections of the paper.
- Reaches a well-educated, affluent, and influential audience.
- Can be used for communicating complex information and graphic visuals.

#### Opportunities:

- Possible to target select readers through sections in the daily newspapers.
- Excellent chance of getting PSA and community calendar announcements published, especially if they're small.
- City news editors are receptive to feature stories if they have direct impact on the local community.

### Community newspapers

#### Strengths:

- Audiences are smaller, but targeted narrowly in a geographic area.
- Many people who don't read dailies read community newspapers.
- Offer the chance to influence people at a grassroots level.
- Community newspapers remain in the home for a long time, and have an increased chance of being read by more than one household member.

*See “Opportunities,” continued on page 3 ...*

## Guidelines for combating rumours

- 1) Analyze the nature and impact of the rumour before taking corrective action.
- 2) Compile complete, authentic information that will refute the rumour.
- 3) When denying a rumour, avoid repeating it more than necessary.
- 4) Use outside experts and credible public agencies to refute the rumour.

## Four F's to live by

Be **fast** in getting back to reporters. Be **fair** and share news with all media. Be **frank** and give good and bad news. Be **friendly** with the media, and avoid snarkiness.

... "Opportunities," continued from page 2

### Opportunities:

- Very receptive to your submission(s) since community newspapers don't have access to a wire and often struggle for content.
- Any local angle on your work greatly increases the chance of your work being picked up.
- Community newspapers have a large amount of readers; some even come close to daily newspaper circulation numbers.

## Television and radio

### Strengths:

- Both have large audiences.
- Reach a wide range of demographics.
- Community programming is receptive to local non-profit messages.

### Opportunities:

- Both television and radio are receptive to having guests appear on news programming for brief interviews. Community programming for longer interviews.
- Excellent chance of being picked up if your work includes sound effects (for radio), or visuals (for television).

# Making speeches and interviews more effective

*Face it, if the media wants to interview you, you better be prepared. If you want to get the most out of your speeches and presentations, try the following:*

### When writing the speech:

- Use the active voice as much as you possibly can.
- Try to make sentences an average of 20 words each.
- Use "talking" words – not "reading" words.
- Make points in cluster of three.
- Write an opening that captures the audience's attention.
- Make conclusions brief.

### When preparing the manuscript:

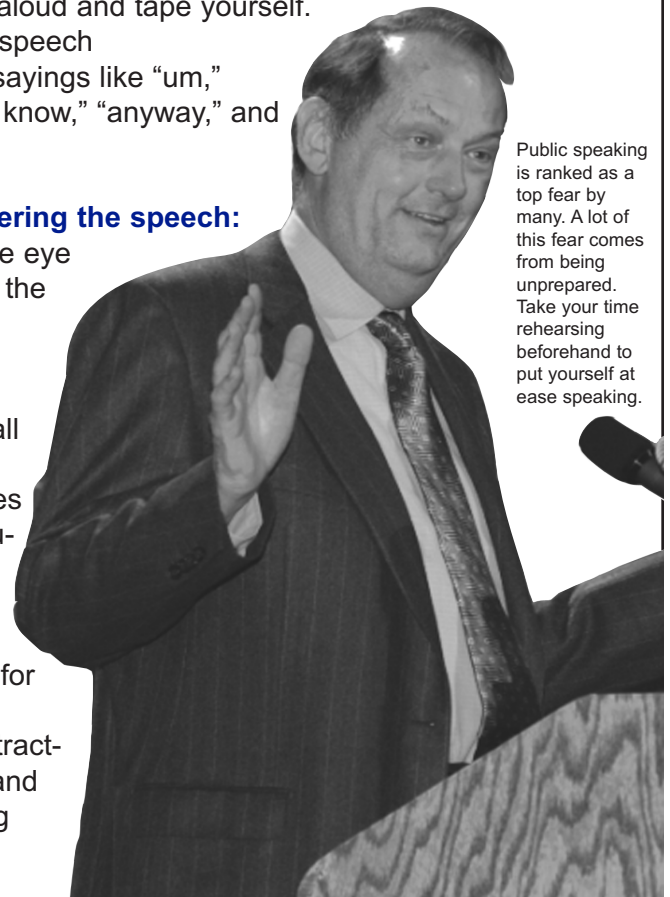
- Use large type and lower case letters as it's easier to read.
- Leave wide margins on both sides of the page.
- Double or triple space text in the speech.
- Number all cue cards/sheets, just in case you drop them.

### When rehearsing:

- Rehearse aloud and tape yourself.
- Time your speech
- Get rid of sayings like "um," "okay," "you know," "anyway," and "like."

### When delivering the speech:

- Try to make eye contact with the camera and audience.
- Keep your head up at all times.
- Let gestures happen naturally, and use pauses for effect.
- Watch out for noise – this includes distracting jewelry and coins jingling around, etc.



Public speaking is ranked as a top fear by many. A lot of this fear comes from being unprepared. Take your time rehearsing beforehand to put yourself at ease speaking.



# Do it yourself guide to media relations

*You have news, announcements, and pictures you want to send out. How do you do it? This simple "how-to" guide should help with some of the basics. Keep in mind, templates for all of the following are available on the CANPA website at [www.canpa.ca/templates](http://www.canpa.ca/templates)*

## Print News Release

### What is a print news release?

A communication tool used to break news to print media.

### How do you write one?

- 1) Include the text "news release" near the top of the first page of the document.
- 2) Indicate the date it was sent out along with your personal contact information. It's also recommended you indicate on the news release that it's "for immediate release."
- 3) Begin each news release with a headline before getting into the body copy.
- 4) If possible, try to include quotes in alternating paragraphs. Make sure you attribute speakers after their quotes.
- 5) Approach the release using the "inverted pyramid" format. This means the most important information is given first.
- 6) Keep sentences and paragraphs short and to the point.
- 7) No release should ever be more than two pages. If your news release is two pages, indicate there is a second page on the first page. On the second page, indicate it was continued from the first page.
- 8) Consider a boilerplate as your last paragraph. A boilerplate describes what your organization is and does in no more than a few sentences.
- 9) Centre an endmark at the end of the last paragraph of the release. A typical endmark is – 30 –.
- 10) Place a serial number at the bottom of the release indicating dates and where the release was sent to.

## Radio News Release

### What is a radio news release?

A communication tool used to break news to radio media.

### How do you write one?

- 1) Follow the first three and last two instructions of the print release above.
- 2) Set margins on the page at two inches on the left and right of the page.
- 3) Write no more than ten lines of text. A radio news release needs to be read in 30 seconds or less.
- 4) Name speakers before using their quotes.
- 5) Don't follow the inverted pyramid style. Your lead should be the last line of copy since it's what you want people to remember the most.

## Media Advisory

### What is a media advisory?

An invitation sent out to reporters to cover an event, news conference, or briefing.

### How do you write one?

- 1) State what's happening, and the event's time and location.
- 2) Write "media advisory" at the top of the document.
- 3) Identify whether the advisory is for a news conference, a briefing, a photo opportunity, or an interview opportunity.
- 4) Include the same contact information as the print release.
- 5) Specify what's happening in one paragraph or less, and discuss the key news values.
- 6) Answer the five W's (who, what, where, when, and why) under separate sub-heads.
- 7) Keep the advisory to one page in length.

## Need help?

Do you need help with any facet of media relations? Believe it or not, help doesn't have to cost a fortune. The Algonquin



There's no need to beg for help. Public relations students at Algonquin College offer you free assistance.

College student public relations agency offers free student assistance to clients in need. For more information, please contact Peter Larock, coordinator of the public relations program, at [larockp@algonquincollege.com](mailto:larockp@algonquincollege.com), or at (613) 727-4723 ext. 5178.