



Media relations

We appreciate your efforts to raise awareness about your local Kiwanis club. Every opportunity to further Kiwanis' brand awareness and highlight your club's service in the community will strengthen your Kiwanis club!

Once you've created your media list, send out your media materials and follow up over the phone with your contacts to encourage them to "spread the word."

A step-by-step checklist

- 1) **Customize the press release.** We've provided you with a "shell" of a release. Now you just need to fill in the release with your localized information (community facts, what you're doing for an event, your contact information, etc.) and you're ready to go! Remember: The more local the story, the more appealing it will be to the media.
- 2) **Distribute your customized press release to your media list.** Email is probably the best and easiest way to get your information sent out in a timely and cost-effective manner. Do not send the press release as an attachment in your email. Copy and paste the press release into the body of the email, and include any additional information as an attachment. Consider a catchy subject line to make sure it doesn't get lost in their inboxes. Be brief, get to the point and emphasize the local angle—but don't be afraid to be creative.
- 3) **Make follow-up calls.** After you've distributed your media materials, pitch your story idea to your media contacts. If you email the information, you can begin to place your follow up calls the very next day and subsequent weeks thereafter.
- 4) **Be efficient.** When making calls to your contacts, remember:
 - Reporters, editors and producers are almost always working against deadlines, so keep your conversations brief and to the point. The best time to reach print reporters is usually before 3 p.m. (unless the newspaper is an afternoon paper). Television reporters and assignment editors are usually available to discuss story ideas between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
 - Don't ask, "Did you receive the materials I sent?" Reporters hate this question. Try saying, "I sent you information a few days ago. I'd be happy to tell you more and get you additional details if you're interested."
 - Be prepared to talk about your story. When you've got your media contacts on the phone, it's a great opportunity to explain more about any events or fundraisers you're hosting.



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- 5) **Think about what the media really want.** Overall, the media love local stories—what’s happening to people in their community, how it fits into an overall national trend, what impact it has on other people in town, etc. That’s where your story will resonate the most. If you remember three things, remember these three: *local, local, local*.

In addition, different media outlets respond to different key points. For example, television news programs will respond to visual scenes, so make sure you send them visuals—such as photos or even videos—to use as well. Radio stations will respond best to one-on-one interviews, so mention that you could come in for an in-studio interview or conduct a live phone interview. Print contacts usually ask for the most detail and for statistics to prove the validity of your story. Print contacts also appreciate visuals.

- 6) **Realize you might have to re-send the information.** Newsrooms are hectic places, so don’t be surprised if your contact mentions he or she has misplaced the news release, or that the materials have been routed elsewhere. Be prepared to send another copy.
- 7) **Meet deadlines.** While your contacts already have the news release, they may require additional information or want to interview you for a longer story. Always return phone calls and requests for information in a timely manner. Most publications have specific issue dates and deadlines that *cannot* be extended.
- 8) **If the media respond, be ready.** Read and review your message points. And remember, media relations is a lot like sales: You may have to talk to many people to close just one deal. But it’s worth it—one local story gives thousands of people an opportunity to learn more about your Kiwanis club.