



# Building a media list

To spread the word about Kiwanis and to build buzz in your local market, you need to know where to begin—and with whom. The best way to start is by building a media list. Here's how.

- 1) **Build your media list the same way you would build your professional network.**  
Relationships are the best starting point when pitching your story. Think for a minute about who you know. Do you have any contacts on staff at your hometown newspaper or TV/radio stations? Do you know anyone else who might? If so, those contacts might help you get your foot in the door. And if the media professionals you contact say they aren't the right reporter or editor, they're usually kind enough to refer you to the appropriate person.
- 2) **Identify the media outlets that might be interested in your story and start to make a list.**  
Think about the following types of media that are in your town or within a radius of about 30 miles. For smaller towns, you might want to opt for a larger radius.
  - **PRINT (magazines and newspapers):** What is the biggest newspaper in town? Does your community/neighborhood have a smaller newspaper as well? How about a city or regional magazine that focuses on what people are doing in your community? Try to focus on the biggest media outlets in your club's city, as well as any neighborhood publications that are close to your club.
  - **TV:** What are the major TV stations in town? Do they have morning or midday shows that feature interesting events or organizations in your community? Do any TV news anchors specialize in philanthropy or service—and for that reason have a natural interest in your story?
  - **RADIO:** Your club's project or event would make a great interview opportunity for radio morning shows. Think about the most popular radio hosts in your town. Would they be a good fit for a philanthropy or service story? What morning shows do you listen to in the morning?
- 3) **Once you've identified media outlets, check each outlet's website for contact information.**  
Many stations list contact information for a newsroom, editor or reporter. Search for email addresses and phone numbers to add to your list.
- 4) **Identify the right contacts at each media outlet.** Your contacts will have different titles based on media type:
  - **PRINT (magazines and newspapers):** Regional magazine editors, newspaper volunteer section or philanthropy section editors. At smaller newspapers, ask for the name, phone number and email address of the managing editor or special sections editor.
  - **TV:** News assignment editor, as well as the producers of the station's morning, midday and/or talk shows.



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- **Radio:** News director, producer of the station's morning and/or talk shows. Be cautious about approaching "shock jock" stations that may not handle your news in a tasteful manner. Usually, news or talk stations are more receptive to pitches because they have more room for stories that are not timely or "breaking" news.
- **Online:** If the website is run by one individual, you only have one option. If you are targeting an online news site, look for someone who covers community news.

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**Note: Do not contact the advertising department with a story idea.**

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- 5) **If you can't find a particular reporter's email address or phone number on the website, start making phone calls.** Ask the receptionist or newsroom contact for the correct person to approach regarding philanthropy or service. Keep records of everyone to whom you talk, and make sure to get the correct spelling of names, email addresses and phone numbers.
- 6) **Understand how much time ("lead time") various media outlets need when you distribute press materials to the people on your list.**
  - Daily and weekly newspapers, radio stations and television talk shows usually require about two to three weeks' notice.
  - Magazines usually prefer a few months' notice, so don't expect to see coverage right away. Since most city magazines set their own print deadlines, it's best to simply call and ask how much advance notice they require on a story.
  - Local television and news assignment editors prefer only a week or a few days' notice.
  - Online sources can post items very quickly, so send the information a few days or a week in advance.

**Congratulations on building a great media list!** Now it's time to get your information ready to send to everyone on your list.