

# PR TIPS TO DRAW IN THE MEDIA

## **PR TASKS WHEN PLANNING A SPECIAL EVENT!**

*Provided by Keri Gee Barnett, Central County ROCP and PR.COM*

1. Make all efforts to tie your special event into a holiday and community event (e.g. on Martin Luther King Day, do “ROP Role Model Day.”) The media will be looking for stories that relate to that day in history. You’ll heighten your chances of getting coverage.
2. Begin your media blitz by compiling a list of people who you would like to attend your event. Include friends, customers, and “most importantly,” the local and trade press who may cover the event. (Note: Be sure to read the columns that the press write, so you know what kinds of special events interest them most...Before you approach them.)
3. Compile a list of well-spoken ROP/ROCP staff and supporters to be interviewed while at the event. Inform these key people of the main ‘speaking points’ you’d want them to address during a media interview. Put those ‘points’ in writing. In some cases, you’ll want to do a mock-interview with some or all of your spokespeople.
4. Send a formal invitation to all the primary media contacts, and their editors, on your list. This is a nice gesture and may lend credibility to your media event.
5. Fax or email a secondary press release, company information and another invitation to your primary press contacts. Exclude the editors this time. If you haven’t hooked them yet, chances are the follow up fax/email won’t do it, but it could give the beat reporter enough information to do a small story, even if she/he is not planning to attend the event.
6. Enlist the help of your office co-workers for a telephone blitz the day after your fax/email hits. Call your primary press contacts and ask if they plan to attend, or if you can provide any additional background information to assist them in doing a story. Highlight the most unique aspects of the event.

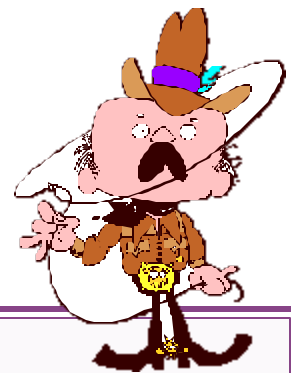
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7. Have a press booth or table and greet the media as they arrive; make sure they have the proper name badges and are directed to the area where the action will take place. Again, offer to provide any additional information your press contacts may need for a story.
8. Have key committee members keep in close proximity to the press so that you can answer their questions, forward key people to them to interview, and help them in any way they need.
9. Follow up after the event by sending thank-you notes to everyone, even before you know who wrote a great story. Timely follow up is absolutely key to getting press coverage for your event.
10. Scan each media outlet for stories about your company event, but don't get your hopes up for the front page. Be satisfied and happy with whatever coverage you receive and remember, it was free!

## *Don't forget to consider the following tips...*



1. Include company brochures, sell sheets and a press kit with your press release. It might be the push that puts your release on the top of the pile.
2. If you can't foot the bill to have formal invitations printed, then settle for elegant blank invitation cards and a laser printer. Include all the pertinent information (who, what, when, where, why) and be sure to ask for an RSVP.
3. Hire your own photographer for the event to make certain you get the shots you want to see in the local paper. After the event, offer the photos to the people who attended or include a couple of great shots with each thank-you note.
4. Avoid merely staging a photo op with the director/superintendent of your ROP/ROCP in order to get some press coverage. It must be a real event with real news value or the next time, the press will remember you pulled its proverbial leg!



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