Media Relations Strategy, Tracking and Evaluation Essentials

for Nonprofit Organizations

Healthcare Georgia Foundation
grantmaking for health

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Recommended Citation: Media Relations Strategy, Tracking and Evaluation Essentials for Nonprofit Organizations, Toni Almasy, MBA, Avatar Communications, Dean Thompson, Blue Flame Resources, Healthcare Georgia Foundation, Publication #76, July 2013.

BUILDING MEDIA RELATIONS

In this guide, we will take you through the basics of delivering a media relations strategy that builds visibility and credibility, creates buzz, attracts interest from funders, helps to diffuse a potential crisis, and much more. We will help you understand the best way to approach media leaders with your story so that they are encouraged to share what you have to offer with their readers, viewers and listeners. Finally, as with any worthwhile marketing communications approach, we will show you how to measure and evaluate the success of your efforts – so that you can better determine the return on investment of your media efforts.

As a nonprofit health organization, you have a variety of resources available to help you deliver your story and messages to key stakeholders. Two of the most influential and believable tools are traditional and social media. Unlike advertising, editorial coverage [aka earned media or social media content] is especially powerful because of its implied third party validation. This type of coverage costs substantially less than buying advertising space or time. Better yet, having stakeholders tell your story to their friends, family, and colleagues through their social media channels adds even more evidence. On the other hand, earned media coverage also means that you give up a great deal of control. For that reason, it's very important to be well prepared before implementing traditional or social media programs.

DEVELOPING CLEAR AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Before you begin the process, it's important to ask yourself what you hope to get out of engaging the media. Is your objective to build awareness for your organization or a particular program? To drive people to participate in an event? Encourage a healthy behavior? Secure funding or increase volunteer participation? **You'll be much more likely to succeed if you have the end in mind from the very start.** Your media relations objectives should flow naturally from your mission, goals and communications objectives. Be as specific as possible. This will make measuring your outcomes easier and more meaningful to your organization.

CRAFTING THE STORY

Once you have a clear objective in mind, your next step is to determine what it is you want to communicate. If you haven't done so already, you should develop 3-5 simple and clear key messages that cover the main elements of your story or pitch. At least one of those messages should include a call to action, such as "visit our website" or "view our most recent client case study."

If you pay close attention to what types of stories the media are covering, you'll find that they like to write about human-interest stories. Of course, facts and figures are important, but a reporter is typically most interested in showing the impact a program, service, or policy will have on an individual or family. That means your story will have a better chance of getting picked up if you can connect the reporter to a real person who has been impacted by your cause. Identifying people for a story can take a great deal of time and effort, however it often makes all the difference about what gets covered.

WHAT'S NEWS? (AND WHAT ISN'T)

Just because an activity or issue is important to your organization doesn't mean that a reporter or his or her readers will find it equally compelling. Media are more likely to gravitate to stories that are timely, novel, hit close to home, and have substantial impact or consequences. Watch local TV news or read the newspaper thoroughly for a few days and ask yourself "Why did the outlet choose to cover this particular story?" That insight will help you think more strategically about your own media relations program. Always put yourself in the position of the reporter and think about his or her audience. Is the reporter speaking to residents of the local town or city? Business owners and leaders? Health professionals? Policymakers? All of the above? What's news for one audience may not be news to another.

News That's Worthy

- Timeliness. How long ago did it happen?
- Novelty. How unique is it?
- Proximity. How close is it?
- Impact or Consequences. How many people or how broad an area was affected?
- Prominence. Did it affect a well-known person or organization?

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding the media outlets and reporters you plan to approach is key to successful media relations. Reporters are more likely to respond to you and take an interest in your story if you can demonstrate that you understand their particular "beats" and areas of interest. While two reporters might cover health issues, one may focus on global infectious diseases while another may write about the economic impact of health disparities. If you find it challenging to glean a reporter's focus you should consider asking them directly.

Gather as much information about the reporters you want to target with your story and build a media database. This is typically a simple spreadsheet that includes the reporter's name, outlet, email address, phone number, and any other background information that will help you identify the types of stories they are interested in covering. Like any professionals, reporters change jobs, so keeping your media list up-to-date is critical. Try to reach out with a personalized, value-added note to the new reporter on the beat. This is especially effective if you've done your homework (e.g. "I saw your recent story on channel 7, and I really liked your angle on promoting physical activity in schools. You may not be aware that our organization provides free recreation equipment to underserved communities in the metro area, but I'd like to talk with you about how we're making an impact on improving youth health.").

Pitching a reporter you've never met or spoken with can sometimes yield results. But you're more likely to be successful if you cultivate relationships with reporters over time. Let them know via a quick email or phone call about you and the topics on which you and your organization can serve as expert sources. Offer tips from time to time that relate to their areas of interest, even if they don't have anything to do with your organization. The reporter will come to value you as a resource, and will be more likely to cover your news when something important arises.

Working with the Media

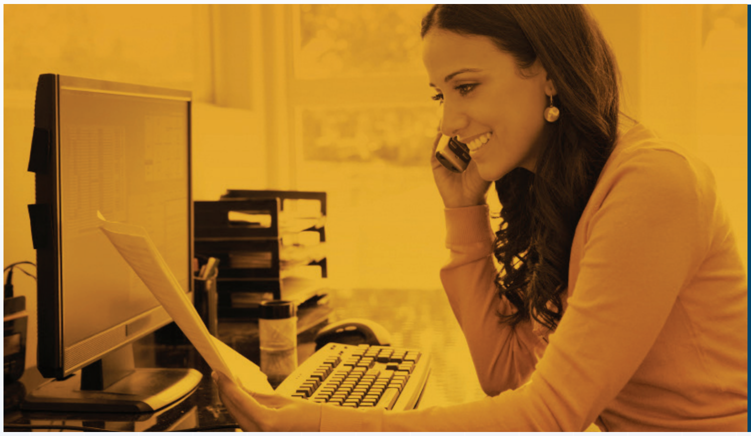
Whether you are proactively seeking out a reporter to cover your story, or responding to a request, here are a few tips that will help ensure your goals are met:

- Be up front and clear with all of your views. Know your copy points and be prepared to deliver your messages concisely.
- Respond quickly to media requests; don't stall! Respect the reporter's deadline.
- Be careful about giving your opinion. Sticking to the facts will help keep you from getting into hot water by getting off message.
- Have all relevant references and contact information handy.
- Tell the truth.
- Know your journalists; familiarize yourself with their work.
- Recognize the time allotted for your interview.
- Plan to communicate key messages within the first minute of the interview.
- Speak in sound bites. An editor is looking for a clear, 30-second synopsis of your message that is both concise and memorable.
- Be aware of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Don't assume the media is abreast of the material you may have sent prior to your interview.
- Always be punctual.
- Practice, practice, practice.

THE PITCH

Once you feel comfortable that you've covered the important details of your story, you should consider pitching it to the media. The easier you make it for a reporter to cover your story, the more likely he or she will take an interest.

There are two primary ways to get your story or event into the hands of a reporter: press release and a direct pitch. Press releases are common tools that allow an organization to put a series of facts and figures into one document. You can find samples of good press releases by searching the websites of other organizations. Effective press releases are constructed like a good news story, with strong, accurate facts and powerful quotes. They are not overly promotional and seek to answer the questions "Who," "What," "When," "Where," "Why" and "How?"



While press releases are still popular in many media circles, a much more effective approach has emerged, called the "direct pitch". In some ways, pitching a reporter is no different than persuading a person to do what you want them to do. In this case, you need to provide the reporter with compelling reasons to cover your story. **Here is an example of a good email pitch:**

"Countless websites are devoted to cancer education, research, treatment and advocacy – as well as to specific types of the disease. Until now, however, there has not been a comprehensive social networking site with the sole mission of building a community among cancer patients, survivors and their supporters. Such a site will fill a real

void, if you follow the findings of a study by Pew Research Center that shows while people turn to professionals for an accurate diagnosis and treatment options, they are significantly more likely to seek out non-professionals when they're searching for emotional support.

Socialcancer.net is the first comprehensive social networking site that harnesses the power of social media to connect cancer patients, survivors and supporters. We invite you to speak with founder John Smith about this unique website and what this launch means for anyone affected by cancer.

THE FOLLOW THROUGH

If you've prepared your story thoroughly and crafted a solid press release or pitch, you will likely pique the interest of the reporter you're seeking to engage. It's important to know that, in addition to your story, reporters are being approached by dozens of organizations every day. He or she may or may not have time to get back to you about your story opportunity. Do follow up with a reporter if you have additional information to provide that you think makes your story even more compelling. Refrain from following up just to check and see that she received your pitch or press release. If you follow these simple guidelines, the reporter will appreciate you valuing his or her time and understanding the job they have to do.

SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONS

In the past few years, social media has grown significantly in both use and importance in our culture. No longer do media consumers get their "news" solely from traditional media. More and more, we turn to friends and other influencers who post about interesting and relevant stories on their blogs, Twitter feeds and Facebook Pages. And nonprofits are no stranger to this trend. According to the 4th Nonprofit Annual Social Network Benchmark Report, (available at www.nonprofitsocialnetworsurvey.com), nonprofits accumulated 8,317 members on Facebook and 3,290 followers on Twitter, up 30% and 81% respectively from 2011.

Social media has also narrowed the gap between the messenger and the recipient, making the distance between nonprofit organizations and their constituents smaller than it has ever been. This can be both a good and a bad thing. On the plus side, social media can be a powerful and effective ally in getting the word out far and wide to those interested in your organization or cause. Conversely, if an organization mishandles an issue or garners unwanted attention about something that is simply untrue, bad news can go viral quickly.

In some ways, social media relations can operate like traditional media relations, and for that reason having a social media relations plan would provide value to your organization. The major differences are that in social media, "reporters" may or not be credentialed or even experienced. Yet other "reporters," bloggers, and social media users have a wealth of experience and expertise in the areas they write about. Some of these types of contributors might eschew regular deadlines, choosing instead to write and post stories when they arise, and other blogs are updated as routinely as you would see the morning newspaper or watch the evening news. You'll need to decide which of these approaches work better for your organization. Navigating these fast moving and somewhat uncharted waters can be tricky, so you'll need to be diligent in your preparation.

MANAGING NEGATIVE NEWS

While social media has a tremendous upside, it is not without potential pitfalls. Any crisis management plan should include a social media response. But what happens if social media causes the issue? An ill advised or irrational Tweet or Facebook posting can reverberate around cyberspace faster then you can say to yourself, "Maybe that post wasn't such a great idea." Or perhaps your social media crisis began outside your organization: someone blogged, reported or tweeted something negative about someone or something related to your organization. Despite your best efforts, the reporter, blogger or person commenting may have a different view of the situation than you do.

Before responding, ask yourself whether the coverage or comments are true. If there are factual errors in a story or post, you should contact the reporter or blogger and make the case for a correction. Factual errors that go unchallenged become viewed as facts in today's always on, always wired world.

If, on the other hand, the facts are correct – but the tone of the story is negative – you should assess the situation and consider developing a "standby statement." Standby statements are your opportunity to lay out the facts, in the context of your organization's story, to help you refute negative publicity. Such statements are helpful tools for your staff and volunteers and can also be posted on your website. If the coverage is especially negative, you may want to consider engaging the pro bono help of a local public relations firm or the counsel of public relations volunteer from your board or communications committee. Regardless of how you decide to proceed, here are several things you can and must do to recover.

Crisis Management Tips

1. Stand firm. Never let factual errors go unchallenged. If the situation involves a difference of opinion, it's okay to state your organization's opinion once.
2. Be responsive. You've only got a limited amount of time to get your side of the story out there. This is your first and best chance to stem the tide of information. Pull together your organization's leadership and communications team ASAP. Get your facts together, develop a simple and cohesive response, and send it out within an hour of the incident, if possible. Use Twitter, Facebook, your Website, and your blog, if you have one. Remember to keep your staff in the loop on your response, as they too need to be informed about the crisis.
3. Make yourself available. Have a media-trained spokesperson and at least one backup prepped and available for interviews. Tough questions may be asked and your spokesperson should be ready to handle them. Your spokespeople should be trained at least once per year on how to handle hard interviews.
4. Stay tuned. Use the tools in this publication to monitor the media. Contact those in the media that you have relationships with and get your response out. Be consistent with your story and be truthful. "No comment" can be seen as an admission of wrongdoing in the school of public opinion, so be prepared to comment if necessary.
5. Reflect and retool. Compile all of the Tweets, Facebook replies, comments, emails, and other articles that relate to the crisis. Review your web traffic for spikes, patterns and trends. Analyze both your internal and external responses and share lessons learned with your crisis management team. Update your crisis management plan with recommendations, and continue to monitor the media.

MEDIA TRACKING, MEASURMENT AND EVALUATION

Now that you've gotten some coverage, don't stop there.

You also need to monitor and track the results so that you can measure and evaluate your efforts. In fact, businesses and nonprofit leaders alike are holding media relations to the same account as they do other elements of their marketing mix. The time to think about an evaluation program is before you even begin your outreach.

As we discussed earlier, the ultimate measure of a media relations program is whether or not your efforts helped to achieve your organization's objectives, such as building program awareness, driving people to an event or changing a behavior. Be clear about that objective as you develop your measurement and evaluation plan and you'll find that the process unfolds more naturally and easily.

If you have resources at your disposal to track the coverage you are generating, you can turn to companies such as Cision, Meltwater and others and use their sophisticated and somewhat costly systems. Fortunately, there are numerous free and/or low cost tools that can help you with the heavy lifting.

MEDIA TRACKING

Google Alerts

With the days of newspaper clippings long behind us or beyond the budgets of most nonprofits, Google has filled the information gap with its Google Alerts email notification tool. Google Alerts utilizes key words to tracks news, blogs, video, discussions, and books online. To get started, visit www.google.com/alerts, type in your desired search query (key term, word, topic, person, organization), specify how you want to be notified, and enter your email address. If you're looking for a specific search term, be sure to put your keywords in quotes, as you would for any search. To help you with customizing your experience, here's a link to Google's handy search operator link: (a symbol you apply to your query to give you more control over your returns) https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/136861?hl=en. That's really all there is to it. Depending on how much information you start to receive, you many need to tweak your parameters now and then.

Google Alerts Example:

Everything	Volume	How often	Deliver to
Medicaid Georgia	Only the best results	As-it-happens	info@yourorganization.org
Nonprofit Sustainability	Only the best results	As-it-happens	info@yourorganization.org
Public Health	Only the best results	As-it-happens	Google Reader
News	Volume	How often	Deliver to
"Affordable Care Act"	Only the best results	Once a day	info@yourorganization.org

Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com>
to me

News — **10** new results for **"Affordable Care Act"**

Monterey County supervisors debate impact of **Affordable Care Act**
Monterey County Herald
A new study of Monterey County's health care safety net system suggests it can absorb the new demand for access to care under the **Affordable Care Act** with a few tweaks. But it warns that local officials must make sure county residents who qualify for ...
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Southern Maine legislators speak out on behalf of **Affordable Care Act**
Seacoastonline.com
Jim Stott, co-owner of Stonewall Kitchen, left, speaks about once needing a bone marrow transfusion and wonders, if he didn't have health insurance at the time, what would have been the outcome. From left are Stott, York Hospital President Jud Knox ...
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Mention.net

One step beyond simple alerts is a handy tool called Mention (www.mention.net). Available as a standalone application, Mention has interfaces with Windows, Mac, iPhone, Android, and an extension on your Chrome browser. Think of Mention as an online brand-monitoring dashboard for your organization. You can create a custom alert, favorites, and plug in your social accounts all in one place. When your organization or program "mentions" come in, you can sort them by source or priority. There are three pricing plans, including a Free Plan that gives you up to three alerts and 500 mentions per month, plus one month of history. For $19.99 per month, Mention gives you unlimited alerts, 50,000 mentions per month, history, statistics and data export tools to help you with analysis.

Google Analytics

More and more marketers and organizations are turning to Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) for in-depth website reporting and analysis. At no cost to subscribers, Google Analytics allows you to see your website in real-time, build your own dashboard and create customized reports. Google Analytics is a feature-packed software application that tracks information about your site's audience, traffic sources, content, referring sites, key words, Page visits, and much more. The application's Custom Alert feature also allows you to create a notification of sudden or unexpected changes in your site's traffic (available daily, weekly or monthly). A paid version is available, however at $150,000 per year, however it's more suited for enterprise level requirements.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRACKING

The advent of social media has shifted the traditional media tracking paradigm. Events, publicity, or one Tweet can send your social media presence soaring in minutes. Or perhaps you're just tweeting along with a few hundred followers and hoping that what you're putting out there is really going places. To understand your influence definitively, you'll want to familiarize yourself with some of the many tracking services that are readily available, at little to no cost.

Facebook

Facebook is the best-known social media network in the world, and the most popular one as well. According to Facebook's 2013 Q1 operational highlights, there were 1.11 billion monthly active users as of March 31, 2013. The appeal of Facebook is two fold: It helps people fulfill their need to be part of something, and it is a way of presenting one's self (or organization) to others.

98. The percentage of nonprofits with a Facebook presence

Source: www.nonprofitsocialnetworsurvey.com

Facebook is a relatively low-tech medium for engaging your constituents, staff, board members, community, and donors. The advantage of Facebook for nonprofits is that it can harness the power of this social media giant at minimal cost and maximum impact. Measuring your Facebook presence and impact involves more than counting "likes". The key to making Facebook work for your organization is to use it to tell your stories with multimedia (e.g. pictures, galleries, audio, video). By sharing these stories in a timely and compelling way, your organization can develop emotional ties to your community, which will ultimately connect them to your mission and values. Also, be sure to use Facebook to break news stories, events and other timely information, as nearly half of all users check their Page every day.

Social Media Tips:

1. Don't use your personal Facebook Page for your organization. Create an organization Page so that your Page is public and can be seen by anyone (free of charge).
2. Create an organization name Page that's easy to access and promote. Choose an easy URL. For example, "www.Facebook.com/ healthiercommunities". Remember to fully complete the "About" section of your site.
3. Designate a Facebook manager or administrator within your organization and have at least one backup.
4. Use your organization Page to purchase advertising, run contests and promotions.
5. Leverage compelling content into fundraising or volunteer drivers. Be sure to include a caption with the photos or video you share.
6. Add value to your posts. If your posts consist mainly of advertising and self-promotional materials, you'll likely lose traffic or be "hidden" by your followers.
7. Be consistent. Don't post a flurry of information and then fall off the radar screen.
8. Be true to your work. If your organization is focused on building sustainable community gardens, your posts should be mostly about that topic.

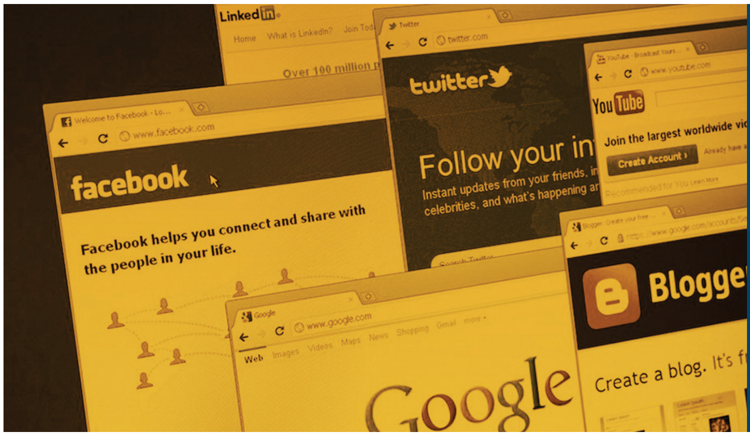
Insight

As your organization's Facebook Page administrator, you'll have access to Insight, Facebook's analytics tool, to help you track your Page's performance. To access Insight, simply go to your Page's cover photo, click on the drop-down to "View Insights". Once there, you'll have access to real-time statistics on your posts, likes, who is engaged and talking about your Page, and if anything you've posted has gone viral. If you're just getting started with your organization Page, track your progress regularly, and more often if you run a campaign or promotion. Already using an organization Page? Get the best of Insight by logging in now taking a snapshot of your website traffic activity and history. Then, use this information to create a benchmark and improvement goals. Don't worry if you don't have time to check in regularly, Facebook allows you to export data you might have missed.

Twitter

TweetReach

If a Tweet goes out into cyberspace, does anyone hear it? Tweetreach (www.tweetreach.com) can help you find out. Tweetreach translates tweets, retweets, and @replies into traditional marketing and metrics terms. If you'd like to know who saw your tweet and who responded, simply visit the site, sign in with your Twitter account, and type your tweet in the search box. The site returns a snapshot of reach, activity, exposure, contributors, retweets, and more. There's no charge to do a simple search, but if you want more reporting and/or technical support, monthly plans start at $84.



Klout

Klout (www.klout.com) is an online application that measures the impact of your social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and provides you with an Influencer Score between 1 and 100. If your organization is interested in seeing it's standing as a thought and social action leader, Klout will better help you understand the difference between being active and being influential. The site features a dashboard of statistics across various social media networks, your Klout score and the metrics behind actions that contribute to it. Klout is currently available at no cost.

LinkedIn

Use LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) for your nonprofit organization much like you would in the other social media networks referenced in this publication. LinkedIn is a networking community where you can tell your story, see who you're connected to, and learn more about what they care about. If it is donations that you're seeking, you can browse company profiles to see if they support causes similar to yours. Even then, you'll need to spend time cultivating those relationships carefully. Complete your profile fully, and be sure to include your logo. If you want to connect to someone, always send a personal cover note. Join affinity groups and follow at least 25 people (they'll likely follow you back), regularly share valuable information or updates, and refrain posting too many updates. For more on how LinkedIn is helping nonprofits, visit http://nonprofits.linkedin.com/.

Blogs

One of the most effective and efficient ways to tell your nonprofit's story, share time sensitive news coverage or events, highlight case studies, and solidify your organization's credibility, is to blog regularly. Stay close to your mission, and write focused, informative content. Be sure to be creative and engaging. Use pictures and video whenever possible. Ask your readers questions to encourage comments and conversation. This will lead to increased reader loyalty, an important tip, as there's a lot of competition out there. Don't forget that this is an opportunity to soft sell your cause: You can do this by telling a story about progress you're making on a particular effort and letting your readers know how they can become part of the success. Last, WordPress (www.wordpress.com) has an easy to use blog website that allows you to create a basic blog for free, and also offers a full-featured version for $99 per year.

Pitching to Bloggers

Pitching bloggers can be done in much the same way as you would pitch a traditional media reporter. Mass blasts of press releases or story leads rarely work. In fact, doing so can serve to damage a relationship with a blogger before it even begins. Craft your story idea specifically for that blogger, telling him or her why you think their readers would find your story compelling. Tell the blogger how your lead ties to another story he or she recently has covered. Don't hesitate to reach out to the blogger with story ideas that don't even relate to your program or service. Doing so shows that you're interested in building a relationship and becoming a valuable source for that blog.

Message Boards

One of the oldest, and sometimes forgotten forms of social media is the message board. And while media specialists don't devote a lot of time to monitoring message boards, anyone who's ever read a bad posting about a prospective product, vendor, or organization has likely given some amount of credence to an anonymous source. It's a good idea to check them now and again, especially if you have a significant bump in media coverage (positive or negative).

Boardreader

Boardreader is a simple website (www.boardreader.com) where you can enter your desired search terms and it returns sortable results at no cost. The site also has advanced settings that allow you to further refine your search by choosing exact words or phrases, excluding words, focusing on specific domain addresses, languages, and more.

Resource Tip: Visit export.ly (no "http" or "www" needed) and download one of their many free social media analytics tools, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. Your price might be a "like" or the sharing of some basic information, but it's often a good tradeoff to access one of these handy tools.

Measuring and Evaluating

Monitoring and tracking your media coverage is important, but it doesn't tell the whole story about your media efforts. To take your media relations program to the next level, you should create a system for measuring and evaluating results. The ideal system takes both quantitative and qualitative measures into consideration. Quantitative measures, such as circulation or audience, help you know how many people you reached as a result of the coverage. Qualitative measures, on the other hand, evaluate the quality of the coverage. More coverage isn't always better. You need to consider whether or not you were able to get your key messages across, and whether or not your message was received by your intended audience. Was the tone of the story positive, neutral or negative?

HEADLINE	OUTLET	CIRCULATION/ AUDIENCE
"Georgia residents have access to more healthcare options"	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	250,000
"Policymakers discuss impact of Affordable Care Act"	WALB-TV	35,000
"Governor urges Georgians to 'shape up'"	WMAC-AM	20,000

If you have been working with a reporter on a particular story, ask him or her to let you know when a story is scheduled to run. That way you can have it on your radar screen. Use spreadsheet software to create a basic tracking matrix like the one on the next page. Capture the headline of your story (or give it your own appropriate title if it appeared on TV or the radio), the name of the media outlet and circulation (print) or audience (broadcast) figures. If you have access to a media database or tracking service (e.g. Cision, Flacklist, Muck Rack), it will typically provide those figures. If you do not have such a service, you may be able to reach out to media outlets and ask for the figures.

It's important to remember that circulation or audience numbers tell you how many people were potentially exposed to the story – not how many actually heard, read or saw it. Still, it's the typical standard used by most public relations professionals to approximate the reach of their media relations efforts.

Calculating the Impact of Coverage

On the next page you'll find an expanded version of the tracking and monitoring spreadsheet. In addition to headline, outlet and circulation or audience, you should add columns for message delivery, tone, and an overall "score".

No two news stories about your organization are alike. In one story, you may have successfully gotten across your key message points and found the tone to be overwhelmingly positive. Another may have purely mentioned your program or organization and taken a neutral tone. For that reason, it can be helpful to create a simple scoring system to better help you track the likelihood that stories are having a positive impact.

For message delivery, score each story on how well it delivered the key points you identified earlier. Were all of your main messages covered? Give the story a 5. Were just some covered? Score it a 2 or 3. No mention of any key points? You'll want to give the story a 0. Then multiply your message score by the circulation or audience to arrive at a total score for the story. Similarly, you'll want to evaluate a story's tone. Was it positive? Neutral? Negative? Track those points as well. You'll see our tracking spreadsheet revised to account for these additional measures on the next page.

HEADLINE	OUTLET	CIRCULATION/ AUDIENCE	MESSAGE DELIVERY	TONE	SCORE
"Georgia residents have access to more healthcare options"	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	250,000	4	Positive	1,000,000
"Policymakers discuss impact of Affordable Care Act"	WALB-TV	35,000	0	Negative	0
"Governor urges Georgians to 'shape up'"	WMAC-AM	20,000	1	Neutral	20,000
TOTAL		305,000	5		1,020,000

Use your initial total score to compare this coverage to future stories. Here are some additional metrics that you could include in your chart for future campaigns: Shared vs. Sole Mention, Story Type, Photos/Video, Website link or Organization Contact Information, Spokesperson Quoted and Quality of Comments.

The Next Level – Survey Research

The measures described above, as with counting the number of people who attended your event or visited your website, reflect "outputs". They are a way to evaluate the effectiveness of your communications tools. You'll also periodically want to evaluate whether you are moving the needle on messaging outcomes. That is, are more people aware of your program or organization? Are they more likely to follow your advice? Did you experience an increase in volunteers?

Outcomes are typically measured through survey research, which can be done informally through online tools such as Survey Monkey, or more formally through sophisticated research partners, depending on your budget and needs. As with any of the media relations tactics mentioned earlier in this publication, you should:

- Be prepared to be focused in your questions
- Ask tough questions
- Expect to hear a wide range of feedback
- Remain objective
- Remember to use your first survey as a benchmark for future endeavors
- Thank the respondents for their participation

CONCLUSION

A thoughtful, well-rounded and consistent media relations strategy is critical to helping nonprofit organizations stand out in an ever-changing news environment. This process requires that you have clear objectives from the start, and that you employ a wide range of tactics designed to get your message to the right audience, at the right time, and through the most appropriate media channels. By leveraging the nuances of media relations and embracing both the traditional and social media resources at your disposal, you'll be well on your way to not only getting the coverage you seek, but to fully understanding its impact.

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