Catalyst Center for Nonprofit Management

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Nonprofit News

Tips for Successful Media Relations By Debbie Goetz

In order for your public relations plan to succeed, you need to have a strong relationship with the media. Media relations involves building relationships with media and then working together to inform the public of company news through consistent and credible media coverage. Developing a strong understanding of the media and how to communicate with reporters will help you get your news covered, and improve the success of your public relations plan.

Here are 7 tips to help you improve your media relations skills and increase your media exposure.

1. Create a media list Before you start crafting the perfect pitch, research publications and reporters to build a detailed media list. Knowing who to talk to at a publication will save you time and benefit your relationship with reporters in the future. Once you have decided which publication and reporters may be interested in your story, you will be able to create targeted pitches that have a greater chance of being covered.

2. Know the reporter you are pitching
Learning details about reporters can mean the difference between your news being covered and your future pitches being tossed or deleted. Research how and when certain reporters like to be contacted. Some reporters like to receive pitches through email and others prefer to receive a phone call. Always be mindful when contacting reporters. Sending them an email or calling them when they are on deadline can stress your relationship and lessen your chance for coverage.

3. Be courteous on the phone When calling a reporter introduce yourself clearly and reference any past conversations you've had. Then ask if it is a good time for them to talk. A reporter’s time is precious, so being considerate and understanding will help you make a good impression. Plan your conversation out ahead of time, so you can communicate clearly and relay important information quickly.

4. Target your message A clear and well developed message will be easier for you to pitch and for reporters to build a story around. Once you have clarified your message, consider creating a sheet with important facts that support your message. Doing this will help you communicate clearly and stay on topic during your pitch. If you are sending your pitch by email, take some time to send separate and personalized pitches to each reporter. Carbon copies are easier for you to send, but are impersonal, and will reflect negatively on you and your pitch.

5. Be careful when emailing your pitch
Publications receive hundreds of emails a day. When emailing your pitch, create a catchy subject line that will stand out. Avoid using all caps or excessively long subject lines. Your goal is to catch their attention without appearing intimidating. If possible, call the reporter with your pitch instead of emailing. While email is easy and can be done quickly, it can just as easily be deleted or forgotten. A phone call allows you to speak directly to the reporter and communicate your message.

6. Create a beneficial relationship Whenever possible, offer to help a reporter with a story he or she is working on. Offering your assistance may not guarantee your story makes the front page of the next issue, but it does build goodwill and strengthen your relationship. Helping reporters may also create new opportunities you might have not considered otherwise.

7. Follow up Once you have made your pitch, follow up with the reporter on a regular basis. At times, a reporter will be working on several stories and your story may not be run immediately. Politely follow up and provide additional information to support your message and create a compelling story. Keep tips 2 and 3 in mind when following up. Remember how and when the reporter likes to be contacted and always be courteous of his or her time when calling to follow up.

A successful media relations plan depends on your ability to communicate your message clearly to the media. Use the tips above to hone your media relation skills, create better pitches and boost your media coverage.

***Media Musts** is a session at Nonprofit University on June 13th. Debbie Goetz has assembled a panel of media professionals to further discuss this topic.*

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Summer 2016

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REGISTER FOR NPU
www.catalyst.nonprofit.com

Note: Our last two events have sold-out with a waiting list. For this reason, all registrants must be paid in advance either by check or via Eventbrite with a credit card.

Links for registration and payment can be found on our website.

MONDAY, JUNE 13th 2016 8:00 am-4:00 pm Bucks County Community College

8:00-8:30 am **Registration & Breakfast**

8:30-9:30 AM
Nonprofit Restructuring: Why Consider Long-Term Collaborative Arrangements?
The Nonprofit Repositioning Fund is a new pooled fund that supports formal, long-term collaborations among two or more nonprofits in the Greater Philadelphia 5-county region. The Fund seeks to demystify and support collaborations ranging from shared back office arrangements, through to programmatic joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions. We make grants for qualified nonprofits to both explore and implement potential restructuring opportunities. This panel discussion will examine some of the conditions that best support these restructuring activities.
Nadya K. Shmavonian, Nonprofit Repositioning Fund Executive Director

9:45-10:45 am **Concurrent Workshops SESSION I**
1. Myth Busters: Putting Planning Giving Myths to the Test
We'll put myths of planned giving to the test and learn about creative tools and strategies to help your donors make the biggest gift of their life. Better understand planned gifts, how to identify prospects and market to them and how to prepare your organization to receive gifts.

We'll look at myths of planned giving and put them to the test:
- Planned giving cannibalizes current giving
- I need to know a bunch of technical language to talk about planned gifts
- Planned gifts are for the rich
- The so called "wealth transfer" has not materialized.

Randy Nyce, Everence

2. True Colors: Coaching, Managing and Motivating Teams
Leadership is managing and motivating people; coordinating the efforts of a group toward a common goal. This session will assess your personality style and provide you with a new understanding and appreciation of the fundamental differences within your teams. True Colors defines a flexible spectrum or profile, with a rainbow of human qualities. Each Color has its own motivations for performing and producing effectively; what motivates one Color may be meaningless or even problematic to another. Discover how to lead, motivate and understand the strengths and limitations of each Color.
Melissa Flynn, Flynn Strategic Solutions

3. You Better Sweat the Small Stuff: Social Media Details Make the Difference
You're up and running on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but do you know the real secrets to social media success? It's the details that make the difference. This session will dive deep into social media timing, the nuances of a great social media profile, best practices for effective content sharing, and more. These tips will help you ensure your organization is creating an effective social media program, making best use of your time and resources.
Laura Powers & Sarah Larson-Furia Rubel Communications

4. Standards for Excellence 2.0
The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) has taken a leadership role in adapting and implementing the Standards for Excellence®, a comprehensive ethics and accountability program. This program has a strong emphasis on educating board members in providing appropriate oversight and in providing a wide array of "best practice" sample policies and forms to allow organizations to implement accountability practices. Learn how Standards 2.0 can benefit your organization
Elizabeth Vibber, MS, Catalyst Center

11:00-12:00 PM **Concurrent Workshops SESSION II**
1. Generating Donor Leads
Referrals! Affinities! Alumni! Oh My! Strategy and execution, that's where it's at. Leaning on a system will return results if you practice using these tools consistently and persistently. Get tips on where to find potential prospects that may be living right around the corner. Use a solid CRM system as well as your human resources to take advantage of all the opportunities available to you!
Jean Holmes, Bucks County Community College Foundation

2. Is Your New Board Chair Ready to Lead?

The Board Chair plays a pivotal role in creating a culture for the board that guides a mission-driven, impactful organization. Often chairs step into the position with little training and possibly an incomplete understanding of the role. We will delve more deeply into how the chair can create a culture of inquiry and guide the board in steering the organization towards a sustainable future.

Elizabeth Vibber, MS, Catalyst Center

3. Up Your Game with Improvisation

Whether it is a formal presentation, a donor meeting or simply networking at a cocktail reception, the skills used in improv can help you and your board present your organization in its best light. How you ask? During an improvisational exercise, participants must be present in the moment, listening carefully, and contributing freely. These skills turn out to be particularly useful in environments that rely on adaptability-such as a tough question from a donor. This will be an interactive session and include tips and techniques that you can bring back into your board room.

Aviva Meyrowitz, Lights, Camera, Acting

***4.* Your Nonprofit's Risk Management Program: Are You Covered?**

As a board member or director, you have the collective responsibility of oversight and governance of your Non-Profit Organization. It's True – Check the By-laws! Together, we'll discuss risk exposures to loss and how to form a plan right on the spot! A Risk Management Plan is a resource for leaders and managers in an organization that explains the philosophy about risk, and outlines its priorities and strategies. Every organization is different and faces unique challenges and opportunities, so it should be customized to match your culture, resources and needs.

Mish Ganssle, CPCU, CIC, RMG Insurance

11:45-12:45 Lunch (included)

1:00-2:30 PM **Concurrent Workshops SESSION III**

1. Capital Campaigns 101

This interactive workshop will describe seven key elements of a successful capital campaign, focusing on three in particular:

1) an urgent and compelling case for support tied to your organization's vision and strategic plan;

2) engagement of your governing board and a group of fundraising champions, volunteers willing to open doors and help you cultivate leadership donors

3) major gift donor prospects with the capacity and interest to support your cause.

We will highlight ways you can engage your board, cultivate fundraising volunteers, and identify your major donor prospects beginning now. A focus on planning and relationship building will position you for success when you launch your capital campaign. It is never too soon to start asking for advice, sharing your hopes and dreams, and involving volunteers in ways that are comfortable for them and that build their confidence as friend-raisers and fundraisers. We will discuss the staffing and support systems you will need to manage new relationships and information. We will review the tasks and timeline required for preparation, planning and implementation of your capital campaign.

Marcella Moyer Schick, MA, ACFRE, CAP & Richard Button-MMS Advancement Associates, LLC

2. Pump Up the Volume: 5 Ways to Increase the Impact of Your Organization

How well are the members of your organization communicating your message? Are you getting the results you need to increase your impact as well as grow your bottom line? If not, then maybe it is time to magnetize your listeners and donors with a dynamic and magnetic way to communicate with them. This workshop will give you strategies to make your message convert your listeners. Speak about your mission with passion, power and presence.

Esther Hughes-The Center for ELITE Women Communications

3. Media Musts for All Nonprofits

Debbie Goetz will facilitate a panel of media professionals who will enlighten attendees about the best ways to get media attention for their organization or cause. If possible, attendees will be given the opportunity to submit questions in advance. As a result of attending this session, participants will gain knowledge of:

1. What is "media worthy" or newsworthy
2. How to best approach the media about their cause, news or event
3. Who the right people are to pitch to

Debbie Goetz, Debbie Goetz Media

4. Advanced QuickBooks Analysis

QuickBooks can be an incredibly powerful tool for your organization, allowing you and your board to make better-informed business decisions. During this session we will explore how QuickBooks can analyze your financials, identify trends and consolidate data so you have the information you need to accomplish your mission.

Roberta Cowles, Bookminders

1:00-2:30 PM **Generosity Marketplace**

The Generosity Marketplace is a chance to join with colleagues to discuss a need of your organization, share resources and explore the potential for collaboration. Workshop presenters will facilitate roundtables, or form your own during this open forum.

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