

BASIC TOOLS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

How and When to Use:

1. *Press Releases*- Who, what, where, when, why, how in 3-6 paragraphs (can be reprinted verbatim)
2. *Media Advisories*- Who, what, where, when, why, how in bullet form
3. *Community Calendar Listings*- Who, what, where, when in one sentence
4. *Public Service Announcements*- 10, 20 or 30-second message for broadcast; cannot be time-sensitive
5. *Print Opinion Pieces*- longer than letters to editor, must be on a timely, “hot” topic
6. *Broadcast Editorials/Rebuttals*- In response to a current event or in response to TV/radio station’s editorial position
7. *Radio/TV talkshows*- can be conducted in person or on phone for radio; must be on current topic or timely societal issue
8. *Website/links*- your best source for publicizing your events/programs—Once you get web surfers to visit your site
9. *Public Access TV*- be a guest on a show or produce your own; limited audience, low cost, targeted viewership
10. *Flyers/Brochures*- Catchy design, colorful paper, strategic placement
11. *Postcard “save the date” reminders* .Costly, but effective to targeted audiences
12. *Press Conferences*- use judiciously when you have something BIG to announce

(See complete packet: Media Guidelines for Unitarian Universalist Congregations for samples of these tools and more information on how to use them.)

MEDIA RELATIONS

Do's and Don'ts

Don't:

- Miss a reporter's deadline
- Delay initial call-backs to reporters more than 1 hour
- Answer complex inquiries off the top of your head; when not absolutely sure, offer to research and call back (ask deadline)
- Ever say "no comment"
- Let error or omissions go unchallenged; ask for corrections if appropriate
- Bar media access on negative stories; channel and manage it
- Forget Spanish and Asian language media
- Talk or write like a bureaucrat
- Ever go "off the record"
- Fall for the negative or leading question; stick to your key positive points

Do:

- Be accessible; give reporters your home number/pager/cell phone, etc.
- Take time to meet face to face with reporters/editors at least once every six months
- Communicate frequently with key media- weekly tip sheet
- Encourage event or program planners to contact media directly
- Seek out training on media interviewing techniques
- Think "photo op"
- Read/watch the media you're pitching to: get to know who's interested in what and target your pitch to a specific reporter/columnist
- Send multiple press releases/media advisories to different depts. (Metro, Local edition, Religion Page, Lifestyle, Calendar, etc.)
- Get acquainted with local reporters, TV News assignment planners and producers
- Give colorful quotes; use visual language, metaphors
- Utilize City News Service: heightens your credibility; reduces your work of contacting individual media
- Utilize email, broadcast fax
- Look for unusual angles: find the twist or hook to a mundane, routine story
- Become a subject matter expert, not just a source for your church
- Broaden your pitch to UU publications, and other religious/faith-based media