

Getting Your Message Out

Using Communications Strategy to
Further Your Mission

What is your message?

- What do people need to know?
- Is it newsworthy?
- What kind of news – feature or hard news?
- Who is my audience?
- What channels are available to me?

What is free media?

- Unless you have the budget to purchase advertising, you will be using free media channels.
- Traditional media channels include radio, television, and print such as newspapers and magazines.
- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. can also be used.

How to reach media?

- Kentucky Media Directory (visit www.MyMediaDirectory.com).
- Maintain list of reporters you've worked with and are familiar with your agency.
- Identify health reporters and editors in the area.
- Search for local blogs and freelance writers.

Don't Be Afraid

- Approach your local media outlets and encourage them to:
 - Pay attention to issues related to the dangers and consequences of tobacco use, particularly its impact on your community.
 - Develop a list of reporters familiar with the work of public health and make an effort to make your work a regular part of their beat.
 - Publish stories, editorials or reviews written by public health officials or advocates. Some newspapers have regular health sections featuring contributed articles.

What are my options when I have an announcement to make?

- Write, distribute a press release.
- Hold a press conference or media briefing.
- Give exclusive story to one outlet or small group of media.
- Update website and social media sources.
- Publish article in newsletters.
- All of the above.

Who is your spokesperson?

- Offer yourself, LHD employees or local advocates, as experts the media can contact when they need a response to a news story related to tobacco use, prevention and cessation.
- Use spokesperson/people at events, as a source in news releases and other printed materials.

How to write a press release

- Try to use Associated Press style (AP Stylebooks are available for purchase).
- Keep it short – one page is fine.
- Include most pertinent details at the top or near the beginning of the release (quotes can go at the bottom!).
- Add a personal or human interest angle when possible (additional tips posted online with presentation).

Planning a Media Event

- Remember that morning (between 9 and 11 a.m.) is the best time for reporters.
- The event should last no longer than 30 minutes.
- Choose a day as early in the week as possible, and avoid Fridays.
- Pick a location big enough to hold a crowd of people, but with good acoustics.

Media Event, continued.

- Share the event agenda with all relative parties.
- Reserve any necessary equipment, such as a podium, microphone, chairs/seating and backdrop for visual interest.
- Give media people at least a day's notice of the event.
- Have extra copies of your news release on hand and greet each reporter with a copy. If you have the time and resources, you can even put together a press kit.

Don't Forget!

- If you're inviting television media, try to have something visually appealing for the cameras.
- Provide enough chairs at the front for reporters, and enough room for their equipment.
- Start your event on time - no later than five minutes late.
- Make sure your spokesperson is prepared to answer questions, both during and after the event.
- Always remember to follow up with reporters.

Maximize Publicity Opportunities!

- Don't miss out on PR opportunities. Here are some examples:
 - Launching a new program or policy.
 - Smoking rate reduction (or increase).
 - Health Observances.
 - Proposed tobacco-related legislation.
 - Localize state or national story.
 - Release of vendor compliance rates.

Don't forget!

- Always respond to media. Return calls the day they're made, the earlier the better.
- Be mindful of deadlines.
- Be helpful, when possible.
- All public agencies will receive some negative media attention. It's unavoidable!
- Make the most of media interviews (additional tips are posted with presentation).