

MEDIA GUIDE

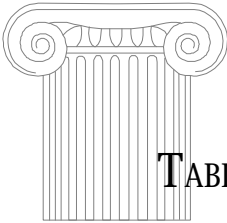


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OVERVIEW

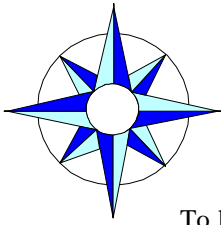
This guide is designed to help all Triangle chapters establish positive media relations and effectively work with the media in their own community and the communities of their members. Building media relations takes time and follow through. Having a positive relationship with various media works in the chapter's favor. If the media knows who you are and what positive things you are doing, they are more likely to help promote your accomplishments and events.



OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this manual is to assist Triangle chapters in building positive media relations. This manual will:

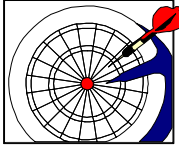
- ❖ Provide tips on how to work effectively with the media.
- ❖ Supply samples of tools to communicate with the media.
- ❖ Help chapters determine how to build a media relations program.



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

News vs. Publicity

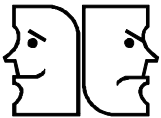
To help gain the respect of the media you need to know the difference between news and publicity. News informs the public of relevant events that may affect their lives. Publicity, on the other hand, is to promote a favorable relationship with the public. While most media won't deal with straight publicity, keep in mind that what is publicity to one medium may be news to another.



Selectivity

For this reason, it is important to be selective when targeting the media you feed information. You'll have more luck in having your message get out if you target your message appropriately—send the right type of announcement to the right radio station, for example. This means either spot monitoring stations sufficiently to learn their format or at least researching each station's preference. You must be a radio listener to use it effectively.

The same rule applies to both print and broadcast. Send your release or feature to a TV station whose format fits your message. Become familiar with the local channels—who uses features, who does public service extensively, what air personalities like to feature your kind of news or message.



Do's and Don'ts for Working with the Media

- ❖ **Do** plan ahead, act quickly, be accurate and concise.
- ❖ **Do** contact appropriate editors, news directors, or reporters directly. Contact them personally, if possible, and be sure to use their names. Know their names and areas of responsibility.
- ❖ **Do** know all your facts and related information ahead of time and have the information readily available.
- ❖ **Do** know deadline dates and times. Avoid contacting the media at these times. Make sure your information is received in a timely fashion.
- ❖ **Do** follow the guidelines for a proper news release and PSA.
- ❖ **Do** make sure your news releases are correct both factually and grammatically.
- ❖ **Do** think of ideas or photos or “twists” that can enhance your subject. **Don't** go overboard, however.
- ❖ **Do** send copies or examples of your clippings to National Headquarters.
- ❖ **Don't** be discouraged if your news release or PSA doesn't get printed or aired. Demands on time and space are heavy for all media.
- ❖ **Don't** assume editors or media representatives are “anti-Greek” or necessarily “pro-Greek.” Approach them in a cooperative manner and don't waste their time.
- ❖ **Don't** overlook small town or hometown media.
- ❖ **Don't** be cute, suggestive, or seek publicity merely for the sake of publicity. Be careful that your message and/or photo conveys the message you are intending to send and sets the Fraternity in the best light.

Other Tips



- ❖ Every medium has “slow” days. Become familiar with when these times and days are and try to aim for that time when possible.
- ❖ Do your research. Many newspapers feature topics on a regular day (all science news on Tuesday, for example). Know these days and use them to your advantage.
- ❖ Don't just focus on the major newspapers. Become familiar with the special interest weeklies. Know what they print and when.
- ❖ Make sure you are available to answer follow up questions regarding your news release. Include both a day and evening phone number where you may be reached and make yourself available.
- ❖ Remember that fax and email are also ways to send out news releases.
- ❖ Don't expect your PSA to be used for more than two weeks.
- ❖ Review your material and make sure it is of interest to others outside your chapter.



Putting Together a Media List

One of the most important items in your media information will be your media contact list. Make sure you have one and that it is updated on a regular basis. Keep track of current names, titles, phone numbers, fax numbers, addresses, deadline dates, areas of responsibility for a variety of media. You may want to keep this information on a computer data base, a three-ring binder, or a Rolodex file—whatever works best for you. This should be a permanent record, however, that is passed along to those following you. It should also be updated at least annually, if not more often.

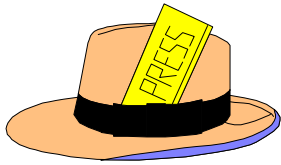
You may be able to purchase a media guide through your campus bookstore or a local public relations society. Guides to the media across the country are also available and may be worth your investment, either as a printed book or on diskette. Please note, however, that these books can become outdated the moment they are printed. That is why it is imperative that you update your lists often by simply telephoning the media and verifying the information.

Thank You! Thank You

Working with the media is an ongoing process. You need to lay the ground work in order to get coverage and all your events may not receive the coverage you feel they deserve. When an event does receive coverage, either in writing or on the air, be sure to follow up with the reporter, editor, or news director with a thank you note. Be sure to:

1. Use the reporter's name.
2. Reference the event/story you are thanking them for covering.
3. Use correct spelling and grammar.
4. Use a note card with the chapter crest/logo/house sketch on it.

If you have another event coming up, wait about a week after the thank you, if possible, and call again to mention it to the reporter. This way your name is still fresh in the reporter's mind. You can also follow up a thank you with another news release or photo.



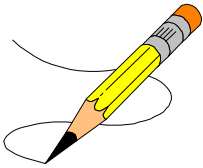
TOOL FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

News Releases

A news release is usually used for print media. It is written in a journalistic style that begins with a lead, expands on the lead and proceeds in decreasing order of importance. This is known as an inverted pyramid style. Editors typically will edit from the bottom up. Therefore, your most important information needs to be in the first paragraph. A quick glance at the lead should tell the editor if your story is interesting—remember, you are competing with many other news releases.

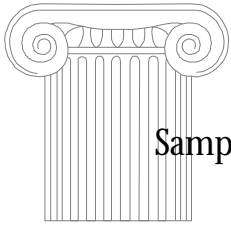
Writing a good news release takes time and practice to do it effectively. Don't be discouraged if your release doesn't appear in print. Remember, you are still getting your name out to the media. Try another approach, including a photograph perhaps, or just keep trying with other news releases for other events.

Writing a Good News Release



A good lead is the key to a good news release. This is the first thing an editor reads and it needs to entice him to continue reading, and consider printing your information. Determine what is unique about your event or story. Make sure it is informative and of interest to the public at large. The summary lead is the most common. This includes the basic facts: who, what, where, and when (also known as the five W's).

- ❖ Write your release in short, concise sentences. Editors are busy people and need to get through material quickly. This style makes their job easier.
- ❖ Try to show the reader what you are doing versus simply telling them about it. Use colorful, visual language.
- ❖ Write in the active voice. Write in present tense. Learn to use simple declarative sentences with active verbs and creative punctuation.
- ❖ Avoid long unbroken passages; however, try to vary the sentence and paragraph length.
- ❖ A good way to break up copy is by using dashes or creating sub-listings. You can set off points with "bullets," or lead your reader through by using sub-points titled WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, or numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. You may find it more useful to use sub-points appropriate to the copy such as "Major Issues," "Recommendation," etc.
- ❖ Avoid clichés, jargon, and unclear language.
- ❖ Make sure all your facts and details are concrete.
- ❖ Try to add a human factor to your story. Including a quote from an officer or member can help achieve this.
- ❖ Check and double check to ensure that all spellings are accurate and correct grammar is used.



Sample News Release

For: Immediate Release

From: Joe Fraternity
222/222-2222

Date: October 1, 1998

Triangle Fraternity at ABC University is hosting a safe and sane Halloween party for neighborhood children on October 31. Parents are invited to bring their children, ages 1-10, to the chapter house for fun and treats. The chapter house is located at 222 North Second Street.

The festivities begin at 6:00 p.m. Children can Trick-or-Treat door to door in the chapter house, enjoy a festive Halloween party, and participate in a costume contest. Bobbing for apples and pumpkin carving are all included. Cost for the event is free.

Please contact the chapter house at *222/222-2222* to reserve your child's spot at this neighborhood event.

Triangle Fraternity is the fraternity for engineers, architects and scientists. The chapter has been active at ABC University for more than 20 years and works hard to keep a positive relationship with the university, the neighborhood, and the community.



Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Radio can be an effective means of communication if used correctly. Many times peoples overlook radio, when they shouldn't. Some local stations near college campuses carry regular stories about campus events. Some even have calendars of events or bulletin boards that could post your event. Don't forget also that many campuses have their own radio stations. Since these often depend upon part-time students for staffing, they may be in the market for local/campus news stories on a regular basis. Become familiar with them and their format.

All radio stations are required by the FCC to contribute a certain amount of free time to announcements of a public service nature. This does not mean, however, that they are required to include your announcement. If your project involves the public, it may well be deserving of the station's public service time.

If you request public service time make sure that your project is of a public nature. See if it benefits both the radio and the listeners. Write your announcement in three different lengths—60 second, 30 seconds, and 10 seconds. Although 10 seconds may not seem like a lot of time, you'd be surprised how much you can say in that time.

Remember when writing your PSA that it is meant to be spoken and heard—not read. Use short, vibrant words that are easily communicated by voice—avoid sentences on stilts or words that have sound-alike meanings.

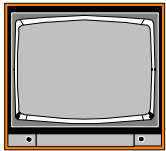
PSAs are scheduled well in advance. It is in your best interest to visit the radio station three to four weeks prior to the time that you want your announcement to run. Talk with the news director and specify when you want your announcement to run. A usual run is no longer than two weeks.

How do organizations get on the radio? What makes the difference is:

1. Listening to the shows and becoming familiar with the hosts and producers.
2. Taking the time to drop a note or make a call to get your message used.

If you don't listen...If you don't ask... You DON'T get on radio.

A good exercise to do at the end of each year is to print out your PSA messages from the past year and rate them. What ones were most effective? What got air time—and results? How would you change them now to make them more interesting and timely?



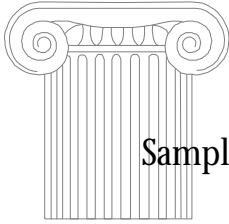
Television

Basically the same rules apply to television as do to radio; however, with television you add a visual element to the mix. Television time is also generally more difficult to acquire than either radio or print. In seeking television time, look for stories that have a strong visual element. TV news generally will illustrate with on-the-scene reporting.



In putting together a PSA for television, the most common type uses a color slide or piece of art. This flashes up on the screen with a short printed message. Usually no dialogue is contained in the announcement. You can either prepare your PSA yourself, or work with the station public service director to put it together. Like in radio, write your message for 60, 30, and 10 second spots, and provide artwork or an idea that the television station artist can create. If the station is producing you PSA, allow one month's lead time.

Another avenue available through television is the cable stations. Most local cable companies offer access channels and have studios available to interested groups. Check with your local cable provider to see what fits your chapter's needs. Remember also, that cable stations will be more likely to air your PSA if there is something in it for them. Can they give their company a plug within your PSA? It may help get your message on the air.



Sample PSA

CONTACT: Triangle, Joe Fraternity, 222/222-2222

START: ASAP

ENDING DATE: Continual Rotation

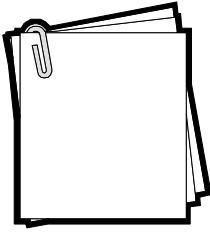
TIME: 20 sec.

WORD Limitation: 70 words

Volunteers are making a difference in the success of literacy programs in our community—and more helpers are needed. Triangle Fraternity, the fraternity for engineers, architects and scientists, sponsors the project.

Jim Jones, Literacy Program Chairman, points out that no special training is required for this vital “rehabilitation” effort. Literacy classes will begin at expanded locations, as volunteers become available.

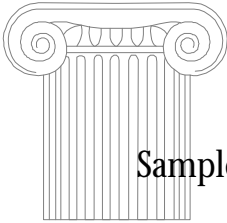
For information, please call Jim Jones, 222/222-2222. Get involved.



Fact Sheets

If you don't know where to start with writing your news release or PSA, try a simple Fact Sheet. Send it to the right contact at the right media, with a personal letter, your coverage request, and a fact sheet to cover the basics about your organization.

The five W's is an easy method to get you started—who, what, where, when, and why. Below is a sample fact sheet.



Sample Fact Sheet

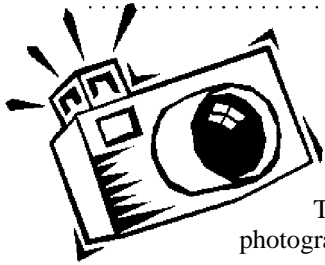
FROM: Joe Fraternity, 222/222-2222

WHAT: Halloween Trick-or-Treat Night

WHEN: October 31, 1998

WHERE: Triangle Fraternity House, 222 North Second Street

WHY: To provide a safe environment for neighborhood children to Trick-or-Treat close to home. Prizes will be handed out along with Halloween treats. Children, ages 1-10, can Trick-or-Treat door to door throughout the house, enjoy a festive Halloween party complete with bobbing for apples and pumpkin decorating. Parents accompanying their children can feel safe about the environment while staying warm and enjoying themselves as well.



PHOTOGRAPHS

The first thing to remember when deciding which photographs to use for publicity is that not all photographs are going to be good choices. If you are taking the pictures, think before you shoot.

- ❖ Why are you taking the picture?
- ❖ What do you want the picture to illustrate?
- ❖ What will attract a reader's attention—an unusual view, item, person, action?

These are all things to keep in mind both when taking a photograph and deciding which one to use.



Subject

While some stories require a formal pose, most will be more successful if an active photo accompanies the story. Interaction between people is more interesting than staring at row of faces. Try to get chapter members involved in an action, rather than committee members standing in a row.



Composition

Take the time to set the photo up right. Move people around to create a more pleasing or balanced look. Don't be afraid to ask people to shift their position even slightly. Play the role of film director. Look to remove clutter from the picture that can be distracting. Watch out for:

- ❖ Background—wall lights, pictures, jumbled bookcases, lampshades, shadows
- ❖ Foreground—ashtrays, coffee cups, bottles, papers, plants

When choosing a photograph from pre-shot pictures, look for ones that have a balanced composition and are pleasing to the eye.

Close ups also provide greater impact. Try to include no more than three people, keeping them close together to eliminate dead space.



Other Tips

- ❖ For sharper pictures, use a good camera, one that adjusts the lens for distance to your subject.
- ❖ If you use a flash indoors, make sure not to shoot into a mirror, window, eye glasses, or picture glass that can reflect the light.
- ❖ Be aware when shooting pictures outside that bright sunlight can cause strong, black shadows and turn eyes into dark hollows. A hazy day, light overcast sky or light shade offer the best conditions. They offer a softer light and diffuse the shadows.
- ❖ To protect photographs remember:
 - ◆ Never use paper clips
 - ◆ Never write on the back with a ball point pen or felt tip pen—use a soft pencil or permanent marker
 - ◆ Mail photographs with stiff cardboard in as large of an envelope as needed.

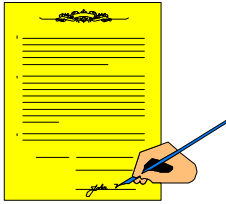
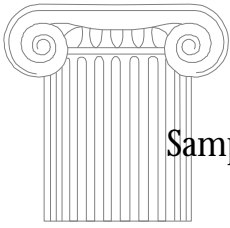


Photo Release

People often question whether a legal release form is needed when releasing photographs for publication. Generally, no such form is indicated if photos are of meetings, boards, committees, or consenting parties. In other instances—particularly in photos illustrating poverty, crime, or involving children—such releases might be a good idea. Following is a generalized form (consult proper legal authority if in doubt on a specific problem).



Sample Photo Release

I hereby agree and consent to the use of the photograph hereinafter described for advertising and publicity purposes by Triangle Fraternity, or its licensees or member organizations, and I waive all claim for such use of for damages.

Description of Photograph: _____

Signature of person photographed (if adult): _____

Print name of above signature: _____

Print name of minor photographed: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: (if signing for a minor): _____

Print name of above signature: _____

Address: (print) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of photographer: _____

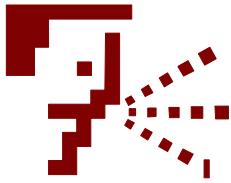
Address: (print) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Photographer's negative code number: _____ Date: _____

Separate and individual releases must be signed by each adult and by parent or guardian of each minor appearing in a photograph.

Use space below for circumstances of picture: title, locale, other identifying data.



INTERVIEWS

This information is useful for not only pulling off an effective broadcast interview, but also for any contact you may have with a journalist.



Determine Your Message

Because interviews are time-limited, the first thing you want to do is determine your message. You must organize your thoughts and decide what points are most important and in which order. Try to discuss your ideas with other Brothers or your advisor.

Practice your interview with Brothers or advisors before it takes place. During your interview, make sure you've said what you want to before you find yourself off the air. While the interviewer may not allow you to go in the direction you'd prefer, you can still get there if you are prepared. Remember, you don't always have to answer a question directly, politicians avoid answering questions directly all the time. Have the answer you want to give prepared and you can answer it to almost any question that is asked. If you know your key points, you stand a better chance of putting them across to the audience.



Television — A Visual Medium

Since television is a visual medium, offer onsite interviews to show your topic, rather than be forced to simply talk about it. If the station doesn't offer mobility, perhaps slides can be used or color photographs.

Tips

- ❖ Communicate your message as though you were talking with a friend.
- ❖ When appearing on television, dress appropriately to the location of the interview, the time of day in which the interview will be aired, and for the audience most important to you.
- ❖ Avoid sharp contrast of color, such as black and white, when appearing on television. Also avoid very busy patterns or close checks.
- ❖ Arrive early and expect things to take longer than you were told.
- ❖ Don't complain about being behind schedule—it could cost you.
- ❖ Take a few questions that you'd like to be asked, and a brief fact sheet.
- ❖ Take note cards with your information outlined on them for you to refer to during the interview.
- ❖ When on the air, sit up straight, take deep breaths and smile. Remember to speak in your normal voice and make eye contact with the interviewer. At the end, shake hands and say thank you.
- ❖ Send a thank you note after the interview.
- ❖ Add the interviewer's and producer's names to your media list.

What to Avoid

- ❖ Don't try to cover too much ground by talking quickly. It's better to make a few good points clear, than cram everything into too little time.
- ❖ Don't use jargon or acronyms. Explain what TFEF and IFC represent, for example.



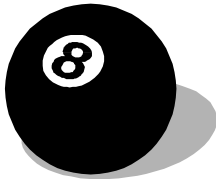
Radio — The Flexible Medium

Radio offers a great amount of flexibility. Generally time is more relaxed than on television and you can refer to your notes without feeling conscientious about it. Radio relies on voice, just as television relies on visual images and print relies on written words. Be sure to ask how much time you will be given and if the interview will be live or taped. Always assume that the host will not have sufficient information about you or your topic. Provide the producer with a list of questions you'd like to cover and a background fact sheet. You can also provide the interviewer with the same information, or additional information.

The interview given will generally be longer than the “sound-bite” that is actually aired, unless of course you are doing it live. Assume that you are on the air, however, from the moment that the interview begins. The flip comment you make in the rush of relief that the interview is over may be the sound bite that is chosen to air.

Tips

- ❖ Remember to speak clearly into the mike.
- ❖ Remember to smile during the interview, your voice will sound much warmer when the interview is broadcast.
- ❖ Use simple words and phrases that are easily understood.
- ❖ Respond fully to all questions asked. Don't simply reply with a “yes” or a “no” answer. If you give a one-word answer, the reporter may state your position on the air, and the result may not be what you expect.
- ❖ Be careful of hidden statements in questions. State your position without endorsing/acknowledging the statement.
- ❖ Be careful responding to double negative questions. You may end up agreeing to something you don't want to agree with. Once again, have a key statement or phrase that states clearly the message you want to convey.
- ❖ Don't rattle papers.
- ❖ Don't forget to offer a back-up telephone number and/or address for further information.
- ❖ Don't ever go on the air unprepared!



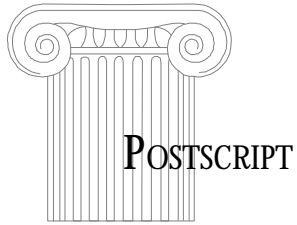
HANDLING THE MEDIA IN A CRISIS

If you play your cards right, when or if you are involved in a crisis you will be well-prepared and the media will be the least of your worries. They may even offer some source of solution to your problem. However, to reach this objective, you will need to be sure that you not only contact the media when you want a favor, but that you establish a good working relationship with them in general. You want to establish respect on both sides with the media.

For any organization, and fraternities specifically, it's important to identify problems before they become full-blown crises, and to prepare for them properly. This is where your risk management plan comes into a great deal of play. Make sure you know your risk management plan and follow it.

Tips

1. Plan ahead. Have a basic press packet available at all times. Make sure you have a plan for handling the media, your membership, and others in a time of crisis. The time to learn this plan is before a problem comes into play.
2. Study other organizations. Ask other fraternities about their plan or talk with corporations regarding the topic. See how you can incorporate ideas from other groups.
3. Designate a spokesman. This may be the chapter president or your chapter advisor. Be sure that all Brothers know who is to speak to the media.
4. Identify your key publics. Think about who you want to reach regarding particular problems and the best way to reach them.
5. Prepare your spokesman. Give him as much information as possible. If there is more than one, be sure that all have the same information so that one does not contradict the other.
6. Conduct a thorough investigation. Perhaps outside observers, national officers, National Headquarters can assist with this. Be prepared to answer: What happened? Who was involved? When did it occur? Where did it occur? How did it happen? And, how much damage was done?
7. Find community allies. Look for people who will support you and lend you credibility.
8. Tell the truth, and deal with facts only. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so-then find out the answer and relay it back to the person who asked. Avoid having to say "no comment."
9. Have a regular dialogue with the media. If a situation is continuing over a long period of time, steadily provide updates if possible.
10. Log inquiries. Keep a record of both the questions asked and the answers given. This way you have appropriate back-up if there is an erroneous reportage.
11. Consult your advisors and National Headquarters immediately. No question will appear irrelevant if you are seeking advice.
12. Never speak defensively.



This guide was written with the assistance of several resources including: The College Fraternity Editors Public Relations Manual: *There Are No Limits*; *News Media Handbook for Public Service Organizations*, published and distributed by News Media Handbook in Indianapolis; and articles from the Association of Junior Leagues International.