

Tips on Getting Media Coverage

- 1. Real News Gets the Best Coverage.** The media prefers real news over fluff. When you are looking for coverage opportunities, try to focus on events or information that the media's viewers or readers will want to know about. In addition to straight news coverage, you can also seek feature stories. Features require a strong angle, but they are not as time-sensitive as hard news. For some creative angles, see NRC's "20 Press Release Ideas to Promote Recycling" in the appendices.
- 2. Localize. Localize. Localize.** Most people care more about what is happening with recycling in their community than on the national front. Try to replace national statistics with local numbers and national spokespersons with yourself or other local authorities.
- 3. Follow Up.** Most publicity efforts lie on editors' desks unread because nobody bothered to call and "sell" the story. Reporters are inundated with news releases, press events and requests for coverage. This is a good case for the "squeaky wheel gets the oil" theory. Call and ask if they received your release, if you can supply any additional information and if they plan to use your story.
- 4. Get Up Close and Personal.** When time permits, visit with the reporter or editor who covers recycling before you send any releases. You may try to arrange a breakfast or lunch appointment to discuss recycling and your organization. Paying for the journalist's meal is considered inappropriate so plan to go dutch when it comes time to pay.
- 5. Be Available Any Day, Any Time.** Reporters are almost always on deadlines and often call shortly before a story is due. Be sure that any phone number(s) you supply on your release rings where you can be reached at all times. In most cases, the reporter will try only once and if he or she cannot reach you, your story will wind up in the recycle bin.
- 6. Go for Slow News Days.** Predicting slow news days can be difficult since one never knows when breaking news will occur. Observe your local media and determine when there is less news and target those days. In many markets, Tuesdays or Wednesdays are good days to attempt to gain coverage.
- 7. Cut It Close on Advisories.** It does not usually pay to give media lengthy advance notice of news events. A two- to three- day notice is usually adequate. Be sure to follow up the morning of your event with a phone call to remind the targeted journalist and to determine attendance.
- 8. Clear All Quotes.** If someone is being quoted in your release other than yourself, be sure to clear all quotes.
- 9. Seek Quotes from Recognizable Authorities.** It is a general rule that the better known a quoted source, the more likely the quote is to appear in the media. Ask for quotes or quote approvals from governors, mayors, council representatives

and others who are frequently in the media.

10. Create Your Own Media List. Identify all newspapers, TV stations with news departments and news/talk radio stations within your market. Call and ask for the name of the journalist that reports on matters of the environment and recycling. Secure all contact information, including fax and e-mail.

11. Distribute Through State Circuit Wire Services. If you want to disperse a press release or media advisory to all major media outlets in your state, there are wire services like U.S. Newswire that can handle it for you (www.usnewswire.com or 800-544-8995). State circuit distribution typically costs \$80-\$125 for up to 400 words.

12. Call for Help. We are here to help you with media coverage. If you have any questions or we can assist you with an event or press situation, please contact Anjia Nicolaidis anjian@nrcrecycle.org or Perrin Lieberman plieberman@nrc-recycle.org at:

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