

Using PR in Your Marketing Plan Workshop Handouts

Excerpt from National Arts Marketing Program Workshop

I. Guidelines for Using Public Relations/Media Relations Tools

Press Releases

Fact Sheets, FYIs, Program Schedules

Media Alerts and Advisories

Biographies

Photo Captions

II. Press Release Writing—Print & Electronic

III. Public Relations/Communications Resources

IV. PR Shortcuts for the Busy Professional

Guidelines for Using Media Relations Tools

Prepare releases with reporters' deadlines plus your timetable in mind. Choose your distribution method depending on the urgency of the announcement. Maintain up-to-date files of standard, often-used materials--biographies, histories, schedules, photos—to make the process of writing, assembling and distributing press materials most efficient.

Send press materials only if you have news to convey or announcements to make. Use fact sheets, FYIs and press advisories to communicate brief pieces of information or to get information out quickly. Always include contact information with only the most direct numbers and e-mail addresses.

1. **Fact Sheets, FYIs, Performance/Exhibition Schedules:** These are abbreviated ways to get information out. They should always include all basic information in an easy-to-read format. They also give you the opportunity to briefly describe the overall venue—audience capacity, number of programs held there, hours, upcoming works, etc.
2. **Biographies:** Two kinds can be used, one for management and one for the artists. You have more leeway in writing in terms of style and language when writing bios for artists, but both should include pertinent career histories, awards received, industry activities and board involvement, and can include personal information re. family, hometown and current home.
3. **Press Releases:** Press releases are written for a variety of reasons—institutional announcements, programming announcements, anniversaries, appointments, capital projects, funding news, board activity, etc. All should include pertinent information in a clear manner and conclude with an overall paragraph that frames the institution (see Press Release Writing below). Releases having to do with programming should frame the particular program in context and include information on the whole season, for example, in a concluding sentence or two.
4. **Media Alerts and Advisories:** These short pieces let the media know something very specific is happening and their “coverage is invited.” Keep them short and easy to see and read. Include all necessary information as to where they have to be and what resources will be available to them (key people for interviews, images or other graphics) and what they will be seeing (rehearsal, hard-hat tour, gallery talk with the artists). The amount of notice you will provide to the media depends on when you can make this news available to them.

5. **Personnel Announcements:** Announcements of appointments should always include information on whether this is a new position or a replacement. The media will appreciate reading who the person is replacing and where that person is headed, if possible to say. They can include quotes from the appointee's boss or board chair, which provides the opportunity to make a statement about the organization and its current/future state in the quote.
6. **Institutional Fact Sheets:** These are updated a couple of times a year and distributed to key trade and consumer press members, board members, key funders. It's a handy tool that can remain close at hand and gives you an opportunity to promote your organization from all aspects—programming, promotion, community outreach, technology, bricks and mortar, funding sources.

For more information, contact Helene Blieberg Associates LLC at helene@heleneblieberg.com.