

## What The Media Want

Every radio or television program, every newspaper, every issue of a magazine needs dynamic stories or information. They have to fill space and make sure their readers or audience are affected by the stories they read, see or hear about. The opportunities for getting your story published or broadcast are out there. However, what you think may be news to you and about your sport may not necessarily be of interest to the public. The key is to find out what the media needs and craft your story to satisfy their needs and interests.

- *Generating media attention can be time consuming*
- *Results are not guaranteed*
- *Because you don't pay for coverage it is out of your control*
- *Media will print and broadcast their impression not necessarily the one you want*
- *You must develop and commit to a plan*

## Essential Components

1. A Good Product or Service - Your product must work and be credible. It should be unique or different; meet a specific need and be proven with many who will attest that it will do what you say it will. Almost anything can be newsworthy if it is positioned appropriately. Where most efforts fail is in focusing too much on the technical facts instead of the practical or interesting applications to the readers' lives.
2. An Interesting Story to Tell - All news organizations are basically storytellers. They're looking for stories to tell readers, viewers or listeners. If you can identify or create a compelling story that might interest the public, it will be easier to interest media outlets.
3. Appeal to a Specific Media Outlet - Ensure that your story is of interest to the media outlet that you are pursuing. Know what interests different types of media. Print publications focus on facts and figures. Radio and television don't lend themselves to this kind of detailed information but sound bites, excitement, and entertainment. The written word stays with you longer but think about whether or not your story can be conveyed in a visual form as an alternative.

## Criteria for a Good Story

- Focus: Does the story have one main focal point, hook or angle?
- Timely: Is it relevant to a current social issue? Does it relate to a special event?
- Novelty: Is there something unique or different about your sport? What stands out in your sport that sets it aside? Have you found a new way to do something?
- Consequence/Impact: Is there a huge impact on a particular segment of the public? Will it change how the individuals participate or live their lives?

- **Human Interest:** Is there a story behind your program or event? Has a participant realized high-impact exceptional results because of your programs? Has a participant made great personal sacrifices? Is the story idea of particular interest to the audience of a specific publication and specific group of people or does it have broader appeal to all media?
- **Prominence:** Do you have you a high-profile participant? Do you have someone in your sport achieving an award or reaching a leadership position? Can you tie your programs or service to a celebrity event?
- **Proximity:** Does your story have a local angle? Is there a geographical region more suited to your solution? Is it a national story or can it relate to a story of national prominence?
- **Conflict:** Is your story contentious in a way that would breed debate or opinion?

### What Can You Do For The Media?

Remember that reporters need information. Make sure that your story is really news, not just an advertisement in disguise. Publicity is most likely to happen when you stop thinking about how the media can help you, and concentrate instead on what you can do for the media. Spend some of your time understanding the media. Find out what areas are the most challenging – the hot issues, trends and interests that are important to them. Then think about what your story does to resolve their issues.

Develop good relationships with your media contacts. Be accessible to them and be prepared to provide any additional information they may ask for.

The Opportunities:

**Be featured in:**

- Local newspapers
- National newspapers
- Specialized newsletters
- Professional and trade papers
- Local and national magazines
- A regular column on your area of specialty

**Be interviewed on:**

- Television news or talk shows
- Radio news or talk shows
- Cable television shows
- Public-access television programs

**Be featured as:**

- Guest presenter at a special ceremony
- Sponsor for civic activities
- Contributor to a charitable event
- Recipient of a professional or civic award

Publication of the PSO Unit

Contacts: Janet McMahon    mcmahon@sport.mb.ca    Fred Schneider    schneider@sport.mb.ca  
                  Brenda Wiwcharyk    wiwchar@sport.mb.ca    Kristin Albo    albo@sport.mb.ca

For further information, please contact a member of the PSO Unit.