

# MENTORING

# Tactics

This Issue

**How to Get Noticed:  
Tips for Working with the Media**

MENTORING  
changing a life forever



# HOW TO GET NOTICED: TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Mentoring Tactic is to help mentoring programs use the media to promote their activities, gain community attention, and recruit volunteers. The media can be a valuable ally to mentoring programs, especially in publicizing fundraising or community awareness events or recruiting new mentors. Not only can media outlets post announcements, but they can also write feature articles on mentoring, attend events to publicize a program, and help in advocacy issues when programs are faced by an external threat or challenge. By learning to work effectively with members of the media, programs can position themselves to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise.

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# I: DEFINITIONS

Below are some basic definitions of media types and tools which can be useful to mentoring programs. While many of these tools are common, programs may not be familiar with their exact definitions or how to best use them.

**Press Release:** A press release is a one- to two-page document which tells a story about your program, the issues the program faces, or an event that has taken place.

**Media Alert:** A media alert is a one-page synopsis of an event that is about to take place.

**Media Kit:** A media kit is a group of publications which educates the media about your program.

**Pitch Letter:** A pitch letter accompanies a media kit and explains why your program is important to the community, as well as what type of coverage you are seeking or what type of information you can offer to the press.

## TYPES OF MEDIA OUTLETS:

**Radio:** Radio stations can be good outlets for news. For more targeted announcements, find the stations that cater to the audience you want, such as teens, young professionals, or retired individuals. Each station should be able to provide you with their listener demographics. Do not forget about Public Radio or stations on college campuses.

**Television:** As with radio, know the audience of each station covering your region. If you are in a small market (such as a rural area or small town), there may not be a television station in the immediate vicinity, so you may have to go to larger towns around you to find a station that serves your community. Many college campuses also have television stations, and local access cable stations offer another opportunity to reach your target audience.

**Newspapers:** Many areas have only one major newspaper, but small local weekly papers can be an effective way to gain attention. Sometimes a story that does not attract the interest of a major paper can be very compelling to a small one, and getting coverage in the local weeklies can lead to coverage on a larger scale.

**Web sites:** More and more people are getting their news from the Web, and the nature of Internet news sources allows news professionals to cover more stories than possible with print, radio, or television. When pitching to an Internet news site, it is best to find those affiliated with your major media outlets, such as the site associated with your local television network affiliate. More independent Web sites can be good venues as well, but be careful to approach only sites that are reliable and legitimate: associating your program with an inappropriate Internet site can have negative consequences.

**Public Service Announcements (PSAs):** PSAs are radio or television announcements which serve the public interest or inform the public about community issues. PSAs typically take the form of scripts that are read by on-air radio personalities or videos which are aired on television. Most radio and television stations have a certain amount of air time allocated to PSAs, providing your program with opportunities for free publicity. Sometimes you will have to record your own script or produce your own television PSA; at other times, the station may provide nonprofits with resources.

## OTHER MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

**Call-in shows:** Another way to get free media attention is to use radio call-in shows. Many radio hosts will focus a show or two on a certain issue and accept calls from the listening audience. Find out what topics are being covered each month and call in if any relate to your program. For example, if a local radio station is hosting a show on volunteering in America, you could get free publicity by contributing information about who is volunteering for your program or by discussing recent trends that you have seen.

**Being a Source:** Providing information to the media is an effective method of forming a relationship. See Section V: Creating a Relationship with the Media for more information on how to become a media source.

## II. GETTING STARTED

### A. Why Media Coverage is Important

Everyone has heard the saying, “There’s no such thing as bad publicity.” While this may be true for Hollywood stars, it is certainly not true for non-profit or public organizations. Since so much of what we see in the news is negative, why would a well-meaning mentoring program ever seek media attention?

Avoiding bad press is a great idea for programs, but avoiding the press altogether is not. Positive media attention can do as much for your program as any service you offer. Media coverage can generate donations, recruit mentors, educate the community about the issue your program exists to address, and provide you with a vehicle to demonstrate your success. All of this can lead to additional funding, more resources, and program sustainability.

Some of the ways in which media attention has helped programs include

- Making the public aware of the great need for mentors in a community;
- Helping with advocacy issues, such as educating the public about potentially harmful legislation or budget cuts;
- Highlighting a special event;
- Helping to promote a fundraising effort; and
- Giving positive feedback to your supporters or volunteers.

### B. What Makes a Good Story

Part of gaining the attention of the media is understanding what they are looking for. Of course, anything controversial will grab their attention, but most of the time what programs are promoting does not fall into that category. While you cannot always predict what will appeal to a journalist, keep the following tips in mind to increase your chances of drawing attention.

- News professionals love a “people” angle. Use anecdotes, heartwarming stories, and people-focused information when sending out media alerts and press releases. For example, if you are trying to promote an event, do not just send the date, time, and location details. Include a case study of one of your program participants who has – or will – benefit from the event. Just be sure to maintain confidentiality by changing the names and leaving out any identifying information.
- Remember that, on any given day, you will be competing with disasters, crime, and national and state news. Resist the

temptation to send out releases on occurrences that are not really newsworthy. If you do, you may become known in the newsroom as “the program that cried wolf” – and even your most newsworthy event may go unnoticed.

- Assist editors and reporters in shaping “their” story. By reading your material, they should have a reasonable idea of what your program does and why their readers would be interested. Do not assume that because you think your news is compelling that they will, too. Tell them clearly and succinctly what it is that you want them to cover.
- Try to frame your material so that it aligns with current events. For example, if the news media is focusing on stories about poverty and hunger in the United States, it might be appropriate to send information about how your program addresses these issues. While you may not get immediate feedback or coverage, the reporters you contact may file your information for later use on stories about hunger in the community.
- If you are hosting an event, invite not only the media but also local politicians and other leaders. If there is a celebrity in your area, consider extending an invitation to him or her as well, if appropriate. Having star power definitely increases your ability to attract the media!
- There are certain elements of newsworthy stories:
  - ~ Anniversaries — The story can be associated with a local, national, or historic event.
  - ~ New and different — Make sure you tell reporters why your story is new or different.
  - ~ Controversy — Is there some sort of tension surrounding the story?
  - ~ Injustice — Does your story focus on basic inequalities or unfairness?
  - ~ Meaningful — Is your story meaningful to local residents?
  - ~ Milestones — Your story may include your 100th child served or 500th mentor recruited.
  - ~ Seasonal — Can you link your story to a seasonal topic or holiday?
  - ~ Timely and relevant — Does your story relate to a timely or relevant issue?

### C. Reaching the Media

Depending on the size of your community, you may have access to several media outlets. Your first step in creating a media plan is to find out what your particular area offers in terms of print, radio, and television media.

- One quick, easy way to gather information on media outlets is through the phone book. The yellow pages contain listings under Newspapers, Radio Stations, and Television Stations.

- Using your compiled list of media outlets, decide which stations are most appropriate for your message. A radio station geared towards teens might be a great place to advertise free services, but it would not be as useful for recruiting adult mentors. You can use the Internet to find out more about each station or paper, or simply call and ask a few questions:

- Who is your primary audience?
- (For radio and television) What type of programming do you air?
- (For newspapers) What is your circulation?
- What types of stories do you cover? Do you cover community events?

- It is also a good idea to become familiar with the key people at the newspaper or station. The best people to know are the

- news desk editor,
- news planning editor, and
- assignment editor/desk for the

- ❖ Metro section,
- ❖ Youth beat,
- ❖ Health reporter, and
- ❖ Special columnists who deal with youth or community issues.

Get names, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses, and ask which method of contact they prefer.

- Time your contact properly. The best time to call reporters is between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. On Mondays, reporters are concentrating on any news that happened over the weekend, and on Fridays they are often not interested in taking on more stories. The best days to call, therefore, are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays.

- Do not assume that one contact will be enough. Plan on calling, faxing, or e-mailing.

Once you have made an initial contact, follow up with the reporter on any information you have promised and help him or her cover your event as much as possible. Do not feel that you are being pushy by reminding a reporter about your story: media professionals are generally managing multiple projects, so they may not remember every story that they are pitched.



# III. MAKING THE PITCH: GETTING ATTENTION FOR YOUR PROGRAM

## A. Making the Most of Current Events

Linking your story or program to current events is one way to be newsworthy. When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) releases a study that says teen violence is increasing, for example, a violence prevention program should be ready to make contact with the media to talk about strategies and issues. To make sure you are ready to act on current events, you should create a standard media kit for your program. A media kit consists of the following items:

- A pitch letter
- A press release
- A media alert, if it is timely
- Statistics on the issues your program addresses
- A fact sheet about the program, including your mission and goals
- A brief history of the organization, program, or issue
- Background information on key staff
- Case studies or anecdotal information about your program, the population you serve, and mentoring in general

In addition, you may consider adding photos, but keep confidentiality in mind and make sure you have parent/guardian permission to use photos of children in this way.

Some of the items in your media kit will change regularly. Media alerts, for example, are created and sent to the press before an event or announcement. You would not include a media alert in your media kit once the event has passed. (For more information on the individual tools listed in the media kit, see Section IV: Tools.) While press releases may stay in your media kit for a while after you create them, it is best not to send out releases that are more than six months old.

When something which can be tied to your program happens in your community or in the national or state news, create either a media alert (for events and announcements) or a press release (for issues or past events) specific to the occurrence and send it out with a complete media kit. In order to frame a current event so that it ties with your program,

- Look at the issue and find a way to translate it to your program. For example, if there is a story in your local paper about a teenage boy who committed a gang-related crime, shift the focus of the problem from that boy to the envi-

ronmental factors that contributed to his gang involvement. Likewise, if the current event is a broader issue (such as the CDC report mentioned above), shift the focus from the national crime problem to your local area crime data.

- Write your press release in a way that shifts the blame for the problem from the individual to the larger society. Focus on the group or leader who can improve the environment in which children are growing up.
- Present a solution to the problem, such as gang diversion programs, increased funding for mentoring, or a community outreach effort.

Your press release should be compelling and include a strong personal element, using stories and statistics to make your point. **Make sure that any story you distribute is accurate.** The worst thing you could do in relating to the press is to send a story that is incorrect. If they use your story, they will look bad and will no longer trust you as a source. In addition, the public who reads the story will lose trust in your agency if you falsely report statistics or events.

## B. How to Make an Important Announcement

If your program or agency has an important announcement to make, consider holding a press conference. Press conferences help ensure maximum coverage of your announcement by having all media members present at one time. Before planning a press conference, make sure that your announcement is truly newsworthy. As with incorrect statistics, bringing the press together for a

### A MEDIA KIT CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- A pitch letter
- A press release
- A media alert, if it is timely
- Statistics on the issues your program addresses
- A fact sheet about the program, including your mission and goals
- A brief history of the organization, program, or issue
- Background information on key staff
- Case studies or anecdotal information about your program, the population you serve, and mentoring in general

less-than-compelling press conference will make getting publicity very difficult in the future. In addition, planning a press conference takes significant effort, so be sure it will be worth your time. Some announcements are better delivered through a press release or media alert than an actual conference.

The best time to hold a press conference is 10:30 a.m. This gives reporters an opportunity to do background research on your agency (it helps if you have done this for them through your media kit), and it gives them time to get to the location of the conference. You can announce a press conference with a media alert (see Section IV: Tools), or you can call members of the press to invite them. Follow this list of steps to get maximum coverage for your conference:

- Fax a media alert to the News Planning Editor three to four days ahead of the conference.
- Call to ensure that the fax was received.
- On the day before the event, call again to remind the editor of the conference and to pitch the event once more.
- On the morning of the conference, call the Assignment Editor to encourage them to cover your event.
- Have media kits available at the conference. If a newspaper, radio station, or television station does not send someone to the event, send them a media kit anyway; they may use the information in a later story.
- When delivering your announcement, tell reporters about your program and suggest story ideas they could pursue.

For the press conference, make sure that anyone who speaks is well-versed in your program, on the issues your program addresses, and on the significance of your announcement. For example, if you are announcing the start of a new program, make sure that you and any other speakers (such as youth, parents, or teachers) know why the program is important and whom it will serve.

### **C. Getting Publicity Before an Event**

If you are holding an event, such as a health fair or recruitment drive, let the media know well in advance. Create a media alert and send it out with your media kit about a month before the event. This will provide reporters with basic information about your program and the event. Two weeks prior to the event, fax the media alert again, this time on its own. Then proceed by following the steps listed above for advertising a press conference. Make a special note of informing the media if anyone of interest (including politicians or local celebrities) will be attending.

### **D. Working with the Media During an Event**

When media representatives arrive at your event, make sure you introduce yourself and thank them for coming; remember that reporters have many demands on their time and did not have to cover your event.

It is also a good idea to have a single point person to talk to the media. That person should be knowledgeable about the event, the program, and the mission of the program. He or she should be articulate and should be able to answer questions about the importance of the event to the community. The spokesperson should be agency staff or a Board member, but if you have a youth from your program who can share applicable information, have them join the spokesperson for an even stronger impact.

Have media kits available at the event in case the one you previously sent has been misplaced. This also helps because the editor to whom you sent the initial media kit will probably not be the reporter who attends the event (and now two individuals at that media outlet have your media kit).

If a reporter asks you a question that you cannot answer, offer to find the information he or she needs — then do it fast! Remember that reporters work on deadlines, and they need to run their stories that evening or the next morning (which still carries a deadline of the previous night). Follow through is crucial: missing one important piece of information can be the difference between running your story or leaving it on the cutting room floor.

### **E. Getting Publicity After an Event**

Once your event has taken place, follow up with the media by sending a press release. A press release is longer and more detailed than a media alert, and it is always sent after (rather than before) an event. See Section IV: Tools for more information on how to write a press release.

If a media outlet sent a reporter to your event, send a thank you note along with follow-up details on the event. This should include your press release and any information you have promised the reporter or other items that are relevant to the program and the event.

It is also a good strategy to periodically send out information to reporters to remind them about your program. Any time there is something newsworthy to report, make sure you send the information to the appropriate editors and any reporters with whom you have had contact. Sometimes a reporter can be a champion for your program or issue based on past coverage of your events.

## IV. TOOLS

### A. How to Write a Media Alert

A media alert is sent out to announce special events, such as a press conference or a community activity. It is distributed before the event and is brief and informative. The key details contained in a media alert are

- **What** — What is the event or occasion?
- **Who** — Who is concerned, involved, or effected? Who will be present?
- **Where** — Where will the event take place?
- **When** — When (day and time) will the event take place?
- **Why** — Why has the event been planned? What is the purpose of the event?

- **Visuals** — What type of photos or tape will the reporter be able to obtain?
- **Audio** — What kind of interviews or audio content will be available?
- **Contact** — Who is the contact person for questions or to get more information?

A media alert is not written in narrative form: simple bullets that provide the information above are enough. In addition to sending out media alerts to get coverage for your event, you can also use them to publicize your event through the calendar sections of newspapers or through radio or television stations.

## MEDIA ALERT SAMPLE

### TEENS, MENTORS, AND BUSINESS JOIN FORCES TO TACKLE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

#### The XYZ Program Forms a Team for Service Learning

**What:** Service Learning — A huge volunteer event that pulls together thousands of people to donate time to charitable causes. The XYZ Mentoring Program will be participating in the launch of the 2001 campaign. XYZ will be bringing 100 mentors and mentees together to participate in a beach clean-up effort to kick off the campaign which mobilizes hundreds of people to volunteer in their communities.

**Who:** XYZ Mentoring Program

**When:** September 8th, 2001, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Where:** Wetlands adjacent to Dog Beach

**Why:** To provide youth in mentoring programs with an opportunity to participate in community events, to give back to their community, and to teach social responsibility

**Visuals:** Teens and youth from all over the Area working together with their mentors to give back to the community  
Local businesses working with youth and contributing time and supplies to an environmental effort

**Audio:** Interviews

**For more information, contact:**

John Doe  
XYZ Mentoring Program  
1212 Main Street, Anytown, USA  
800-55-1212 (phone)      800-444-1212 (fax)  
jdoe@email.com  
[www.xyz.org](http://www.xyz.org)

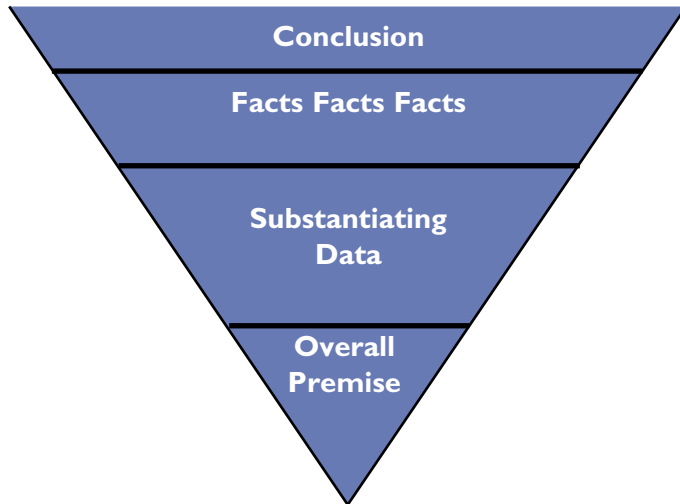


## B. How to Write a Press Release

Press releases are sent out after an event, or they are used to report something that has happened in your program (when you are not holding an event or a press conference). Press releases are written in the form of a news article so that reporters can take information from the release to easily create a base for the story they will write.

When writing a press release, it is important to start off with a compelling fact or story, something that will immediately attract attention. This first sentence or idea is called the story's "lead." A good lead draws the editor or reporter into your press release, making it more likely that he or she will follow up on the idea. The lead should contain the most important element of your press release. For example, if the release is about the report from the CDC, mentioned in the earlier example, the lead might be "The CDC released new data this week indicating that teen violence is on the rise."

Using the lead as the starting point, write your press release as an "inverted pyramid," with the most important information at the top and the least important information at the bottom. The reason for using this format is that you have a limited amount of time to grab the reporter's attention, so you need to make the most of it. An inverted pyramid structure would look something like this:



Keep the press release as short and concise as possible so that your key messages do not get lost. Also keep in mind the "Four C's of Good Communication:"

- **Clarity** — Be precise and clear. Keep the ideas focused and related to the message you are sending.
- **Control** — Do not be caught off guard by the media. Know your program and the issue at hand, and be prepared to answer tough questions. Keeping to your main message and not being sidetracked by peripheral questions can help you avoid 'sticky' issues.

- **Consistency** — Be consistent and correct. Do not mislead the media, and do not make statements you cannot back up with facts. Deliver the same message to all media people. For example, if you give an interview to several publications in your area, make sure your message is the same to each.
- **Confidence** — Know your information and be confident that you have a story to tell. If you doubt this, you will not be a believable source.

Generally speaking, flowery, verbose language does not belong in a press release. The information should be brief and to the point so that editors and reporters can easily take the information they need from the text. The press release should appear on your program's letterhead.

If possible, get quotes from program participants and other key stakeholders. Quotes bring a press release to life while giving reporters an idea of whom they might talk to for more information. If you cannot get quotes from program participants, use quotes from yourself, such as "Dana Goodrow, Program Director, said, "The violence situation in San Diego is getting out of hand. We really need to address this growing problem." Do not make up quotes from other people, but feel free to approach your Executive Director or a Board member and ask them to give you a quote.

## V. CREATING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA

### A. General Guidelines

The most important guidelines for working with the media are to

- Know your facts. Do not make false claims or exaggerate stories.
- Remember that reporters are on a deadline and try to help them meet that deadline.
- Make sure your story is newsworthy and compelling to the audience of the outlet you are trying to reach.
- Stay in touch with editors or reporters who have helped you or with whom you have come into contact before. They can be strong allies when you have news to report.
- Make sure you understand the issue at hand and have a good working knowledge of your agency and the program.
- Plan the timing of your events and news releases so that editors and reporters can respond quickly.

# PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE I

## PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE I

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Program Director Name  
Program Director Phone Number**

### **XYZ COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION GEARS UP FOR THE “National Mentoring Month” CAMPAIGN**

#### ***National, State, and Local Programs Promote Mentoring***

**Anytown, CA (Date, 2006)** – As part of a statewide campaign, XYZ community-based organization will join in supporting the “National Mentoring Month” campaign which focuses on promoting mentoring in our communities. Although mentoring is a growing movement, there are many children on waiting lists around the country.

The “National Mentoring Month” campaign aims to mobilize Californians to get involved with mentoring programs, encourage male involvement in volunteerism, and promote individual programs throughout the region. XYZ, a mentoring program in Anytown, will be involved in a variety of activities aimed at promoting mentoring and recognizing valuable volunteers.

“According to recent statistics, there were <XX> number of youth waiting to be matched with mentors in Anytown,” said <Program Director, full name and title>. “XYZ realizes that adults in this community must take the time to get involved with youth programs. That is why we are committed to raising awareness among community members about mentoring and youth issues,” said XYZ <Program Director last name>.

The “National Mentoring Month” campaign provides local, state, and national mentoring programs with resources to promote their services and advertise their volunteer needs. The campaign is designed to increase community awareness about mentoring and to give mentoring programs a chance to thank their volunteers.

“It is imperative that we continue our efforts to promote mentoring in order to ensure that there are enough mentors to meet the needs of our youth,” said <Program Director last name>.

<Insert your agency information here. Include details on your organization’s programs and identify the various age groups you target.>

For more information about the “National Mentoring Month” campaign and to find out how to get involved with community-based organizations working to promote mentoring in your area, please call 800-555-1212.

# # #

# PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE II

## PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE II

### **Inner-City Youth Need More Male Role Models**

For Immediate Release —The XYZ Program and the Male Achievement Network (MAN) joined forces on June 14th, 2001, to highlight the need for men to get involved in their communities. In a collaborative meeting called “Mobilizing the Male Community,” XYZ and MAN brought together a number of representatives from community-based organizations, government, and businesses to discuss ways to encourage men to volunteer with youth.

Approximately 40 people attended the meeting which used an adaptation of the Open Space group facilitation model. The goal of the meeting was to create an action list for each sector of the population so that the entire community could be involved in this effort. Businesses that had creative volunteer incentive programs were invited to share their ideas with businesses which had no such programs. By encouraging other businesses to provide incentives for volunteering, the meeting sponsors hope to increase volunteerism among all Anytowners, especially men.

“Even though a lot of men volunteer their time, in Anytown and nationwide, few of them volunteer for programs that serve youth,” said John Doe, Director of XYZ. “Men more typically volunteer for emergency and rescue services, Boards of Directors, and substance abuse programs. We need to redirect more men to youth programs where they can serve as role models.”

The meeting was held at the Teen Center, located in Anytown. Participants formed several small breakout groups to discuss topics such as mentoring, fatherhood, faith-based services, the incarcerated population, and other areas that revolve around youth and volunteerism. They came up with deliverables that included action steps that needed to be taken and questions that warranted further exploration. XYZ and MAN are planning a follow-up meeting to be held on September 8th at a location to be announced.

The XYZ Program is a one-to-one mentoring program for teens. XYZ matches teens with adult mentors to build self esteem, teach positive decision-making skills, improve academic performance, and reduce delinquency. For more information on XYZ, go to [www.xyz.org](http://www.xyz.org) or call John Doe at 800-555-1212.

# # #

- Understand that media coverage can sometimes go awry. Be prepared, stay focused on your message, and try not to let the story be sidetracked by peripheral issues.
- Be respectful of media professionals and thank them for their time.

## B. Becoming a Source

Your efforts to get coverage for your program will often fall on deaf ears. Reporters are covering everything from daily news to national, state, and local events, and there is a great deal of competition for attention. Do not become frustrated simply because you have not received coverage for your program in the past: all of the information you have distributed has, in fact, gotten some measure of attention from media outlets, and it may just come to fruition. By educating the media about your program, you have introduced yourself and let them know that they can come to you when they have a question about your area of focus. The next time a story breaks that deals with your area of expertise, you might receive a call from reporters looking for a local angle. Make yourself a valuable source to the media by being armed with statistics and information about your program area and, if possible, by providing reporters with access to program participants. Once a reporter has come to you for information and has been satisfied, there is a strong likelihood that he or she will call you again. In addition, you can cultivate a relationship with that reporter. When you have an event or something to report, you can contact that person, and they will know who you are. Setting yourself up as a source for the media is one of the best ways to get attention in the future.

In order to be considered a good source, you should

- Have data and information at your fingertips so you can respond to inquiries quickly. Remember that the reporter is probably on deadline: the more helpful you can be, the better.
- Make sure your information is accurate. The worst thing a program can do is provide information that is incorrect. Keep up-to-date on issues related to your field and have some good sources for information (such as favorite Web sites or listservs) ready if you need to research something.
- Be able to provide quotes about the issue and tailor those quotes to the reporter's audience and interests. Try to provide new information through your quotes rather than reiterating information that the reporter has already covered.

- Be available. If a reporter tries to reach you and you are in the field or out of the office, you could lose a valuable opportunity to get good coverage for your program.
- Anticipate the media's needs. If you know of a report that has been released or an event that has occurred, contact the media first with more information and potential story ideas.

## C. Step By Step

Creating a media campaign might seem a bit overwhelming, but there are things you can do right now that will start you in the right direction. Here are five simple things you can do today to work on your agency's media relations campaign:

1. Look at your organizational calendar for the next three months and check to see if there are any events that merit a media alert.
2. Start your media kit with the basics—a document that lists your mission, goals, objectives, and other information about your organization. This shouldn't take long to create, as these elements are already in place. Include population served, areas of service, and contact information. You can call this your XYZ Program Fact Sheet, and keep it to one page.
3. Take five minutes each day this week to read your weekly newspaper and see if you can identify the names of the journalists who write stories pertaining to social issues or your specific cause.
4. Check out The National Mentoring Partnership for statistics related to mentoring, and save these statistics in a file you can easily access should a representative from the media contact you.
5. Sign up for a list-serv that provides information on mentoring or youth issues. Getting news alerts can keep you in the loop on mentoring issues, and provide you with ideas on how to find a local angle.

Taking your campaign step-by-step can make the difference between getting started and putting off your entrance into the media relations world.

## VI. SUMMARY

Cultivating a positive relationship with the media can bring many benefits to your program and your community. From recruitment to funding, the media can be a powerful ally. By helping them to help you and providing them with a benefit for doing so, you can be on your way to good media relations.



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# MENTORING *Tactics*

Mentoring is an effective and increasingly popular approach for creating positive change in young people's lives. Early results from mentoring programs are promising, suggesting that positive, consistent attention from an adult, even a non-relative, can create change.

The Mentoring Technical Assistance Project provides free technical assistance and training to new and existing community and school-based programs that work with youth. The project also provides free Mentoring Plus workshops and regional trainings. Please contact CARS for more information.

To receive free mentoring consultation services please complete the online application at: [www.carsmentoring.org/TA/index.php](http://www.carsmentoring.org/TA/index.php) and fax to CARS at 916.983.5738. Contact Erika Urbani, [eurbani@cars-rp.org](mailto:eurbani@cars-rp.org) for further details at 916.983.9506.

## LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

We welcome readers' comments on topics presented.

**Call us at 916.983.9506**

**Fax us at 916.983.5738**

**Or send an email to [kheard@cars-rp.org](mailto:kheard@cars-rp.org)**

Additional copies of this publication are available upon request or online at: [www.carsmentoring.org](http://www.carsmentoring.org)

Mentoring Tactics is published periodically by CARS under its Mentoring Project contract with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. The purpose of this publication is to help agencies, coalitions, communities and programs in the mentoring field stay abreast of best practices emerging from current research and to provide practical tools and resources for implementing proven strategies.

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