



Audience Development Specialists
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Press releases the audience development way

By Shoshana Fanizza, Audience Development Specialists (USA) – www.buildmyaudience.com
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I believe I have written about this topic before, but I wanted to reiterate the reasons behind sending out your releases the audience development way. This means that you are building relationships with the members of the press instead of treating your release as a mass marketing effort. Here is a list of tips:

- Send out one at a time with a message. It does take more time, but this will increase the likelihood that your release will be seen and read.
- If you can't send out one at a time, at least blind copy your list. I happened to be on a press list once due to being an Examiner writer for my area. I was being sent a one-size fits all release with the entire list showing. How do you think the receivers feel receiving this format? Well, they may just think that someone else might cover it so why bother. They might also ruffle at seeing their competition listed.
- Input their names into your email contact base. It was shocking to see "no name listed" beside some of the emails.
- Offer exclusive stories for special events. This means you will need to build relationships first, but I ended up getting some fantastic television coverage doing a few exclusives with a particular news outlet. It fit their news format best, and the right audiences watch their news program, so it made a lot of sense.
- Make sure a teaser and basic information is in the body of the email. They may not have time to click on the attachment, which means it can get "shuffled" in their inbox

and forgotten about. Having the important details up front to get their attention right away is the way to go.

- Send the releases in a timely manner. Most outlets appreciate 3-4 weeks before as the sweet spot. Enough time ahead, but not too much ahead for them to forget about it.
- Follow up 2 weeks before the event with a fresh update. This is also a good way to build the relationship with them.
- Take the time to update your lists regularly and build relationships with the new people. Press jobs seem to rotate consistently. Emailing the new people as an introduction is always a good idea.
- Cater the release to the media outlet. One-size does not fit all, and this step will increase the likelihood of getting covered.
- Go out to coffee with the local editors. This really worked for me.
- Give your releases personality. Aside from catering to their specific outlet, make sure the release has some personality. Add a quote or testimonial from a key person. Relate a story to get them hooked. Attach a fun **small file** photo and offer to send more upon their request.
- Only send attachment files that are 1 MB or less (in total). Jamming their email program is not going to help you get coverage.
- Create an online press kit if you have events all the time and email the press when another segment is up on the website.

- Hire someone to help you if you are having trouble getting results. They can steer you in the right direction by guiding you to create templates that will work for you.
- If you have the funds, hire someone fabulous who already does publicity with an audience development angle.

Sending out press releases the audience development way has been extremely successful for me, and it can be for you too.

Shoshana Fanizza, Chief Audience Builder, Audience Development Specialists (USA)