

*Technology, from smartphones to social media, has shifted the way people consume, share and discuss content. Newsrooms have evolved to keep up with audiences' needs. Despite all this change, one thing that has largely remained the same is the working PR-journalist relationship. Two-thirds of.*

Martin Leading media relations for members of Congress is a daily grind where I learned a great deal about doing it right, and sometimes doing it wrong. Media relations presents a unique circumstance that is much different than interacting with the general public, federal agencies, or elected officials. Many reporters have a special code of ethics which sets them apart and demands thoughtful consideration and planning. In this blog, I will provide some basic tips and guidelines. While each interaction with a reporter is unique, each situation may vary. The most important part of media relations is right in the name: You build relationships through reliability and responsiveness, and the point of a good relationship is trust. If a reporter trusts you, they are more than likely to give you the benefit of the doubt, reach back out to you for comment or give you extra time to respond. Trust means they believe you will give them a fair response, and will make your media relations more effective over time. Confirming receipt of a media inquiry, answering your phone, and managing expectations on what you can and cannot say and how long it may take for you to help them will go a long way. While this concept may seem basic, it can be difficult in federal agencies to accomplish. A big difference between being a press secretary and a federal employee is longer approval times. Being responsive, means responding in minutes, not hours, just to be clear. However, you should take the time to be prepared when responding. Navigating a press call or email can be tricky, here are some tips: Know the levels of attribution and how to use them. Assuming everyone knows the four basic levels of attribution on record, on background, on deep background, off the record. Being able to provide an on record statement and off the record information in the same conversation is good skill to have. Instead be more specific as to why you cannot comment such as a federal law, or policy that requires agencies respect the privacy of individuals. Be as helpful to reporters as you can. Many media inquiries to federal agencies can be answered based on public data or websites. And being hostile does not help you build relationships. Avoid expressing gratitude for their writing. Only half of media relations is answering the phone or email. Your organizations should have a proactive media relations strategy and guidance for staff to be successful. Previously approved statements and website materials are a good. Combined that with a good sense of what is newsworthy will give you the tools to identify low-risk and high reward activities to proactively pitch members of the media on interesting stories. At the Bureau of the Fiscal Service, we have a mission to transform federal financial management and the delivery of shared services. We also have an office dedicated to providing transformative technology and process improvement across the government to accomplish this mission. Innovation in government is almost always a low-risk high reward pitch that is newsworthy because it goes against common perceptions of antiquated government. Once again, building a working relationship with newsworthy parts of your organization likely will result in you having enough time to proactively plan for media relations surrounding operational activities. If this is your situation, your first task should be to reach an agreement between those answering reporters and those approving statements. Ideally, anyone working in media relations should be able to provide an initial statement without the need for any approval. Any agreement should be as formal as possible, to include a memorandum of agreement, approved media relations plan, or an email approval which allows for media relations professionals to do what they are hired to do, without having to ask permission. Media relations is important and can affect the reputation of your organization. It can drive whether or not positive or negative news stories influence the narrative surrounding your organization. Planning and flexibility to build trust with key reporters should be a top priority. Department of the Treasury.

### Chapter 2 : 6 Tips to Improve Your Media Relations Skills | Inspire PR Group

*Do you want to learn how to improve media relations for your company or public relations agency? As you know, there are many benefits of media relations such as credibility, sharing a story, controlling a crisis, being able to bring in a new audience while retaining original fans and building beneficial relationships.*

July 8, Tweet Every professional knows the importance of networking to build solid business relationships. The same holds true for media relations. Almost any tip you find on networking is also a great tip for media relations. It makes sense, as media relations is all about building relationships and establishing connections. You can read more about how each tip relates to networking in the original article, but here is how they translate to production relationships with journalists and bloggers: The goal of networking is to help other people. The most important rule for pitching a story idea is to provide value. Understand their needs before telling them about yours. Listen first, understand what your media contacts are looking for, and then help them get there. Focus on fortifying relationships with writers and influencers who really matter to your brand. But remember the goal of providing value and being a resource. Research your contacts beforehand, spend the time writing a relevant pitch, and follow up appropriately. Good things come to those who do the work. Go beyond your industry. You may focus primarily on one industry, but there are other audiences that are sure to find value in your offer. Your goal is to find the angle that resonates and to build a broader awareness for your brand. Start by offering praise, not requesting help. Opening an email and getting hit in the face with a huge block of text is daunting for everyone, especially journalists. Try to provide as much value as you can. Nurture your established network. As with any relationship, it takes work. Keep sharing their stories, giving them valuable information, and interacting on social channels to keep the magic alive. Not everything you pitch will be a fit every time. Make it a point to follow up. Reply to the original email you sent, so that information is still readily accessible, and keep it short. Try to add something new as well, like an interview opportunity, a graphic or a user testimonial. Improving media relations takes more than 12 steps, but these tips can help you initiate and maintain real conversations and relationships with journalists at your targeted media outlets. Ashley Sherman is the director of digital media relations for Relevance , an online marketing agency in Indianapolis.

### Chapter 3 : Improving Your Media Relations - Gender Public Relations

*Media relations are critical to an effective public relations plan. It is important to develop a strong understanding of the media and how best to communicate with them. Once you develop these basic - yet key - fundamentals, you will improve message adoption, which in turn will generate better results.*

Every organization wants to be noticed by the media—especially for the good work we do. We accomplish amazing tasks with limited resources every day, and yet, we often find the only times we seem to get attention are when something has gone wrong. We feel like we are at the mercy of the media, having to respond to their whims and not able to influence our public image or share our message when and how we want. However, the situation does not have to remain gloomy. We CAN be seen and heard, becoming partners with media outlets, not just observers of what is written and said about us. We must be proactive and thoughtful in our approach; with the right attitude and ongoing planning, we can be successful. In this article, Mike Zlotnicki provides us with an overview of how to attend to media relations, and delves into more detail about two of the most common ways we connect with the media, press releases and interviews. Rhody of the Bank of America explains what he tells clients about dealing with the media: No contest was ever won from the sidelines. Be players, not spectators. The public has a right to balanced and accurate information about your operations. Silence never swayed any masses and timidity never won any ball games. Take the initiative in all circumstances, whether the news is good or bad. Many experienced journalists will view any press release with skepticism. Journalists are expected produce their own stories. When writing a release or talking to a reporter, remember the following: Shoot Squarely — Honesty is the best policy. Journalists can spot phony a mile away. Give Service — The quickest, surest way to gain the cooperation of the media is to provide them with interesting, timely story ideas and pictures they want and in a form in which they can readily use. Always shoot photos in high resolution files for potential use in print publications. Online photos are lower resolution, and often the files size is too small to use in print. The way to keep unfavorable stories out of the press is to keep situations that produce such stories from taking place. However, if a something is aired or published that is inaccurate or misleading, you should ask for a correction, especially online, where it lives forever. Keep Lists Up to Date — The transient nature and mortality of personnel and of media require that distribution lists be continuously updated. Remember, how you share your message can be as important as what you say — From the same book, PR guru Chester Berger recommends: Speak in personal terms whenever possible. If you do not want a statement quoted, do not make it. State the most important fact at the beginning. Do not argue with a reporter or lose your cool. If a question contains offensive language or simply words you do not like, do not repeat them even to deny them. If a reporter asks a direct question, give an equally direct answer. Do not exaggerate facts and always tell the truth, even if it hurts. Our next media article will focus on more creative ways to ensure your message is heard. Mike Zlotnicki is a freelance writer based in Garner, N. His resume includes newspaper and magazine editing as well as advertising and marketing experience. He can be reached at mikezz bellsouth.

### Chapter 4 : Capability Company - Improving Media Relations

*Improving media relations takes more than 12 steps, but these tips can help you gain the insight you need to initiate and maintain real conversations and relationships with your target media outlets. View all posts by.*

The report is jam-packed with information about the current news media environment and how most journalists prefer to work particularly around areas like social media and working with media relations professionals. Tell Your Story with Pictures The top trend in media right now is the evolution of the multimedia journalist. What is a multimedia journalist? Multimedia journalists are expected to be able to produce or adapt content for an increasingly wider-range of media, including traditional broadcast, print and Web formats, as well as blogging, podcasting audio and video , social media, and live content platforms Periscope or Facebook Live for example. I have to imagine entry-level journalists entering the field today are best-equipped to work as mobile natives, but any journalist can develop their skills in this area. This means you have to be prepared to respond much-faster to journalist requests via mobile, but also be able to produce, format and remix your content on-the-fly from wherever you are via your preferred mobile device. How can you make your content more useful or appealing to a multimedia journalist? Do you have attractive, generic infographics to accompany your story that would work for the publishing environments the journalist is producing content for? Do you have the ability to adapt or customize your content based on the preferences, specifications or suggestions of the journalist? Is your spokesperson experienced in doing interviews for podcasts or via Periscope? These are now factors you should consider before pitching a journalist. Mobile media time is now greater than desktop and other media. So most media organizations are developing content for mobile users or at least thinking about it. Do the same via your mobile Web browser “ to see if there is a difference between mobile app and mobile Web coverage. This exercise alone should provide you with enough background to understand the different types of content that a journalist might like to receive to accompany your story “ which can improve your chances of securing coverage. Use Social Media to Build Media Relationships Yes, journalists use social media as part of their news gathering or reporting workflows. Cision explored social media usage in its report and confirmed that Wait, did that just say journalists are open to receiving pitches via social media? Brevity is highly-valued among most journalists, and the faster you can get to the point, the more likely you are at getting their attention and getting a quick response from the journalist about whether or not they are interested in your story. As far as social media platforms go, Twitter remains the most-effective channel for conducting media relations research learning more about the journalists you are pitching. According to the Cision report, Twitter also has high marks in the report for being the social network most-likely to increase in value as it relates to their journalism-related work. Here are a couple of quick tips for using Twitter for your media relations efforts: Observing these patterns can help you better determine when the right time to engage via this platform might be “ and how receptive the journalist might be to your outreach. Finally, if you have access to tools like Cision or MuckRack, most now integrate social media research and outreach as part of their core service offering. Learn the ins and outs of these features to help improve your efficiency using social media as part of your media relations efforts. Okay, one more tip “ use Twitter on your own. If you have built a decent audience across your social media accounts, you should be leveraging them to report your own news. Ironically, when you report on your own news via social media, these messages are typically intercepted by journalists who may be interested in producing stories on their own or at least sharing your content with their readers “ if relevant. In other words, by reporting on your own news, you can sometimes generate just as much media coverage as you would of by pitching those journalists directly. Social media gives you an opportunity to tell your story exactly how you would like it told. This will provide your colleagues, stakeholders, influencers, and most importantly, relevant journalists with a blueprint to consider when telling the story in their own way. Use your social media channels to report on all your news and discover how effective this tactic can be for generating additional media coverage outside of your direct outreach efforts. Journalists are excited about many of the newer visual storytelling platforms, including Instagram, Pinterest, Vine, Snapchat and Periscope. While these are NOT mainstream

social media platforms for most journalists, many are testing these platforms for potential professional applications. The most-likely platform for professional journalists to embrace in is Periscope. Remember that multimedia journalist thing from above? Periscope gives any journalist the ability to broadcast live video to their existing Twitter Followers with a click of a button. This is an incredible evolution in reporting capability for most-journalists, and one we should expect to see increase in popularity in . According to the Cision report, roughly Narrow your search results by keyword, geography or other factors to help you home in on journalists using Periscope as part of their reporting. There is a limited window of opportunity to exploit this tactic to help you break through the clutter, as other savvy media relations professionals will quickly catch on. Use a similar approach to research how journalists are using other emerging social media platforms. Most journalists are excited to try new formats for their reporting. A little bit of legwork on the research front can go a long way towards helping you capitalize on publicity opportunities across emerging platforms or formats. On one hand, no journalist wants to be distracted by an off-topic pitch that has no relevancy to the work they do. On the other hand, they do welcome pitches that are brief, relevant and professionally-written. The key takeaway here is to always consider the person on the other end of the email or phone call has received a hundred pitches today from other publicity-seeking media relations professionals. Your pitch has to be spot-on to get noticed, and you have to connect with the right information at the right time to have a chance. But the more-prepared you are for the pitch “ by doing your homework and truly understanding the needs of the journalist “ the greater your chances for breaking through the clutter and successfully securing the opportunity. If you want to be effective pitching journalists via email, master the art of the subject line and the one-sentence pitch. This has been most-effective for me over the years, and it gets easier and easier as you develop your relationships with journalists. This is the most-difficult format in my opinion “ best-suited for media relations professionals who began their career in sales or telemarketing before switching to PR. Because you have to be able to navigate gatekeepers, be comfortable with constant rejection, and be able to get to your point quickly when the person finally answers the phone. A couple of additional tips for pitching via the phone: And as a final point, The best advice I can give you in this regard is to think like a journalist. Remember that journalists are trying to be factual and objective in their reporting. Journalists are reasonable in their expectations. It may require a little added effort on your part, but would you rather be efficient and fail more often, or effective and succeed more? You should do this! What do you think? Do you think any of these tips will help you improve your media relations efforts in ? Did you read the report and find an additional tip worth sharing with our readers? Please share your thoughts below.

### Chapter 5 : Media Relations & Publicity for better PR results

*Pitching is an art. It takes time, research, and flexibility to pull off a great media relations strategy. Well that, and being able to offer newsworthy content (we'll get back to this in a minute). While there's no "fool proof" plan to secure media coverage (if there is, I definitely would).*

Could it be the way you are communicating? Listed below are 10 highly effective tips to improving your communication with the media and efficiently increasing media exposure for your company or client. Know the reporter and the publication before picking up the phone. You will be wasting time and reducing your chances of coverage by aggravating the staff. This will help you create targeted pitches and story ideas that are both compelling and relevant. Always know how and when a reporter wants to be contacted. Some reporters want phone calls, others prefer email, and still others want news the old-fashioned way – by snail mail. Contacting reporters inappropriately or at the wrong time – such as on deadline – can lead to damaged relationships. Clarify your message before delivering your pitch. There is nothing worse for a reporter than receiving an email that is a carbon copy of a press release, or getting a call from someone that is not familiar with the company they are pitching or the news they are announcing. Most reporters are extremely busy and will give you only 30 seconds to make your case. When sending ideas via email, always include a short, pithy pitch along with your contact information. Editors and reporters get hundreds of emails a day, so entice them into calling you for more information or, even better, to set up an interview. Be careful what you send via email. In addition, always craft a catchy subject line but avoid using all caps or excessive punctuation as both tactics produce a red flag that your pitch might be a virus. Finally, never send out a group email with your entire distribution list in the header. The press gets flooded with calls, so be as specific as possible. The more general you are, the less likely your chances for success. As you develop a stronger relationship with the reporter, they will know you the minute they pick up the phone, making it easier to get their ear. When you get a reporter on the phone, always ask what they are working on and how you can help. This will allow you to uncover new opportunities that will allow you to position your news by way of a different point of view. Eventually, the reporter will come to you with new story opportunities – rather than the other way around. Never make promises you cannot keep. Nothing will squelch a media relationship faster than if you promise something you cannot deliver. Promise to do your best to get the reporter what they need in advance of their deadline, and always follow through. While some reporters will provide coverage after one phone interview, that is often not enough. It is important to be in front of reporters on a consistent basis with compelling information that demonstrates what you are pitching is viable, credible and worthy of coverage. Also be sure to offer reporters the additional elements they would need to round out their story – photos, customer references, analyst references and additional sources, if necessary. You need to be able to provide these elements at the drop of a hat – so have the information ready in advance. Whenever possible, pitch by phone. This will get you better results and allow you to build the relationships you need to ensure consistent success. When using the phone, leave one message only, and then continue to call the reporter at different times of the day non-deadline times, of course until you catch them live. Once you have them on the line, it is much easier to make your case, as you can engage a reporter in a conversation and handle objections as they arise. Media relations are critical to an effective public relations plan. It is important to develop a strong understanding of the media and how best to communicate with them. Once you develop these basic – yet key – fundamentals, you will improve message adoption, which in turn will generate better results. This article was written by Peter Granat, senior vice president of MediaMap.

### Chapter 6 : Public Relations How-To Tips for School Administrators | Education World

*Media relations can be complicated, but with these four tips, your brand will be prepared in advance so there is no media outlet you can't handle flawlessly. 4 tips for improving your company's.*

At the same time, however, they are a crucial skill set for many PR professionals. With that in mind, here are six simple tips to improve your media relations. Start with the relations bit Media relations are, unsurprisingly, all about relationships – mutual trust, respect and occasionally even genuine friendship. So why do so many PR folk still think an email – or even worse an group email – is enough? Think about how many emails you get in a day. Times that by ten, or even twenty, and you are close to the number of emails a busy journalist needs to sift through in a typical day. Given the geographic spread in the Asia Pacific region, a face-to-face meeting is not always possible, but at the very minimum you should be picking up the phone and introducing yourself. And by developing a relationship, you can avoid falling foul of the second piece of advice! 2. Know your media It may seem obvious but it needs saying: Understand what kind of topics they cover trade, lifestyle, business, general news , the kind of formats they prefer news releases, opinion pieces, features, reviews and which journalist within the publication cover which beats. Be relevant or be ignored. Use your communications skills Standard, template press releases tend to get standard treatment in newsrooms – and sadly that can often mean hitting the delete button. If you find putting together your release to be an uninspiring process, how do you think a journalist feels when reading? Sometimes it is about innovating how you communicate, as this video shows , but more often than not it simply means writing compelling copy that tells your story in a clear, accessible and interesting manner and gets the story hook in as soon as early as possible. You are hired as a communicator, so time to show your skills. Find an exclusive angle For many journalists exclusivity is still the best way to pull in readers and keep editors happy. If your client wants a general release, then explain this to your media contacts – most will understand that relationship thing again – but also think of ways to offer more value to the release: Journalists need fresh angles, so help them out. Nothing frustrates and angers a journalist more than being left empty handed with a deadline looming, or, just as bad, being told that the exclusive you promised is being sent out to all media. The journalist you are pitching to will know this only too well and the credibility of you, your agency and your client will be damaged if you are unable to answer follow-up questions.

### Chapter 7 : Ten Ways to Improve Your Media Relations Skills - PR News

*Hiring solutions for nonprofits who want to hire superior executives such as executive directors, development personnel, fundraising professionals, public relations, marketing, financial, and program directors.*

This article was previously published on PR Daily in April Football players practice ballet. As Coyle writes in "The Talent Code": Deep practice feels a bit like exploring a dark and unfamiliar room. You start slowly, you bump into furniture, stop, think, and start again. Slowly, and a little painfully, you explore the space over and over, attending to errors, extending your reach into the room a bit farther each time, building a mental map until you can move through it quickly and intuitively. How do we pursue deep practice? Here are the five techniques I use: We order coffee, tie our dog under the table and watch. Every week, without fail, someone fascinating catches our eye. Take the scruffy, middle-aged man with long hair, black jeans and a heavy metal T-shirt. He had band stickers plastered all over the beat-up guitar case in his hand. He had an audition. Our ritual is part improv, part eavesdropping. It helps to have a friend during this exercise. Always say yes , and always ask follow-up questions. Buy old postcards and photographs. Flea markets, antique stores and even eBay are perfect for snagging piles of old notes. Old postcards often sell for pennies each. It works just as well with photographs. Just search for "antique photographs" on eBay. Turn off all distractions, and stare at the image or letter. What immediately comes to mind? Consider these questions, or just let your mind wander: Where was the person sitting when they wrote this note? Where was this photo taken? Why were these people there? What do the facial expressions in the photograph say? Browse graveyards and phone books. I stumbled across an old graveyard in West Hampstead a few months ago while visiting a friend in London. It was old, but not spooky, as though I had stepped back in time and discovered an unexplored place. The graveyard was empty, and the neighborhood was quiet. I spent hours walking through the stones, jotting down interesting names:

### Chapter 8 : Easy Ways to Improve Your Day-to-Day Media Relations | Federal Communicators Network

*Improving media relations is one of those issues that every administrator will eventually face- either as the result of a localized issue or, as is the current.*

However, by doing your homework, building relationships and showing persistence, you can show your clients results. Below are a few tips on how to effectively execute media relations that will result in having your voice heard over the fray: Do your homework – The first step in effective media relations is to build a concise media list. For example, if you are pitching a restaurant client, do your research and ensure the reporters you have on your media list cover dining. Make sure you are reaching out to the right reporters that are covering the beat you are pitching. Build relationships – One of the best ways to ensure coverage for your client is to build relationships with the media. Read the stories the reporters you are working with write and follow up with them on stories they have written that resonate with you. By showing them you are a real person and not just a PR pitching machine, you will build relationships with them. These relationships will help when they need sources for stories as they will want a trusted and reliable source. As you pitch reporters, make detailed notes of the results of your conversations. This also will help when you send an update to your client about the results of your pitches. Be persistent – Being persistent and not always taking no for an answer is the key to effective media relations. Email them again and this time mark it as urgent. Also, make it clear in the subject line that this is a pitch and you are following up. Also, picking up the phone and making phone calls is an effective way to get the results you desire. However, they will answer the phone. Give them a call and explain your pitch, this helps you build relationships with them and may result in a story. Also, if a reporter says no to your pitch ask them why. This helps you determine what resonates with them and could result in another opportunity down the road. If their goal is to drive traffic to their website, consider distributing a press release on a wire service, such as PR Newswire. If they want to drive traffic into their new restaurant, consider inviting select reporters in for a special preview event or hosting an exclusive media dinner. Clients and the media love out of the box ideas that communicate your key messages. Track press coverage – One of the most crucial elements of media relations is communication with your client. Your client wants to know how successful your media relations efforts have been and if you are producing results. One easy way to communicate this is to create a media relations impact report. This report allows you to track press coverage, impressions the amount of people that viewed your story, the advertising value the monetary advertising value of your story and the editorial value the monetary editorial value of your story. To calculate the advertising value for an online placement you divide the impressions by For print, radio or TV publications you need to correlate how long the placement is and determine what an ad would cost at that length. For editorial value, you always multiply the advertising value by three since the editorial value is always going to have more value because the placement is an earned placement and was not paid for via advertising. This means the placement is going to resonate more with your audience, therefore it is worth more. By following these easy steps, you will execute effective media relations while driving results for clients and building great relationships that will last a lifetime.

### Chapter 9 : Top 10 Tips to Improve Your Media Relations Skills

*Improving media relations takes more than 12 steps, but these tips can help you initiate and maintain real conversations and relationships with journalists at your targeted media outlets. Ashley Sherman is the director of digital media relations for Relevance, an online marketing agency in Indianapolis.*

Tips for School Administrators and Other School Professionals Are you looking to improve communications between school and home? Do you want to get the media to pay more attention to the good things that are going on in your school? Do you know how to handle a crisis? Public relations consultant William Harms offers tips for school administrators looking to put their best foot forward. Think again, says public relations consultant William Harms, who counts among his clients a consortium of 30 independent Chicago schools. Good public relations begins with the cost-free investment of thoughtful evaluation, Harms told Education World. Before you put financial resources into public relations, consider what the term means: Good public relations is something everyone involved with a school should be practicing every day. Before you hire a consultant or a public relations staff person or recruit a parent volunteer, begin improving public relations in your school district by evaluating everyday communications, Harms said. How are people treated when they call the school? Is the person answering the phone courteous, friendly, and helpful? How well does your voicemail system work? Do callers get led through a frustrating phone maze? Most important of all, if a caller leaves a message, does the call get returned? How often are meetings held? Are parents and community members notified of meetings well in advance? Most important, is time allowed for audience discussion? Is the community notified of school events? Are parents given enough notice so they may re-arrange their schedules to attend? How well do teachers and administrators communicate with parents? Parents Want to Know Communication with parents and the public is essential—and the communication must be meaningful, clear, and engaging. The tricky part is knowing what parents really want to hear and what will be perceived as propaganda. Parents are astute at knowing the difference," Harms said. For communicating with parents, Harms sees newsletters as primary communication tools. Harms related that he once received a beautifully-designed newsletter with irrelevant content—all the events listed had already passed. Anything you can do to explain to parents what children are learning will be appreciated," Harms said. As time goes by, the news becomes old news and, therefore, less relevant. Make sure to get photo release permission from parents. You can also show the set up for your events and can include both staged shots and candid shots of teachers in action. Both parents and news editors love pictures of students engaged in a learning activity, so it is worth the extra effort to get these visuals. Public schools must be aware that their communication obligations extend to the community. Fostering Media Relations Why does one school get more media coverage than another? The answer may be as simple as their administrators pick up the phone more often. If you want media coverage, know thy media. Read all the newspapers that cover your area, listen to local radio stations or tap into a parent who does and keep current on your local cable channel. Consider videotaping your school board meetings for local access cable television. Get to know people in the media—stop in and say hi. Take an editor to lunch. Learn what makes interesting photos and news stories. Create a list with the names and numbers of key media contacts in your community. Remember to include "behind the scenes" people such as assignment editors TV and radio , producers TV and radio , people at the city desk newspapers , as well as reporters. Get to know the people on this list and become familiar with their specific duties and what information would be useful to them. Keep their phone numbers, fax numbers, mail and e-mail addresses. Also get your name and information in their address books. When you hear a national news story, contact the people on your press list and let them know how it is affecting your school. Reporters are always looking for ways to put a local twist on a national story. News people love numbers. Use them to illustrate your point. When you learn of surveys concerning areas relevant to your school, forward them including who conducted the survey to reporters on your press list and include a quote or two on how these compare to life in your school. Communicate in a Crisis! No matter how awful or how minor, if an incident has captured the attention of the school, the community, or the world, be prepared to talk about it—publicly and immediately. The first

people to communicate with? The faculty and staff. Keeping them informed builds community and elicits cooperation. Next, communicate with parents. Write a statement to be sent home with all students on the day a crisis occurs and repost that statement electronically. Be clear in stating the facts of the situation, give all the facts you can possibly give, and tell parents how you intend to respond. More information is better—the sketchier the information, the more likely parents will fill in the blanks with rumor and speculation. If you think an incident might draw the attention of the media, be prepared. Refer all media calls to one agreed-upon spokesperson. That person should be prepared with facts in writing to refer to. Stick to the facts. A few things to keep in mind when talking to the media during a crisis: Never tell a reporter anything you are unwilling to see in print. Listen to yourself speak. This helps you to speak slowly and it helps you monitor your statements for accuracy and clarity. If you are asked a question that is off the point, confusing, or inappropriate, answer the question you wish you had been asked. Stop talking when you are finished—even if a reporter waits in silence for more. If you are angry or upset about an issue, try to postpone the interview until you regain a normal, calm demeanor. Follow these steps within the first 30 minutes of a crisis: Understand the circumstances; define the problem. Consider the options; act decisively to ensure the health and safety of students and staff and protection of district property. Communicate with staff; keep the news media informed. Create a crisis assessment and information sheet to send the central office or another resource agency.