MEDIA: Friend or Foe?

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What We’ll Cover:

- What’s your perspective on the media?
- What’s the media’s perspective?
- Do’s & Don’ts
- Press releases & media guidelines
- Making it work & other tips
- Educating your staff and campers
- Time for questions & debate
What’s your perspective?
What’s your perspective?

The PR/Development Perspective says:

- Increased awareness/branding
- Credibility/affirmation for current supporters/clients
- Introduction to new supporters

The Program Perspective may say:

- Disruptive
- A risk to confidentiality
- Exploitive
It doesn’t have to be either/or
What’s *their* perspective?

What the **Media** wants:

- Readers/Viewers (which translates to revenue)
- Timely news and unique perspectives
- Interesting stuff (WWDCC?)
- Stories – which consist of:
  - Sympathetic character(s)
  - **Conflict**
  - Plot (story arch)
- To help you
The Do’s & Don’ts of Media Relations

DO:
✓ Repeat yourself
✓ Est. relationships w/key reporters and editors; nurture them
✓ Target your outreach, such as press releases*
✓ Follow-up
✓ Provide guidance – and guidelines*

DON’T
x Waste their time (or yours)
x Bait and switch
x Burn your bridges (they’ll be back)
Elements of a good press release:

- Make it about what’s interesting to the media/public, not just to your organization. Start where they are and lead them.
- Short, provocative headline (also for email subject line)
- Lead paragraph should get right to the point. (Tell the story)
- Use the inverted pyramid – brief conclusions first, details toward the bottom.
- Use quotes only if they’re interesting. Aim for sound bites that you want to see in print. (The Sam Malone technique)
- Keep it crisp. Eliminate unnecessary words.
- Avoid jargon and overused buzz words like “strategic” and “robust.”

From “Nonprofit Management 101”, © 2011
Media Guidelines (a sample)

Thank you for visiting our camp – we are so glad you’re here! You can help us protect the integrity of our kids and our program by following a few basic guidelines:

- **Media Liaisons:** We will provide you with a camp staff member to help identify activities that are appropriate to cover and campers and staff who are willing to be interviewed. Your Media Liaison can also answer basic questions about the camp and show you around the facility. For the safety and well-being of our campers, please remain with your media liaison while at camp.

- **Program:** Our camps have been designed to make the best use of a relatively short period of time. To help maximize the benefits of the program on our campers, please refrain from stopping or interrupting activities to interview a child or get footage of an event. (Background filming or filming from a distance is fine.) Our activities rely heavily on the campers' feelings of trust and safety. Please consult your Media Liaison if you see something that you'd like to film or have questions about an activity. When possible, we can pull a child out of an activity to be interviewed without interrupting that activity.

- **Verification:** We understand the pressure of working under deadline and would appreciate the opportunity, if possible, to verify quotes and information at the number listed below.

Thank you again for your interest in our programs and our mission to help children with cancer and their families.
Making the Most of Your New Friend(s):

Your **objective** determines your approach:

- **Coverage:** Personalized press release to each camper’s home town paper
  - **Pros:** Lots of stories, more campers get to be a star
  - **Cons:** Labor intensive, minimal donor impact

- **Bigger Bang for More Bucks:** Aim for largest publication(s) available
  - **Pros:** Instant credibility, more potential for bigger support, long shelf life
  - **Cons:** Difficult to get good coverage without good connections + one-n-done

- **Getting on TV:** Give them something to talk about & make it easy on ‘em
  - **Pros:** A picture really is worth a thousand words – and it’s reusable!
  - **Cons:** Short story, lots of editing, and you may get lost in translation

- **Other objectives?**
Other Tips:

For Television:

- Wear branded clothing when on camera and repeat your camp name.
- Be specific about best/worst times of day to film (but understand that the reporter may not be that flexible) – reporters want action.
- Provide “B-roll” if possible/necessary, especially for smaller stations who may not be able to come to you.
- In formal interviews, sit on your coat tails – and stop blinking so much!

For Radio:

- If you’re not articulate, take (or send) someone who is. Avoid filler words.
- Compose your own practice questions and rehearse what you’ll say to answer each of them. Provide questions to the reporter ahead of time.
- Call in if you must, especially for short PSA’s or announcements.
Educating Your Staff and Campers:

Include media training in your staff orientation

- Staff should treat the media the same way they would treat any visitor – as people who simply want to see how much fun camp is. As with many other areas of camp, staff lead by example.
- Staff can inform camp leadership if a particular camper does or does not want to be interviewed
- Staff can be protective of campers without being unpleasant to the media

Announce media visits to the campers in advance

- Identify campers in advance who are comfortable and geographically appropriate
- Notify campers that they should feel free to tell their counselor(s) if they don’t want to talk to the media. (Be sure the staff member isn’t making that decision for them.)
- Engage the reporter/camera operator into camp programming when possible (let them help lead a song, be part of a stunt, etc.)
Questions? Rebuttals? Tips?
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