

THE A – Z (almost) OF MAKING THE NEWS

No matter what story, event or issue you want to promote, you need to think of the “angle” or “hook” that will catch the attention of the media, and their listeners / readers. This is what will make your item newsworthy, relevant and interesting.

Check below for ideas or inspiration.

Anniversaries - Your organisation’s 10th, your 100th carer, or tie in with a ‘famous’ anniversary e.g. St Andrew’s Day, the death of Elvis....

Calendar - There are designated years or days you can use to publicise your work e.g. World AIDS Day, International Year of Language Learning, May Day, Halloween.

Celebrity- A famous face is almost always news, whether they are taking part, endorsing, or going public with their own personal experiences. A high-profile celebrity will almost certainly guarantee you coverage, but they can also cloud the message. You have to make sure your story does not become secondary to the famous face supporting it.

Children/animals - “Never work with children and animals” was coined because they always steal the scene, especially in the visual media (TV and photographs). Lots of giggling children at the launch of a play scheme will allow you to get across the more worthy (but very good) reasons for starting it in the first place.

Conflict - Not necessarily fighting or wars. There can be conflict between a local council and a community, between government and pressure groups, or between developers and cyclists.

Controversy- Your own work or campaign may stimulate controversy, or you may want to react to controversial changes in the law or an advertising campaign.

Danger - Lives or livelihoods at risk, communities under threat, health and community safety issues.

Events - Better to promote an event before it happens or when it happens (you can always mock up something in advance), rather than after the event. Always emphasise ‘why’ as well as ‘what’.

Geography - Local news is what local newspapers are all about. But that doesn’t stop you finding an angle for wider coverage. A good basic rule is if you are sending information to a paper covering a particular area, you must mention that area in your first paragraph.

Government - Announcements which affect your work, Ministers in attendance.



Happy endings - There may be a happy ending in response to previous coverage – if so, tell that story. Or, alternatively, it may simply be a good example of your on-going work.

Help needed/help offered - Appeals for money or help, or a new/expanded service.

Human interest - The personal stories and experiences behind any statistics or campaign are what makes for reader interest and understanding. Be sensitive, though, to all involved

Link with national/international story - This can be the fact a celebrity has become a single parent, or a major world disaster elsewhere. You need to be constantly aware of what's going on, and looking for 'angles' to get your own messages across.

Money- Whether it's being cut, raised, lost or needed – money is always an issue.

New - It is often not enough that something is new (because very little is), you need to highlight other angles and differences.

Openings - The opening of new services, buildings and offices can be news, but you need to shore up the opening itself with a happening/event/publicity stunt.

Opportunities - Offering members of the public opportunities to better themselves, their lives, or their community.

Photographs - A quick look through any newspaper will reveal a great many stories that are not particularly newsworthy but that get coverage because they are accompanied by a great picture.

Publicity Stunts - Think of something visual and exciting to liven up even the most mundane event, or boring statistics. Use humour (where appropriate), local drama groups, or street theatre.

Reports/research/surveys - Not because they have been done ('so what' syndrome), but the results, and what will happen to/because of them.

Scandal- Not that kind of scandal! But the scandal of a village hall closing, or cuts in services.

Success story/achievements - Celebrate achievements of members of staff, volunteers, clients, the organisation. Blow your own trumpet, for goodness sake!

Superlatives - Oldest, highest, first, last, longest....

Topicality - For example, when new government statistics are released.

Unusual or bizarre - Events, facts, or personal stories

Winners - Any competition winners, awards etc.

**REMEMBER
IT IS THE WAY YOU TELL IT THAT SELLS IT**

From the DIY guide to Media Relations for Active Communities

