

# PART SIX



Media Guide



## OVERVIEW

Media relations are an important part of raising your community's awareness about the value of chemicals, chemistry, and the chemical industry. Building media relations takes time and effort, but the benefits can far outweigh the work. Keep in mind that getting your story out helps form the opinions that your neighbors, customers, suppliers, and local officials have about your operations. The chemical industry should stand up and take credit for the good things it does in communities across the country and the world. Working with local media to spread the good news about the work that is done in your community will advance the industry as a whole.

This section details how to create and maintain relationships with media outlets in your community. Included are sections on how to make contact with reporters; write media advisories, press releases, and public service announcements; maintain relationships with reporters; and prepare for interviews.

Here are some basic tips to think about as you start to develop media relations in your community:

- Develop a message or set of short messages (about your event and your company) to which you constantly refer. These messages will help you prepare to answer questions from the media. Repeating a concise, consistent message, often, will help cement your mission in the minds of your community members.
- Identify one spokesperson from your company or organization to serve as the voice of your organization. Your spokesperson should be personable and well-spoken. Designating a spokesperson will make it easier for media outlets to contact you and prevent mixed messages.
- Remember that the media is depending on you to give them the information that they need to compile a story. Pull a fact sheet together about your event and your company. Refer to this when talking with reporters.
- Use the media wisely. It is great to generate media coverage on a regular basis, but don't overwhelm the media. Sending press releases or media advisories regularly is fine, but don't send them so frequently that media outlets tire of them and quit reading them. Likewise, if the content is not intriguing or seems insignificant to the reporter he/she may choose not to read your information.

## MAKE CONTACT

Telephone your local media outlets and introduce yourself and your company. Explain why you may have a potentially newsworthy event and ask what you can do to let them know about these events in a manner that encourages them to cover your story. Often, particular reporters or editors will cover specific topics, such as business, community, or education. Making contact with the particular person who is most apt to be interested in your event or organization will help you get your story published. Check out the media outlet's Web site for a company directory or ask when you call the general number.

For an effective pitch, keep the following in mind:

- Be concise, upbeat, and to the point.
- Have your facts straight.
- Keep in mind that just holding an event might not constitute a news story. Explain to the reporter how your event will benefit the entire community.
- Don't call several reporters at one media outlet to pitch your story. If your key contact isn't interested, ask whom else you might call. If you do call another reporter, let him/her know that you've already spoken to someone at the same place.
- Be confident. You are doing a newsperson a favor by offering them a story to cover.
- If you've submitted materials by the designated deadline and haven't heard back, follow up. Have patience. If a reporter doesn't immediately return your phone call or e-mail, it doesn't mean that he/she isn't interested.

## MEDIA ADVISORIES

A media advisory provides reporters with a short, to-the-point alert about an upcoming event. A media advisory differs from a press release in that the media advisory just gives the necessary information – who, what, when, where, why – and serves as an invitation for the reporter to join you at the event. A press release, on the other hand, covers the basic information as well as supporting content, such as why the event is taking place, how it benefits the community, etc. A media advisory should include:

- The date, time, and location (include address) of the event.
- Contact information. The contact should be the person who will speak to the media or facilitate interviews at the event. Place the contact information at the top of the advisory.
- A short summary of your organization in the last paragraph.
- A notation on the advisory regarding whether there will be a chance for photo opportunities. You may also want to contact the photo editor.
- The bottom of the page should be marked with “###” to signify the end of the advisory.

When sending a media advisory, keep the following in mind:

- E-mail, mail, or fax your media advisory to the appropriate contact at least three weeks before your event. Follow up by sending a press release that further details the event.
- A media advisory should never be more than one page.

## SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

### Media Advisory

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**For Immediate Release: May 21, 2008**

**Contact: Laurel Brent**

**703/527-6223**

**lbrent@chemed.org**

Who: Chemical Educational Foundation

What: 2008 National *You Be The Chemist* (YBTC) Challenge

The YBTC Challenge is a fun and educational academic competition designed to engage grade 5-8 students in the science of chemistry. The Challenge promotes the science of chemistry, the benefits of chemicals, and the importance of chemical safety awareness by bringing members of the chemical industry together with the schools and organizations in their local area.

Held every June, the National YBTC Challenge is the culmination of Local and State Challenges held nationwide throughout a Challenge cycle. Each State Challenge winner and a chaperone receive complimentary travel to and lodging in Philadelphia, PA. In addition to the *challenge* of the competition, participants receive exciting prizes. The event joins participants, guests, and chemical industry members together to celebrate chemistry and the efforts of participating students.

When: June 13, 2008, 8 a.m. – Noon

Where: Chemical Heritage Foundation  
315 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
215/925-2222

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Founded in 1989 and headquartered in Arlington, VA, the Chemical Educational Foundation is dedicated to fostering a greater understanding of the science of chemistry, the benefits of chemicals, and the importance of chemical safety awareness.

## PRESS RELEASES

A press release is a brief account of your story or event. It should be organized, concise, and absent of technical jargon or "fluff". Stick to the message and incorporate the following guidelines:

- Have a well-defined reason for sending the release.
- Get the reader's attention and interest with a catchy heading and strong leading sentence.
- Cover the most important facts first and then follow with details.
- Incorporate the five Ws:
  - Who are you and what do you represent (concise organization description)?
  - What is the news that you want covered (do you want to invite people to an event, communicate an important fact, talk about your company's community outreach activities)?
  - When will the event take place (include month, day, time, and costs, if any)?
  - Where will the event take place?
  - Why is your news important? Why should your community care?
- Focus on one central subject. Do not stray from your topic.
- Include only appropriate quotes. The quote should be short, support the information in the release, and include the name, title, and company of the person quoted. Make sure the person quoted approves the quote before sending out the release.
- Follow the chosen media outlet's press release format. In general, the press release should be:
  - Typed and double-spaced
  - Written in the third person
  - Limited to one or two pages
- Don't forget to include the date of your release. Also write FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE on the upper left-hand corner.
- Include contact information.
- Mark with "###" at the end of the release to signify the end.

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

### News Release

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**For Immediate Release: June 17, 2008**

**Contact: Laurel Brent, 703/527-6223**

**lbrent@chemed.org**

#### ILLINOIS STUDENT WINS NATIONAL CHEMISTRY COMPETITION

ARLINGTON, VA—June 17, 2008 – On Friday, June 13, twelve students from across the country showcased their knowledge of chemistry concepts, important discoveries, and safety awareness as they battled to become champion of a national chemistry competition held by the Chemical Educational Foundation (CEF).

After seven rounds, Christopher Pillay, an eighth grader at Margaret Mead Junior High School in Elk Grove, IL, emerged as the winner, gaining the title of 2008 National YBTC Challenge champion! Ethan Li, an eighth grader at Detroit Country Day School in Bloomfield Hills, MI, and Nabil Shaikh, a seventh grader at Exeter Junior High School in Reading, PA, placed second and third, respectively.

Held at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, PA, the competition brought together almost one hundred members of the chemical industry, excited family members, and educators in a celebration of chemistry. “The *You Be The Chemist* Challenge, in its fourth year, is a wonderful opportunity to showcase local middle school students who excel at science and have a competitive spirit,” stated Laura Tew, Director of Stakeholder Relations for Arch Chemicals, Inc., of Norwalk, CT, a gold-level sponsor of the two-day event. “The Challenge is a great fit for the sponsor, the student, the parent, and the teacher,” she added.

In addition to Arch, AIG Environmental of New York, NY, was also a gold-level sponsor. Silver-level sponsors were Brenntag North America, Inc., of Reading, PA, and Thames & Kosmos of Portsmouth, RI. Bronze-level sponsors included Expo Chemical Co., Inc., of

Houston, TX, the National Association of Chemical Distributors of Arlington, VA, and Turning Technologies, LLC of Youngstown, OH.

“This is the third year that AIG Environmental has sponsored this event. We are proud to take part in an event that encourages the development of our youth. Chemistry and science are careers that deserve the highest recognition and the Challenge reiterates that importance,” stated Denali Marlane, Associations Manager for AIG Environmental.

Throughout the school year, thousands of students participated in Regional and/or State YBTC Challenges nationwide. The top twelve students, one from each participating state, advanced to the national competition. The other participants were Mahala Curl, Stuart Pepper Middle School, Brandenburg, KY; Kit Dunton, Gold Hill Middle School, Fort Mill, SC; Raine Hasskew, Cypress Christian Academy, Houston, TX; Jeremiah Mitchel, DeVeaux Junior High School, Toledo, OH; Emily Pakulski, Washington International School, Washington, DC; Inderbir Singh, Westdale Middle School, Baton Rouge, LA; Andrew Stewart, Duncan Middle School, Duncan, OK; Doug Streat, Roton Middle School, Norwalk, CT; and Elijah Stutzman, Davidson IB Middle School, Davidson, NC.

While in Philadelphia, all of the National YBTC Challenge participants received prizes including Thames & Kosmos CHEMC3000 chemistry kits, gift certificates to the Discovery Channel Store, and YBTC Challenge T-shirts, bags, and other giveaways. The first-, second-, and third-place winners will also receive educational savings bonds. In addition to the academics of the competition, participants, chaperones, and industry members were able to explore the city, enjoy local restaurants, and relax as they explored the wonders of science at the Franklin Institute.

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## DISTRIBUTE YOUR MEDIA ADVISORY OR PRESS RELEASE

- Send your media advisory or press release in a timely manner. The media needs advance notice (usually three weeks for media advisories and two weeks for press releases) about an upcoming event or story in order to put it on their schedule.
- Some media may prefer to receive releases by fax or regular mail, but many prefer to receive information via e-mail. If sending your release by e-mail, you want the reporter to be able to quickly open the e-mail, determine what it is about, and be interested in finding out more about your event. Keep these tips in mind:
  - Use a catchy subject – grab the attention of the reporter right off the bat.
  - Include the text of the release in the body of the e-mail. Don't send it as an attachment.
  - Don't include graphics that may be slow to download.
- Follow up with a phone call a few days after you send the release or advisory.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public service announcements (PSAs) are short messages produced on film, DVD, CD, audio file, or as a computer file and then given to radio or television stations for airplay. PSAs are a great communication avenue for nonprofits or companies supporting the missions of nonprofits. Topics often cover important social issues, such as health and safety issues or education and training concerns. PSAs can be very simple, with a single speaker reading or performing a message, or they can be more elaborate with flashy sound and visual effects, high-tech animation, music, or actors.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires media broadcast outlets to serve in the public interest. Therefore, most television and radio stations use PSAs as one of the ways to meet the requirements of licensing and renewal applications.

### WHEN TO USE A PSA

- If you have a specific announcement to make – Attend the YBTC Challenge!
- If you have a clear, easy-to-communicate message that you want your community to know about – Chemicals and chemistry are important in everyday life!
- If you are requesting a specific action – Support science education; use CEF's Activity Guides; show students that chemistry is fun!

## BENEFITS OF A PSA

- They are generally inexpensive. Media broadcast outlets donate the airtime; therefore, your only cost is that of producing the PSA.
- Stations will allow you to include your phone number or Web site address in the PSA, giving your company and message inexpensive promotion.
- PSAs can be an easy way to reach a broad audience, raising greater awareness of your cause.
- PSAs are an effective way to get your community members to take action!

## DEVELOPING A PSA

- Decide on a target audience. Who do you want to reach with your PSA?
- Focus your PSA on one broadcast medium. Which broadcast medium will reach the greatest amount of people in your target audience? Focusing specifically on either a radio or television broadcast will help you further flush out your message and give you a better idea of production needs. (If you have success in one medium, you can always create a PSA in the other medium.)
- Contact your preferred media outlets. Find out their PSA requirements. In what format do they want to receive them? What is their preferred length? When is the best time to submit a PSA and to whom?
- Decide on a clear, concise message. What do you want your target audience to know? What action do you want them to take?
- Brainstorm ideas by listing all the possible messages you want to get into the public mind. How can you illustrate these points? What do you want your audience to know?
- Focus your message. PSAs are short by nature. Make sure you don't overload the listener or viewer with too much information.
- Check your facts by making sure that all of the information you provide is up to date and accurate.
- Grab your listeners' or viewers' attention right away with a catchy phrase or tagline. Your PSA should be imaginative, original, and attention getting. Remember, most of the time those listening to the radio are also doing other things, such as driving or working.
- Create a script for your PSA. Keep the number of words used reasonable to the time allotted for your PSA. For example: a 20-second PSA should have 40-50 words at most for radio, less for television.
- Create a focus group for your script. Find members of your target audience and show them or let them read your PSA. Do they find it informative? Are they moved to act?

## PRODUCTION TIPS

- Decide early on if you want to produce your PSA yourself or professionally. Keep in mind that a badly produced PSA can have a negative effect on the opinion of your organization.
- Approach area ad agencies and production companies to see if any would be willing to donate employees, studio time, or equipment for your PSA.
- If you can afford to, do more than one PSA. Produce different versions of the same message or several different PSAs with differing messages.
- Radio
  - Professional broadcast announcers may be expensive; consider students at a local college radio station, local sports announcers, or those who are familiar with speaking in front of large audiences.
  - Keep your message clear, concise, and on topic.
- Television
  - Local drama clubs or community theater groups may be a great place to find inexpensive (or even free) on-screen talent, who will appreciate the experience.
  - Local universities may also have media arts majors who would be willing to work with you to gain more experience in videography, editing footage, etc.
  - Create a storyboard for the entire script before you begin shooting. Storyboards show sketches of each individual shot with the appropriate dialogue. This will help the director and the videographer figure out the flow of the PSA. Tell the videographer exactly what you want. Write out each shot and the dialogue that goes with it.
  - Avoid special effects. They are expensive and could prove to distract from your message.
  - Keep your shots clean, to the point, and distraction free.

## PSA FORMAT GUIDELINES

- PSAs are generally 10–60 seconds long.
- Your copy should be typed and double-spaced (even triple-spaced if read by a radio announcer).
- Don't use hyphenations or abbreviations.
- The top of your sheet should include how long the PSA should run (FOR USE: June 12–June 17), the length of the PSA, what organization the PSA is for, and the title of the PSA.
- The bottom should be marked with “###” to signify the end of the PSA.

## DISTRIBUTING YOUR PSA

- Different stations have different policies. It is important to contact your local station ahead of time to find out what the requirements are of your preferred broadcast outlet. Never send a PSA without knowing the rules and guidelines of the station first.
- Getting a PSA played can be highly competitive. Make personal contact with someone at the station, preferably whoever is in charge of selecting which PSAs run.
- Try to schedule an appointment with your contact to talk about the PSA.
- Bring an on-air-ready copy of the PSA, the script, and information about your company, and the community outreach project you are organizing.
- Explain what your company does, the goals of the PSA, and how your message benefits the community.

## SAMPLE RADIO PSA SCRIPT

### Public Service Announcement

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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Laurel Brent, 703/527-6223**

**lbrent@chemed.org**

Use: June 1, 2008 – June 12, 2008

Time: 20 seconds

Organization: Chemical Educational Foundation

Title: Celebrate Chemistry

Main Point: The Chemical Educational Foundation's Fourth National *You Be The Chemist* Challenge competition will be held June 13, 2008, at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, PA. Join us at 8 a.m. to cheer on students from around the country as they compete in this exciting celebration of chemistry. For more information, visit the Foundation's Web site at [www.chemed.org](http://www.chemed.org).

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## RESPOND TO QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA

- Respond immediately when reporters contact you. Ask them their deadline and what questions they have. Set a time to meet or talk.
- Know your message. Have your message points written out and practice saying them. Keep your message simple and short; too many talking points may be distracting for the reporter.
- Listen carefully to the reporter's questions. Try to avoid yes or no answers. Your response to any question should bring the conversation back to your original message.
- Make up some questions that you think a reporter may ask. Practice how you would respond to them. Write your answers down and then practice saying them aloud.
- It's okay to say "I don't know." It is much better to tell reporters that you will research an answer and get back to them than to provide them with information that may not be accurate. If you think that you did misstate something, immediately let the reporter know.
- Never get upset or lose your temper with a reporter. You want to build a positive rapport with local media. Keep cool!
- If you're on television, maintain eye contact with the reporter, speak clearly in a normal conversational tone, ignore the camera, don't wear flashy clothing, and assume that the microphones are on *at all times*!
- Always thank a reporter for his or her coverage. Send a personal thank you note.

## MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

Maintaining a relationship with local media is an important part of your community outreach efforts. Below are suggestions that can help you build a positive rapport with local reporters and media outlets:

- Get to know the reporters who cover the topics most important to you.
- Arrange a short meeting at their paper, television, or radio station to introduce yourself. Reporters have very busy schedules and are often working on tight deadlines. Be considerate of their time and make the meeting brief.
- Keep up with personnel changes; turnover in the media industry is often high.
- Develop your own media list and keep it up to date. Some areas might even have a local press club that you can join to create even greater media relations.
- Make yourself easily available to the media at any time. You may want to give reporters a cell or home phone number where they can reach you after work hours – in case they need any last-minute information.
- Return a reporter's call as soon as possible. Reporters are working on deadlines and will appreciate your quick response.
- Always thank a reporter for his or her coverage. Send a personal thank you note.

## KEEP A RECORD

Celebrate your company's media coverage! Keep a copy for your files and share the news with your board members, customers, neighbors, etc. Include the article in company mailings, newsletters, or promotional items.