

 

# Media Relations

INTERREG IIIC  
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## What is media relations?

- Building relationships with journalists
- Introducing your project to the media
- Promoting story ideas to the media

 

## Why media relations?

- It will help you get recognition for your projects
- Demonstrate the benefit of your projects to your target audiences
- Improve your chance of more funding

 

## Why media relations?

- It is another method to influence regional policy
- You have a legal requirement to do communications & PR activities for your projects
  - ✦ According to EC regulations
  - ✦ According to your work plan

 

## Getting started

- Identify your target audiences
- Know what your messages are
- Know which media you should be using to reach your target audiences
- Create a communications/PR plan
- Develop a press list
- Start communications activities

 

## Media relations

Sounds obvious but...

- Read publications / trade press relevant to your project
- Read relevant national press sections
- Know what stories or issues they cover
- Be an industry expert
- When a journalist calls, call back as soon as possible



## How to generate media interest in your project



## Build your media relationships

- Invest in media relationships
- Key to regular and positive editorial coverage
- Most journalists get most stories from a small circle



## Organise or participate in events

- Press conferences
- Media briefings
- Seminars or round-table meetings
- Press trips or media tours
- Speaking at conferences or events



## Write opinion editorials

- Article in a newspaper or magazine that expresses an opinion on an issue
- See if you have any high-profile people in your project who could author one



## Letters to the editor

- Monitor press in your market for articles relevant to your project
- If yes, write a letter to the editor commenting on it
  - ❖ Remember to link the contents of your letter to your project



## Case studies

- Write a case study about your project & promote it to local media
- Remember to identify:
  - ❖ the problem
  - ❖ what you did to fix the problem
  - ❖ results achieved



## Send a press release

- Only if you have news
- Something new, interesting or unusual that your project is doing
- Send it only to media that would be interested
  - ✦ Not everyone on your list!



## Organise journalist interviews

- Must have something newsworthy to tell them about your project



## Get to know your local media

- Find out what stories they're interested in
- Build up personal contact: perhaps by inviting them out to lunch or coffee?



## Organise tour or press trip

- Must be newsworthy
- Plan very well and show media something interesting and different



## Publicise research

- If your project has produced interesting research, publicise it



## Create your own survey

- Create a survey linked to your project and publicise the results
  - ✦ Easiest to do something online – [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) is a good tool



## Get forward feature lists

- This is a list of upcoming subjects to be covered in a publication
- Many publications have them
- Call and ask for list or check their websites



## Industry experts

- Most projects involve experts in some field or other
  - ✦ Try to get them quoted in newspapers, magazines, on radio or television
- Look at the events listed on DG REGIO website to see if your project could participate anywhere



## Prepare story ideas

- You can promote these if you're called upon by the media
- Suggest them when speaking with media contacts



## Advertorials

- A paid-for article in a magazine or newspaper
- Write and place in a publication your target audiences read
  - ✦ There is normally a fee for advertorials, this might not be covered as part of your project budget



## Send information to be uploaded

- To the "news and events of running operations" section of the INTERREG IIC website
  - ✦ Press releases
  - ✦ Case studies
  - ✦ Features
  - ✦ Opinion editorials
  - ✦ Forthcoming events
- To the Events section of the DG REGIO website.



## Building media relationships



## Journalists

- Be active, not reactive
- Don't damage hard-built relationship by one thoughtless mistake
- If you don't know an answer say you'll find out
- If not an exclusive, say so



## Specialist journalists

- Approach specialist journalists
- Build relations with editorial specialists
  - ✦ Health correspondent
  - ✦ Technology correspondent
  - ✦ Science correspondent
  - ✦ Transport correspondent
  - ✦ International journalists



## Specialist journalists

- If specialist is relevant to your business get to know them personally
- Supply them with regular, exclusive material
- A specialist will generally get you better coverage than a non-specialist reporter



## Specialist journalists

- Less likely to make mistakes about your subject area
- Often freelance for different publications
- May be able to help with writing materials
- Trade / specialist press often supply national newspapers with stories



## Forward features

- Make use of special features or supplements
- Most publications run special supplements
- Soft target for coverage
- If survey theme is appropriate, find out who's editing it



## Forward features

- Supply editors personally with story ideas
- Most special features are regular
  - ✦ once a year, etc.
- Build up list of scheduled features
- Target story ideas to appeal specifically to each one

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## The media

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## Wire services

- Use newswires
- If it is a good story it might be put on the wire
- Monitored by all newspapers
- Good stories get better chance of getting noticed by editors

AFP

DOWJONES

REUTERS KNOW. NOW.

dpa

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## TV

- Hard news
- Softer news
- Documentaries
- Consumer shows
- Children
- Lifestyle
- Etc.



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## Radio

- Radio
- Music stations
- Talk stations
- Combinations

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## New technology

- News websites:
  - ❖ Affiliated (to newspaper, television or radio station – or media group)
  - ❖ Independent
- Websites for specific industries
- Newsgroups
- Online message boards / groups
- Emails, SMS

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## Print

- International publications
- National papers
- Regional papers
- Magazines
  - ❖ Consumer
  - ❖ Specialist
  - ❖ Trade

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## Spokespeople



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## Spokespeople

- Vital for media coverage
- Find the right spokesperson
  - ❖ Essential to get best out of an interview
- As a rule don't use marketing or publicity people for interviews
- Better to use someone like a politician or someone senior from a local authority
  - ❖ Unless they are poor communicators

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## Training

- Train them well
- Can they:
  - ❖ Deliver the correct message
  - ❖ Handle awkward questions
  - ❖ Deal with hostile interviews
  - ❖ What do they look like on TV?
  - ❖ Sound like on radio?
  - ❖ What languages do they speak?
  - ❖ Will they be available?



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## Spokespeople

- The wrong person will do more harm than good
  - ❖ You've spent time & effort convincing a journalist to run a story
  - ❖ Don't be let down by the spokesperson at the interview
  - ❖ Damages the reputation of your project
  - ❖ Damages relationship with a journalist

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## Industry Experts

- Promote spokesperson as industry expert
- Spokesperson should be able to comment on:
  - ❖ General industry trends, future of the industry, important discoveries, etc.
- Large accountancy companies very good at this
  - ❖ e.g. After government economic announcements they ensure that journalists have telephone access to their key financial experts

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## Interviews

- Make sure spokespersons are well briefed
  - ❖ Know the subject area
  - ❖ Know the publication
- If possible develop a Q&A document covering as many question areas as possible
  - ❖ The good AND the bad
  - ❖ Include all key messages



## Interviews

- Discuss question areas with journalist
  - ❖ Most journalists will not supply questions in advance
  - ❖ Unless Hollywood star, unlikely to be able to ban question topics



## Interviews

- Follow up with journalists afterwards
  - ❖ For more information
  - ❖ To double-check details
- Unlikely to get copy approval
- Keep track of interviews
  - ❖ Keep copies of what's published / aired
  - ❖ Good for evaluation and reference



## Other media relations tools

- Press kits
  - ❖ Create one for your project
- Online press office
- Monitor your press/media coverage



## Workshop

- Brainstorm three potential news angles or news stories for your project
- Brainstorm what media relations activities you would do for these news angles