

# 2012

## Media Training Kit



**Womensport  
Queensland**



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## FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF MEDIA

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### 10 steps to successful media coverage

1. **Keep it short** – Strip your message to the bones. Remember people hardly have time to read these days. Put your detailed information in a 'fact page' supplied as a 'service follow up' after your press release
2. **Think headline** – If the crux of your message cannot be expressed in a few words (maybe a sentence) it's unlikely to be successful
3. **Use a consistent slogan, logo and spokesperson** – This is the best way to make your sport or event instantly recognizable, especially over an extended period. Include your organizational slogan at the bottom of all press releases
4. **Do it regularly** – Regular communication is essential to build a relationship with journalist but DO NOT WASTE THEIR TIME. Contact them when you are offering them something that they can use. Be a service to them not a nuisance.
5. **Be positive** – You will feel frustration at lack of coverage, inappropriate coverage, inaccurate coverage and controversial coverage but always approach your media contacts in a positive, friendly and professional way. Work with who you have and tailor things to suit them. Remember they don't owe you coverage. You need them more than they need you.
6. **Set the agenda** – Be proactive in your approaches. Present ideas, angles, and contacts.
7. **Be visual** – Pictures are much more effective than words. Be wary of the use of your female athletes in particular
8. **Appeal to emotions** – News stories love things such as conflict, fear, triumph over adversity, amazing comebacks, historical statistics or family connections etc.
9. **Entertainment** – Think of the media as theatre; it is primarily for entertainment. It is not rocket science and it has no real social moral obligations
10. **Match the medium** – Tailor the message to fit the different types of media and do not ignore grass roots media. Research suggests more households read the school newsletter more than the daily city paper

### Things that journalists consider most newsworthy

- ✓ Impact
- ✓ Conflict
- ✓ Timelines
- ✓ Proximity
- ✓ Prominence
- ✓ Currency
- ✓ Human interest
- ✓ The usual
- ✓ Money

## ORGANISATIONAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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### **Have a spokesperson that is always your number one choice for the organisation. (Build their profile)**

- If possible use the Chairman, CEO, Elite Coach or a well-known name from your board.
- Be sure it is someone who will be available on demand
- Be sure and use someone who will be available on demand
- Keep them informed at all times as they may be approached directly by the media in the case of a controversy
- Choose someone who will most likely be involved long term with your organisation

### **Have a second spokesperson who is the person used when the first is not available**

- All of the above applies
- Be sure they are a person likely to be available when the first is not (e.g. don't use two board members who are married as they will inevitably holiday together)

### **Have a high profile athlete (possibly retired) who will be happy to be quoted (high profile mention) and occasionally used as spokesperson.**

*(This person becomes your high profile mention... for example... a media release can start with the title "Emma Snowsill impressed with junior performances". The press release may refer to junior results that Emma was not a part of or even saw, but if she agrees to be quoted in your press release she may help you get coverage.)*

- Have a high profile current or former athlete from your sport who's name you can use to attract attention
- Choose a controversy free option as an athlete that has a high level of recognition and respect in the media/public eye
- Write the quotes of your 'high profile mention' yourself to minimize their work and NEVER release the quote without approval (a two minute phone call is all that will be needed)
- Be sure your 'high profile mention' is easy to contact or approvals of quotes will be tough

### **Create media contact rules**

- Have rules about all media contacts going through your Media Representative (volunteer or paid) where possible
- When direct media contact is inevitably made to a member of the organisation, (either spokesperson or staff member) always notify your Media Representative so that you can follow up with the journalist to offer assistance, further information or stats etc.



### **Create a media contact list**

- This list must be maintained on a weekly, monthly basis as journalists roles frequently change. This list is your key intellectual property to get good coverage and keep it active
- Ask parents of your players what they do for a living as part of your signing up process, as you will inevitably have the children of media professionals in your own ranks. Make use of their contacts and expertise where possible

### **Create simple advertising documentation for your organisation**

- This documentation will take form of brochures and pamphlets that provide information of who you are, what services/sports you offer etc.
- This can be used to provide information to prospective athletes, volunteers, sponsors and sometimes the media
- Create fact and stat sheets of who your members are, what your athletes achieve etc. that may be of use to people interested in your sport including the media. (Place these stats and fact sheets on your website where possible so they can be easily and remotely accessed)
- If you have the staff availability or a suitable volunteer create a monthly newsletter that keeps people tuned in to your organisation
- Make use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, get athletes and high profile members of your organisation to like and follow you as this will attract attention to your pages. It is also a great tool to promote events and promotions

### **Treat your website like it is an organizational representative that sits down with those interested in your sport and provides all the information they could possibly be seeking**

- Make the navigation simple, the photos plentiful and the overelaborate elements of an expensive website to a minimum as they can cause issues with the loading of the page
- Update your website with the latest news, stats, results and profiles so that it is current and dynamic
- Use your website to access new sponsors, members, newsletter recipients, volunteers and more

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## **HOW TO WRITE A MEDIA RELEASE**

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### Media Release Template

#### **SUBJECT LINE (generally same as heading)**

The subject line and heading must be compelling and provide an angle to the story.

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

'Media Release' needs to be clearly stated at the top centre of the page to identify the nature of the document.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

State when the news release is available for use. If the news release can be used immediately, use the term 'For immediate release'. If you need to time the release or place an embargo on it, clearly mark as 'EMBARGO. Not for release before TIME, DATE'. Note that editors do not look favourably on an embargo.

## **RELEASE DATE**

States when the news release was sent.

## **HEADING**

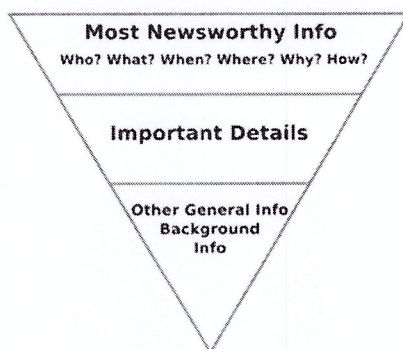
Heading must be compelling and provide an angle to the story.

## **PARAGRAPH LEAD**

The lead paragraph should include the **WHAT, WHERE, WHY, HOW, WHEN** and **WHO**.

By using this formula of answering WHAT happened; WHERE it took place; WHY it occurred; HOW, WHEN, and to WHOM, the lead will be easier to write. An editor may not read beyond the lead paragraph so it is essential that it contains all the relevant information.

## **BODY TEXT**



Each paragraph of a news release is less important than the one before it. This is called the inverted pyramid.

Each paragraph must be self-contained.

The final paragraph should summarise the background or the organisation or individual.

Trade papers will often accept a feature story in its entirety. Select how you want to tell the story, such as whose story it is and how you are going to reveal information.

## **CONTACTS**

Details of your media contact person for further information, including name, email address, website address and business and after hours contact details. Journalists prefer the phone and work all hours.

## **SOURCES [IF ANY]**

### Media Release Tips

### **Things to avoid**



A media release can quickly become 'pluggy', boring or simply over-complicated. When writing, make sure to avoid:

- Jargon & acronyms specific to your industry
- Long sentences & complex words
- 'Salesy' statements about the organisation
- Buzzwords (e.g. end-to-end, unique, solution, innovative, state-of-the-art, etc.)
- Emotions and adjectives should be reserved for quotes only
- Do not make the release too long keep it to one A4 page
- Do not have information close together. Leave spaces between paragraphs

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## MEDIA MANAGEMENT FOR A MAJOR EVENT

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### Suggested steps:

1. Call media outlets for the appropriate area of your event and ask for a name of the relevant person and an email or other contact to send the media release to. Find out what their preferred method of delivery is
2. Four weeks before your event, write a media release and send it to all contacts you have collected
3. Create a 'media pack' that includes profile information of key people involved in your event, the history of the event or your organisation, relevant fact and stats, etc. (no more than 3 pages)
4. Three weeks before the event call each of the contacts you were previously given to ask if they had received the media release
5. If they did not get the release, resend it immediately
6. If they did get the release and appear to be brushing you off then explain that you have a 'media pack' to send them and again ask for their email address and send the 'media pack' along with the original media release
7. Two weeks before the event call those who only received the press release and tell them you are following up to be sure the press release was received and that you have a 'media pack' to assist them (send the 'media pack' to them)
8. Four days or so before the event call all the contacts and ask who will be attending the event and what special arrangements they will require. Discuss who is available for interview or when the best filming/photograph opportunities will be
9. The day before the event send a brief email saying that you are looking forward to seeing them at the event, what time it starts and possibly the time of the key award, final game, etc. that would be relevant to the media
10. On the day of the event be sure that a media pack with the media release, fact sheets, invitation, etc. is available for all media who turn up
11. Have a designated staff member or volunteer who will greet media and help chase up people they want to interview/photograph, etc.

12. Take note of the name and media outlet of each photographer, journalist, etc. that attend the event and follow up with a phone call after the event to thank them for attending and see if they require any further information from you
13. Collect all media coverage for your portfolio
14. Write a brief thank you email for journalists/outlets who give you coverage
15. Call journalists who did not give you coverage and in a friendly manner ask where you could improve in the future to gain coverage
16. Update your media list with all your new contacts from the media

(All news outlets may vary from daily, weekly and monthly and may need to be treated differently)

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## GOOD VS BAD WEBSITE

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### Tips for achieving a good website

- Keep your website current. Ensure that information is updated on a regular basis
- Ensure that menu system is simple and workable
- Have your contact information on the website, make sure that it is clear and up to date
- A simple clean website design can be far more effective than overelaborate designs
- Good use of graphic elements (photos, subheads, pull quotes) to break up large areas of text
- Use colours that work together and make your text easy to read. Text is big enough to read, but not too big
- Every web page in the site looks like it belongs to the same site; there are repetitive elements that carry throughout the pages
- Link colors coordinate with page colors
- Links are underlined so they are instantly clear to the visitor
- Have athlete profiles with pictures. These profiles should be easy to read and have the relevant dates of their achievements
- People love pictures. Have pictures from big events available on your website so people can see what your sport is all about
- Avoid over clutter of the web pages
- Make use of links that will connect people to your social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter

### Tips for avoiding a bad website

- Having no contact information (only giving the option for contact via online form)
- Having limited information about what your organisation does



- Busy, distracting backgrounds that make the text hard to read
- Underlined text that is not a link
- Text that is too small to read, text crowding against the left edge and text that stretches all the way across the page
- Dead links (links that don't work anymore)
- Text links that are not underlined so you don't know they are links (If you're not going to underline your links, make sure that each link is made clear. Don't make people wander around with a mouse checking to see if randomly coloured text is a link)
- Blue link borders around graphics
- Links that are not clear about where they will take you
- Links in body copy that distract readers and lead them off to remote, useless pages
- Large graphic files that take forever to load
- Meaningless or useless graphics
- Graphics that don't fit on the screen (assuming a screen of 800 x 600 pixels)
- Anything that blinks, especially text
- Animations that never stop
- Unclear navigation; over complex navigation
- Orphan pages (no links back to where they came from, no identification)
- Useless page titles that don't explain what the page is about
- Entry page or home page that does not fit within standard browser window (800 x 600 pixels)
- Frames that make you scroll sideways
- No focal point on the page
- Too many focal points on the page
- Cluttered, not enough alignment of elements

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## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH JOURNALISTS

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- Be confident and friendly – you will feel uncomfortable at times contacting people without having previous contact with them but be sure you are offering something and it will be easier
- Be prepared with your information, press release, fact sheets, idea for an angle etc.
- Understand that the journalist is rarely to blame if your story does not get coverage
- It is ok and in fact inevitable to feel frustration but always be friendly, courteous and professional

- Protect your media contact list. Do not put them on a general mailing list and allow other staff members to mail them unnecessary things. Only the media manager/volunteer sends the relevant media information from your organisation or you will train them to ignore you
- Remember that a journalist is trying to do his/her job and it is your role to be of assistance. Provide information, hunt down contacts or interviewee. Provide a service!
- Be available and accessible to comment on 'your issues'
- Say thank you when you get coverage. It is amazing how effective this one act is in keeping a journalist involved in your sport!
- Be aware of media deadlines. Their professional lives depend upon them so be reliable
- Ask what they want, who their target audience is and tailor your media offerings to suit their market
- Offering free tickets to special events, dinners or even events not associated with your organisation if you get your hands on something through a sponsor or parent that you think a journalist would want
- Manage and train your organizational talent, (spokesperson, coaches, key players) to be sure that they are good performers when you pass them to the media on behalf of your sport
- Imagine yourself in the journalist's position with the business demands of their particular media outlet, their management team, the number of sports contacting and asking so much of them and behave in a way that you would want if in their role

## MEDIA INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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### **Always be prepared**

Just because you're immersed in a subject every day doesn't mean you can spontaneously pull on the right threads to weave a public performance. The fundamentals always come down to preparation. Make sure to research your listeners and their expectations beforehand. In any interview, you're really speaking via the reporter to his or her readers, listeners, or viewers.

### **Shaping your message**

The real difference between talking to the media and talking directly to an audience, of course, comes down to control. The idea is to get out the message you want while still responding to questions and ceding control to the reporter.

### **Six tips to help you get out your preferred message**

1. **Set goals for every appearance** – OSTA: objective, strategy, tactics, and audience. Everything communicated should have an OSTA plan. Plan to hammer home your key messages. For interviews, keep answers — especially for TV or radio — to about 25 to 40 seconds each. When it's appropriate, use props or visual materials to vary your pacing.



2. **Nothing is 100% off the record** – Once notes are made, editors and publishers can review them. Whatever you say — anywhere — can follow you around endlessly and perhaps disastrously. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Then later on, be certain to get back to the reporter with an answer.
3. **Watch your body language** – Even in positive interview situations, interviewees sometimes look tense or stiff, which can have a big impact on the message you are trying to convey.
4. **Stay on track with your message** – If the interview goes off track, stop it. You can ask for a break, a glass of water, a visit to the restroom. It doesn't matter if the excuse seems lame — they will use footage of you on-camera, not off.
5. **Learn how to "bridge"** – This technique allows you to deflect any attempts to derail your message. "Bridging" creates a transition so that you can move from one subject to the message you want to communicate. First answer the direct question, then transition to your message.
6. **Prepare take-aways** – Always plan the points or facts you want the reporter and, by extension, the audience to walk away thinking about. You might identify these points as the building blocks of your presentation.

#### **Make sure to track the results**

Get reviews of your performance. Ask pals and peers how well your message went over. Be smart and brave enough to make the necessary improvements, so you do even better next time.

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## SUCCESSFUL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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#### **What NOT to do when connecting on social media...**

- #1. Be inappropriate
- #2. Over promote – events/athletes
- #3. Be impersonal or rude
- #4. Show emotion – think before you send!

#### **What TO DO when connecting on social media...**

- #1 Build relationships
- #2 Be respectful of opinions even if you don't agree with them
- #3 Be on-brand and mindful of the online footprint you're creating
- #4 Be honest in all your business dealings