



## CREATING A PR TOOLKIT

Once a strategy has been put in place, it is time to develop the tools necessary to gain media coverage for your meetings, conventions trade shows and events in Columbus.

### PRESS RELEASES

A press release is written and distributed to get your message in front of a large public audience through media outlets. A press release should include newsworthy and valuable information compiled in an organized and concise manner. Visit <https://www.experiencecolumbus.com/media/press-releases/> for examples.

#### Press Release Elements:

1. Issue the release on company letterhead. It looks professional and credible.
2. Include a short, descriptive headline to grab the reader's attention.
3. Include city where the press release was written and the date it is released.
4. Put the most essential information at the beginning. Provide answers to who, what, where, when, why and how in the first paragraph.
5. The remaining body of the release should include further details, background information, quotes and additional relevant information.
6. Use a quote by a company representative. This adds credibility to your release.
7. Include a contact for members of the media to reach for additional information, or to set up an interview. This person should be familiar with all the information in the release and be able to answer questions.
8. Include a boilerplate (information about your company or organization).
9. Center three pound signs (###) or the number thirty (-30-) at the bottom of the page to indicate the end of your release.

**\*Be sure to proofread your release twice, preferably by two or more people, before you send it out!**

### MEDIA ALERTS

If you are interested in having media cover a specific event during your meeting or show, such as a press conference, you should send out a media alert. The alert should provide key information about the event and entice media to attend and cover the event.

#### Media Alert Elements:

1. Issue the media alert on company letterhead. It looks professional and credible.
2. Include media contact information for press seeking additional information.
3. Use a short, active and descriptive headline to entice the reader.
4. If there is a photo opportunity, state it at the top of the alert; it is more likely to generate coverage.



5. Use a block format for media alerts, so the news desk or reporter can quickly and easily find the specific information they need. Describe what the media will see and hear, where and when it will take place and give background details.
6. Include a boilerplate (information about your company or organization).

## MEDIA LISTS

Now that you have your press release and media alert ready for distribution, it is time to build your media list. A media list includes key contacts who may cover your story, or who would benefit from receiving your press release or media alert.

### Effective media list tips:

1. When laying out your media list, use whatever format is most helpful to you – an electronic database or a spreadsheet chart. There are also companies that can create media lists for you, primarily if you plan to send out releases nationwide. Feel free to utilize the local media list provided by Experience Columbus but be sure to vet each contact to make sure the outlet and beat are relevant to your meeting, convention trade show or event. **Do not distribute your release to all contacts in the list.**
2. For each outlet, note the contact name, phone number(s), fax number, e-mail address and website. Research which reporters are the best fit to pitch. Ask yourself, “Would they be interested in this event?” Also note how each wants to receive information – some prefer e-mail, while others prefer phone calls.
3. Find out when their “crunch” periods are. This is the time just before a deadline when calling would really put you on their blacklist. This shows you are considerate and interested in making their job easier. Also, keep a running log of phone calls, email exchanges and conversations with each publication.
4. It is important to know the media outlet’s audience and editorial focus before pitching items. If possible, read, watch or listen online to the media outlets you plan to pitch before doing so!