

Publicity Officers'

AIDE MEMOIRE



Seeking a higher profile



CONTENTS

	Page
P.R. Fundamentals	1
The Press Release	2-3
The Press Release - Layout	4
Writing Features	5-6
Dealing with Radio	7-9
Company Magazines	9
Photography	10-12
Sample Press Release Style	13
Publicity Ideas	14-16
Key Facts for Fund-Raisers	17-28

P .R. FUNDAMENTALS

P.R. is all about image - customers, potential customers, general public, competitors, suppliers, shareholders, opinion formers, your own company staff, future employees. You have an image whether you practise P.R. or not. P.R. people (indeed all staff) must strive to improve and maintain a company image.

Every organisation - Government, private companies, even museums, Police, sports teams, etc is now spending more time than ever in explaining and giving information about their actions.

Favourable attitudes amongst your 'public' are essential to the organisation and are inescapably linked to your commercial future. Attitudes play a big part in P .R. work - opinions, beliefs of general public that determines images of companies, products, services.

P .R. work is to determine what the right image is and then work to that end.

One bad press story, correct or otherwise, can harm, even destroy a company or organisation image overnight. Remember self-inflicted wounds - the RATNER factor - are so easy.

Anything contentious, involving policy, commercial confidence: always seek approval from above - produce a considered statement.

Finally, 'TELL THE TRUTH'. The Press will always find out and then you and your company are really in trouble. The skill is to try to turn round negative situations into something positive.

THE PRESS RELEASE

- >>> Reliability - will lose credibility straight away if any inaccuracies - check, check and check again.
- >>> Must have bold company logo at top, bold heading NEWS RELEASE, or similar (example on page 13).
- >>> Opening paragraph to be presented in such a way as to retain interest - 80% to 90% of all press releases are not used. You have to reduce the odds.
- >>> Needs slanting to type of publication, may therefore need to be several versions of the press release.
- >>> Name, alternative contact, office number, out of hours number must be shown at end of release stating 'For further information contact ...'. Out of hours number is vital, remember press work long, different hours from other people.

Why do so many fail?

1. What's newsworthy to you falls flat with the Editor.
2. Arrives too late - need to know publication deadlines etc.
3. Must get to right person - News Editor (small newspapers, by name if possible).
4. Story intrinsically good but so badly presented Editor loses heart and gives up reading.
5. Too much information (ideal is 4/5 short paragraphs on one side).

Constant slogans:

1. WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW
 2. K.I.S.S. - Keep It Short and Simple.
- >>> Put your best point up front, journalists busy, working to deadlines, easily bored. Must get the main elements across in the first few words so that readers in a hurry can pick up the gist of it.
 - >>> Don't worry about sticking to main theme, a journalist can use his knowledge to perhaps identify another different, more newsworthy angle; can then contact you.
 - >>> Headings - journalists like superlatives, e.g. 'First', 'Biggest', etc.
 - >>> Every story has an angle if you look for it. Without a story line, human interest angle, you are wasting your time. A recent survey showed that 42% of the content of all regional newspapers is 'human interest' (nationally 12%).
 - >>> Try and include good quotes if appropriate; try not to be trite.
 - >>> Good photo opportunities should be added, where worthy of mention, if release involves press visit; picture facility.
 - >>> If the story is really good, ring the News Editor first - do they want it?
 - >>> Keep asking yourself: why do the majority of Press Releases fail? You will then begin to build up an understanding of what the press want from you.

THE PRESS RELEASE - LAYOUT

1. Neat typing - double spacing.
2. Contents on one side of paper only.
3. Presentation, paragraphing, punctuation must be very good.
4. Sufficient space at beginning for Editor to insert possible headlines, Editor's instructions.
5. Release must be dated and with clear instructions if an embargo is necessary.
6. Continuity links must be used if more than one page. 7. Ending should be clear.
8. Leave 1" margins.
9. Avoid typesetting difficulties - e.g. no splitting of paragraphs. 10. Use capital letters sparingly.
11. If long piece, put a precis on front cover.
12. No underlining - means something else to printers.

WRITING FEATURES - PUBLICITY MATERIAL

Advertorial ideal - you pay for a sizeable space as an advert, magazine/newspaper matches space with free editorial - you write but reader thinks written by newspaper.

Remember what authority you have to write details - are they fact, opinions, emotional, rhetoric?

Put yourself in the shoes of the recipient - easy flow, continuity, etc.

Perception - need to assess reaction, what line most persuasive in the circumstances.

Many things need to be calculated in order for message to be understood fully.

Remember:

Advertising = Propaganda. P.R. = The Facts.

Ask yourself -

1. What is your publicity meant to accomplish?
2. What is your target audience?
Write in their language - Daily Mirror or The Times.
3. Why should people support you, buy your goods, etc? - list them all, then try pick one over-riding benefit that lifts your service, produce above the rest.

Few people enjoy producing features, etc., tend to put it off, approach with negative attitude. Look for best time of day to work on it - not when tired or when the timing puts you under more pressure. Professional writers devise their own techniques for motivating themselves and being most prolific, look to identify some for yourself.

If you can't make headway jot down anything relevant, then by rewriting and improving you form a basis.

Look at published examples from other produces/services, identify style of magazine you are writing to.

DEALING WITH RADIO

A dangerous situation for you and the organisation or company you represent - you must prepare.

The media will have knowledge from the press release and/or a direct conversation. Indeed, they may pick up the story from another source. As such, you need to be prepared well in advance. Most of the questions can be anticipated and model answers can be prepared and memorised. However, items that most interest broadcasters are often of public contention and debate so you need to be well briefed on current public feeling etc. It is sensible to take special attention in the build up of topical events related to the subject. This might have been the spark that created the interview's interest in the first place.

The more skilled you are, the more you will be able to create a newsworthy interview and control the situation with a positive contribution, rather than merely respond to any contentious edge the interviewer seeks.

A sound idea is to write down four points you would like to make. Then write four questions you think are most likely to be asked. Plan succinct answers to them - the interview will probably be brief, a few minutes or less. See it as an opportunity to advance positive comments; stay out of any negative themes if you can. Think of a brief phrase for your closing remark - one which will summarise your performance in a solid and memorable way.

The Invitation

Most likely by phone. Ask direct questions such as which programme, the theme, is it going out live or pre-recorded, who is to interview you and will there be anybody else taking part. Write the answers down so that some speedy research of the interviewer, the programme etc. can be made.

Radio interviews are often done down the telephone line (either live or recorded). ALWAYS make an excuse to get them to ring you back - say you are out in the main office or something and could they ring back in a couple of minutes. You then compose yourself, inform people including the switchboard (if appropriate) but most of all you don't then give off-the-cuff answers.

The Interview

The interviewer wants a lively discussion; he might provoke controversial answers from you, even try to wind you up. Stay cool and state your case, don't fight fire with fire! Let the interviewer finish the question before you set about answering it. There is little time to go into a deep answer.

When dealing with the opening question, the golden rule is to state your conclusion first; that way, if the interview is ended prematurely your main point will have been made. The interviewer may get bored with the subject, and you must give your main message regardless of the question (listen to politicians on TV and radio).

If you are cut off with another question before you have finished ask politely but firmly for time to finish.

When you have dealt with a question stop talking; sometimes the interviewer will pause hoping you will carry on to dig a hole for yourself - beware of this.

Only quote statistics that the audience can relate to. Stick to layman's language, or if not possible convert to an everyday example, etc.

As the interview comes to an end you may be asked to say a few words - This is when you come out strong with your rehearsed final phrase, the one you want to be remembered.

Finally, it is useful to know what goes on in a studio, the hand signals, who does what. By having an understanding you may pick up clues as to how things are going, when the interview is coming to an end - it may give you the chance of the last word!

COMPANY MAGAZINES

Many companies and organisations now have staff newspapers or magazines.

The aim is to help company spirit, mix company formal requirements, expectations from staff, with social information.

An ideal and mainly untapped route to further your image, dealings with the company - and it's free. Contact the editor before writing a story. They may even supply a professional photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The purpose of any newspaper or magazine from the Editor's point of view is that it must be sufficiently attractive for the recipient to want to read it.

The Editor can only publish a good finished product if the material he has to work with is good enough in the first place.

One of the most important features of a newspaper is the visual impact it makes, the main contribution to this being the pictures. Good pictures do not just happen; a lot of work goes into getting a good result.

Every story, however, does not need a picture; conversely, every picture does not need a story. There is, consequently, a need to analyse carefully every assignment - what is the story about? is a picture necessary? can a picture easily be obtained? would the time spent obtaining a picture be worthwhile?

Cost is another important point that should always be borne in mind. Good photographers and good photographs cost money. It is far better to have a few good pictures than a lot of mediocre ones.

It is most unlikely that the press will accept your own 'snaps'. The photo would have to be first class, a shot of something nobody else could have obtained, etc. You have to judge how important the story is to you and if it is, you must hire a professional. Many of these are not suited to press photography - avoid the 'weddings' type.

Common faults with Pix

1. Just a record shot - flat and uninteresting.
2. Portraits - the 'Wanted' poster, black eyes, unshaven, shadows.
3. Poor lighting, overlit, unnecessary use of flash.
4. Too much detail in the picture distracting from the main purpose.
5. One dimension, no sense of depth.
6. Obviously posed shots, subject of the picture used unrealistically.
7. Reflections.
8. Messy backgrounds.
9. Poor focusing.
10. Staring full face at camera, both individuals and groups.
11. Too many handshakes.

Proofs or Contacts

1. Contacts preferable as you can see every shot and then make your own choice.
2. The best way is to get a set of contacts and to get the photographer to select the best two or three.

3. Proofs/prints - photographer will select what he thinks are the best and you make a choice from those - only do this if time is very short.
4. Do not necessarily have the whole of the negative enlarged - select the part you want. Use a chinagraph pencil on contact face. You will get a better result by the sub-Editor reducing than by his having to enlarge from part of your picture.
5. If you are not sure then leave the picture intact - it is the sub Editors job to scale a picture to fit the paper.
6. Size of prints to send to paper: whole plate, 8 x 6 or 7 x 5, NOT smaller.

Captions

1. The caption tells what the picture is about. It can be used to illustrate a story or it can be an extended picture story, i.e. when a picture tells a story better than words. The caption should state in words what the picture cannot say.
2. Fixing captions: use a self-adhesive label. DO NOT use a felt tipped pen. Portraits: write name on back of print in Biro or very soft pencil.
3. Make sure people's names are spelt correctly.
4. Where possible have the photographer write his own captions.
5. Full names and correct position on the photograph are essential on all captions.
6. Captions are the reporter's final overall responsibility.

News release



THE
ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION
Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

28 November 94

News Editor
Halifax Express

Association Finds Navy Man's Wartime Pal

Halifax Naval Veteran Fred Jowett had given up hope of locating his wartime pal yet a call to the local Royal Naval Association Branch and they achieved in weeks what he had failed to do in nearly 50 years.

Fred of Manor Row Mixenden lost track of fellow Able Seaman Mike Cooper after the fall of Singapore. Said Fred "Like so many others, we had been through a lot together, I couldn't let go the need to find out what happened to him".

Through the network of Branches, the RNA traced several people who knew of him during Naval Service and within a matter of days had found him alive and well living in Pratts Bottom. A reunion is planned next month.

Adds a delighted Fred "The RNA were superb, as well as finding an old friend I now have many more in the Halifax RNA - I ought to have joined years ago".

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITOR: The RNA meets every Friday lunchtime at the Navy club. The Halifax Branch has over 100 members. For more information on the above or the RNA please contact Fred Chambers on Halifax 342567.

PUBLICITY IDEAS

Below are listed some themes to look for to gain local press coverage (even national if story line so good). Always remember to get full permission of any individual beforehand.

The press thrive on human interest stories. Any story, needs to attach to RNA somehow and regardless of content add commercial on benefits of RNA, local branch, secretaries details.

Medals - lost, found, replaced, outstanding claims, unusual story behind etc. etc. rarity, foreign awards.

Shipmates - lost touch, helped to find, reunions, 'out of blue' reunions (next table Marbella etc.) stories behind reunion RNA part in finding/helping.

Family - lost, found, reunited, generations of Naval service.

RNA Anniversaries - anything from 10th, 25th, 50th, 60th - Birthdays 21 st etc.

Charity Donations/Work - as Branch or even individual members, can even be a plea for extra support for a specific charity aim. Links/ help Sea Cadets, individual stories Sea Cadet at age 9, joined RN, joined RNR, joined RNA, now helping SCC unit fundraise to thank for the good start in life.

Research - WWII, campaigns, help for authors - requests as well as RNA success in helping.

Topical Commemorative Events - 'Where were you on VE Day' etc. (especially something unusual) find story, offer in advance of actual date.

Topical World Events - local story e.g. earthquake in XXXXX, RNA member remembers his part in the last one whilst serving on - - -, bit far fetched but you will hear shipmates talking about something in today's paper that they experienced some time ago.

Nostalgia - trip down memory lane, someone with a good story to tell.

War Pensions - success story by member or RNA help in getting pension etc.

Branches - change of venue, change of meeting day, time.

Appointments - new President, Chairman, Secretary, add a bit of story/background, Unusual appointment, situations, e.g. Bradford currently has President, Chairman, Secretary for North East area (We had pieces in three papers on this).

Civilian Awards/Appointments - new JP, Chairman of Bench, anything that is to attract press attention, new chairman Tenants Association anything, ask shipmate to try include 'member of - - - RNA' etc.

Branch Awards - best recruitment figures etc.

Standard Dedication events, any events. Visiting VIPs - need their permission.

Memorials, plaques etc.

Disability Help - RNA helped XXXX with special equipment via SSAFA, RBL, RNBF, etc.

The list is endless, what you need to do is to now listen with your PRO hat on at your local Branch meetings. The ideal is to offer a story that demonstrates the friendship, camaraderie of the RNA.

Once you have had a story printed you won't be able to stop. Good luck.

David Dennis Area President 21 February 95

KEY FACTS FOR FUND-RAISERS

1. Clarity:

Be clear as to the central reason why a particular project is being undertaken and how it supports the future development of your group.

2. Linkage:

Establish a clear link between the project and the funding source you are approaching and make this link the basis of your approach.

3. Brevity:

Irrespective of what funding source you are approaching you can be sure that they receive many more applications for support than they can possibly fund. Keep your application down to:

- single page covering letter
- single page outlining the project and benefits
- single page budget
- single page presentation of your organisation.

4. Appreciation:

Try to see your application from the perspective of the funder. If you were in their shoes would you fund the application!? If you can answer the question honestly ... send it in!!

5. Presentation:

Keep your application clean and business like. The funding source will be looking for:

- a brief but succinct application
- from a group that appears to be well founded
- with a project that links into their aims and objectives
- with a fair chance of success
- for a price that they can afford.

STEPS IN FUNDRAISING FOR A PROJECT

Introduction:

These notes are intended to act as general pointers and should not be applied in every single case. The main things to bear in mind are:

- Trusts, Sponsors and sources of Public Subsidy vary considerably and a single strategy cannot be made to work for all of them;
- The application of common sense and determination are key requirements for any fundraising activities;
- Believe in what you are doing. The vast majority of funding sources are established (through statute, legacy, constitution or marketing strategies) to support projects like yours;
- Never beg!

Preparation:

Although planning does not guarantee a successful campaign every time it is crucial in getting your message across effectively. Key stages should be:

- Clarify the need or requirement for the project;
- Define the aims and objectives of the project;
- Determine how the above link in to the work of your group;
- Establish the workings of the project and an accurate budget;
- Match the aims of the project and group with those of various funding sources that you have already researched.

Defining the Project:

You should be able to present the essentials of your project on half a side of A4. If you are unable to do this it usually means that you haven't thought it through fully. You need to go through this so that you can spell out what you want and why to the funding sources.

Trusts, Sponsors and Statutory Authorities do not know your project; spell it out clearly.

Selling yourself:

In much the same way that a bank manager will be reluctant to give you a loan if you are not known or trusted a funding source is unlikely to support your application if your credibility is not established.

Establishing credibility consists of:

- implementing a promotional campaign that brings together clients, supporters, existing funders, etc.;
- ensuring that the region's quangos and broad based groups know of your work;
- actively securing endorsements from high profile groups with whom you work (Education and Health Authorities for instance);
- keeping press clippings and developing a portfolio;
- bringing all these together in a sharp presentation so that future funders have an image of your group that you determine.

Selecting the Funding Sources:

First base is the library. It's free and the people in the reference section are usually helpful. The books you are looking for are detailed on the attached information sheet. In addition to the library don't forget:

- The Rural Community Council;
- Council for Voluntary Service;
- the Local Authority;
- the specialist quango (for instance the Sports Council or the Regional Arts Board);
- local offices of organisations such as Common Ground or The Community Development Foundation;
- local/regional business organisations such as the Lions, the

Rotary Club or the Chamber of Commerce to research local companies and to present your organisation to sponsors;

- scour the local business press, it normally includes articles on companies in your vicinity that are taking on staff, expanding launching new product lines or moving to new premises; in all of these activities the company concerned will be looking to publicise as far as possible.

Making the Application:

Whilst it is not possible to generalise for all funding applications it is possible to draw out essential points and basic formats:

a) Covering letter - in my opinion this is the most important aspect of any application. The covering letter gives you your only opportunity to approach the funding source from your angle and to set the context in which your application is viewed. The letter should be brief (one page if possible) and should state:

- who you are
- why you do what you do
- whose support do you enjoy
- what is the project
- why is it important
- how much will it cost
- why should they (the funder) support it

b) Project Description - this is the piece of paper that will be read if the covering letter strikes a strong chord with the potential funder. It again should be brief (keep it to two pages if possible) and should include information on:

- aims of the project
- what is the need being addressed
- what is the relevance
- what is the programme of work
- what is the culmination (performance or exhibition)
- what press and media attention do you expect
- what numbers of people and supporters are involved
- what are the selling points

c) Company Presentation - this can be a piece of prepared promotional material, collection of lively press cuttings, Annual Report or something prepared specifically for the project. Its aim is to let the potential funder know a little bit more about you and to give them confidence that you know what you are about.

Receiving the Results:

Three things can happen:

- a straight 'no and don't bother us again'
- a straight 'yes, thank you very much and the cheque is in the post'
- a variation of 'we're interested but not for this year please keep in touch'.

THE FUNDERS VIEW OF YOUR APPLICATION

I spoke to three major UK Trusts to discover exactly what they look for in an application and then checked this with The Directory of Social Change and Charities Aid Foundation. The collected views were:

1. We apply our guidelines exactly as we experience far more requests for funding than we can ever support: we want to ensure that we give money to the most deserving;
2. If we apply law of probability to your application then you have a 1 in 10 chance of success;
3. We are looking for:
 - quality in the people working on the project
 - a practical outcome
 - degree of pioneering or 'newness'
 - degree of community participation
 - potential for replication
 - clear and achievable objectives
 - evidence that the organisation is being run in an efficient manner
 - potential that the project can be self-financing in the future

In another survey by the Directory of Social Change verbatim comments were:

"In your approach to us, the opening paragraph should be the 'punch' paragraph which should set the scene and also gain the attention of the reader ..."

"Why do we reject? We are unable to get a quart out of a pint pot; that is the main problem."

"From our point of view, if you get it right first time, you are either brilliant or lucky; but you must show an understanding of your project and of the Trust's policies."

THE SPONSORSHIP SPECTRUM

Introduction

By definition, 'sponsorship' is not altruistic. It is a business relationship of mutual benefit to all parties, designed to satisfy the defined objectives of each.

Application

The word 'sponsorship' is now in common usage to cover a wide range of commercial and corporate support activities. The application of the word is not clear cut, but is rooted in the building of positive and mutually beneficial relationships which are vital to the fund-raising strategy of community organisations.

Within the spectrum of corporate objectives, a far-reaching change is being implemented which moves 'sponsorship' away from individual event/activity support into new areas of partnership with providers.

"Corporate communications, the perception of the Company by those on the outside, is seen to be making a growing contribution to corporate success" - findings of a report released in June 1991 by research analysts Dragon International. The important issue is, therefore, to link up projects being undertaken by an organisation in such a way that is appealing to the corporate aspirations of a local, or regional, company with interests in the area within which the organisation operates.

Relevance

Sponsorship can be an extremely rewarding and cost effective part of a fund-raising strategy but it must be viewed in context with the overall business development of the organisation concerned. Commercial sponsorship can prove to be the difference between the staging, or otherwise, of an activity which, if tied into the coordinating agency's core activity, can impact greatly upon the surrounding area.

Demands

Sponsorship activity, and the resulting corporate links, can make significant demands upon the group involved. A careful calculation is required of the time necessary to maintain effective contact once the initial work has been completed.

In many instances the initial contact is the result of research and development by freelance workers. If the real benefit of this work is to be fed through to ensure the long term financial viability of the organisation, regular and professional monitoring is necessary.

A positive and enduring relationship will not develop from a casual contact or in a vacuum. It will require a great deal of input from both parties to ensure an emerging dynamic dialogue based on the mutual understanding of aims, objectives, wants, needs and capabilities.

Sponsorship Requirements

For sponsorship approaches to be successful, some criteria need to be met by the Organisation concerned:

- high profile and positive image;
- opportunities to access a varied audience profile;
- awareness of responsibility to sponsor;
- commercial understanding and ability to deliver;
- internal support and professional staff to maximise effect;
- flexibility to adapt to changing requirements;
- persistence!

What Approach?

The dilemma is, frequently, whether to select a sponsorship package first and then to find a supporter, or, look for partnership opportunities first. Both methods do have some validity and depend upon the group's experience with sponsorship and their capabilities to service a relationship within the private sector.

Central to the decision, however, should be the role of sponsorship within the organisation's financial structure. In general terms, sponsorship should not be included on the 'bottom line' of any financial projections. But, with a degree of forethought, it can figure highly in the group's finances as a result of developing relationships with the commercial sector.

In essence, the success of any approach will depend upon the targeting of potential sponsors followed by an effective presentation undertaken by competent workers.

THE BUSINESS RESPONSE TO SPONSORSHIP

Business becomes involved in sponsorship for two very simple reasons:

- Improving the awareness of the Company
- Improving the image of the Company

Within this broad aim, sponsorship serves three purposes in that it:

- reinforces marketing strategies:
 - brand awareness
 - enhancement of brand identity
 - reaching niche markets
 - communicating with distributors
- creates a positive image:
 - locally, nationally and internationally
 - communicating beyond the business environment
- improves employee loyalty and recruitment.

SPONSORSHIP KEY QUESTIONS

> Be sure of your aims, audience and the impact of the event or programme being organised. Be positive but avoid hyping and making promises that you cannot keep. Without being too crass, ask yourself "Why should they choose my proposal?"

> Be well briefed on the company you are approaching, what it is doing and be clear on the link between your project and their interests.

- If you are going into a meeting that has been called by the company, ensure that you are prepared to discuss all aspects of the project and that you are empowered to act decisively and authorised to take decisions on behalf of your group.
- Value the project you are presenting to the potential funder and estimate its worth from their perspective. £1,500 may fund the entire project but it is less than 10% of the cost of one half-page advert in the Financial Times for ONE issue!
- Never underestimate the potential of a project to the funder. Your audience, your image, your impact is what is on offer to the company. Always try and see your efforts from their point of view.
- Be quite clear as to your ethics and operating principles and be firm as to what you will and will not do in exchange for sponsorship.
- Always involve all staff in the aims and objectives of sponsorship so that they will be able to respond to questions from the potential funder in a manner that is informed and helpful when you are out of the office.
- Be prepared for a long negotiating process that is sure to be frustrating at some point. Be prepared for the stress that is implicit in dealings with the commercial sector and for the feelings of rejection that so often follows the failure of an otherwise well structured and thought out application.