

# Publicity Made Simple

2005 National LTCi Producers Summit

October 17, 2005

Kansas City

# Why Do Publicity?

Publicity *makes* products famous.  
Advertising *keeps* them famous.

# Why Do Publicity?

Publicity builds credibility in the arena of public opinion in a way paid advertising cannot.

# Why Do Publicity?

- Increases the credibility of your sales message
- Extends the reach of advertising
- Cost-effective

# Why Do Publicity?

One American in ten  
tells the other nine how to vote  
where to eat, what to buy.  
They are “Influencers.”

# Why Do Publicity?

Influencers are 11% more likely to turn to their insurance agent for advice and expertise on financial matters.

# Why Do Publicity?

Influencers are 13% more likely to recommend insurance to others than the average American.

# Why Do Publicity?

Influencers are more voracious consumers  
of news than the average American.



# Publicity Made Simple

## Agenda

Understanding the News Media

What Makes a Story Newsworthy?

Print vs. Broadcast

Ways to Reach the News Media

Story Control

Crisis Communications

Resources

# Understanding the Media

## Who Are the Media?

- Smart
- No-nonsense
- Curious by nature
- Self-interested by profession

# Understanding the Media

## What Do They Want?

- News
- Responsiveness
- Honesty
- Preparedness
- Respect

# Print vs. Broadcast

- Print media can deliver a complicated message.
- Broadcast needs sight & sound to make the story work.
- Print journalists can work by phone.
- Broadcast journalists inject themselves into the story.

# Ways to Reach the News Media

- News releases
- Media advisories
- Letters to editor

# News Releases

Statements of facts about a product, issue or event that affects the media's readers, viewers or listeners.

# News releases

The news media receive hundreds  
of news releases every day.

# What Makes a Story Newsworthy?

- Timing



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- Significance

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- Prominence

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- Timing
- Significance
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Human Interest

# New Releases

## How to Write One

1. Prepare the news release on company letterhead.
2. Start with DATE, CONTACT NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, and the RELEASE DATE. Write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” underneath if the issue is timely.

# New Releases

3. Write a headline that summarizes the news. Use at least one action verb.
4. Present the following information in descending order of importance:
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where
  - Why
  - How

# New Releases

5. Start with most important facts in a two- or three-sentence introductory paragraph. Gives details in middle paragraph(s). Least important information should appear near the end. Last paragraph is standard information about the company (boilerplate).

# New Releases

## Suggestions

- Keep it short (1-2 pages).
- At the end of the news release, type “-30-” to let the reader know the story is over.
- Avoid self-serving comments and phrases, unsubstantiated comments and phrases and use of superlatives.



# New Releases

## Suggestions

- Anything that can be argued should not be stated as fact without attribution.
- Use quotes to make the news come alive.
- Avoid jargon (or explain it).
- Use real life examples.
- Tie your story to current events or social issues.

# Examples

- Americans Unprepared for Cost of Long-Term Care
- Studies Show Americans Want to Receive Long-Term Health Care at Home
- Americans May Outlive Their Long-Term Care Insurance

# News Release Turn-Offs

- It is not about anything newsworthy.
- It reads like an advertisement.
- It uses hype and exaggerations.
- It is too long.

# Ways to Reach the News Media

- News releases
- Media advisories
- Letters to editor

# Media Advisory

Used to alert the media about  
an upcoming event.

# Media Advisory

## How to Write One

1. Prepare the news release on company letterhead.
2. Start with DATE, CONTACT NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, and the RELEASE DATE. Write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” underneath if the issue is timely.

# Media Advisory

3. Give bulleted information on Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.

# Media Advisory

- What:** Seminar on Long-Term Care Insurance
- Why:** More than 70% of older Americans will require long-term care, yet less than 10% currently have insurance.
- Who:** Jim Smith, Physicians Mutual
- When:** Thursday, October 27, noon
- Where:** Marriott Hotel



# Ways to Reach the News Media

- News releases
- Media advisories
- Letters to editor

# Letters to the Editor

- Offer an opinion on an issue or a trend related to long-term care insurance.
- Include facts and statistics on why readers should care about it.
- Conclude with a call-to-action.

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# Story Control

## The Interview

- Be prepared.
- Know your key messages.
- Anticipate key questions.
- Anticipate negative questions.
- Learn to bridge from *their* question to *your answer*.

# Story Control

## What Makes You Credible?

- Factual information, honest response.
- Saying “I don’t know” when you don’t.
- No “off the record” remarks.
- Respect for the reporter’s intelligence, job and time.

# Preparing for an Interview

## Determining Key Messages

- What am I trying to tell or sell?
- What do I want the reader/viewer to remember?
- Do these messages pass “the red face test?”

# Preparing for an Interview

## Key Messages

- Keep them short, simple.
- Avoid jargon.
- Use anecdotes to illustrate.
- Be enthusiastic.

# Preparation for an Interview

Use the  
Pre-Interview Checklist



# Preparation for an Interview

## Prepare for the Tough Questions

- What's the worst question?
- Prepare your answers.
- Practice – then practice some more.

# Preparation for an Interview

## Use Supporting Information

- Company facts, statistics
- Industry facts, statistics
- Trend data
- Anecdotes
- Other references/resources

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# Crisis Communications

## Situations

- Allegations of bad business practice by a local policyholder
- Negative media reports about your business
- Natural disasters

# Crisis Communications

The media will cover a crisis  
whether or not you cooperate.

Your responsibility is to ensure that the  
information reported is accurate.

# Crisis Communications

1. Obtain the facts quickly. Provide as much information as possible as soon as possible.
2. In the absence of information, do not speculate. Say, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.”
3. Do the right thing. Tell the media what you’re doing to right a wrong or show concern for those affected.
4. Punt to your company’s Corporate PR Person.

# Resources

- [www.publicityinsider.com](http://www.publicityinsider.com)
- Strunk & White, Elements of Style
- Local chapter of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)
- Local PR or advertising agencies

Questions?