

How To Get the Word Out Communication Strategies

Strategy	When To Use It	Pros	Cons
<p><i>News release</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- blind or guided -- with or without fact sheets or other accompanying information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There is important information involving your agency that will impact the community -To announce good news, innovative programs, or a special event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Quick, easy to distribute -Summarizes who, what, when, why and where 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reporters receive many releases every day -Your story may not be viewed as "news" - May guide the reporter to the story, but rarely used "as is"
<p><i>Press conference</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To report significant news, respond to allegations, correct misinformation, provide details on actions to be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -You control the message - Opportunity to be well prepared - Gives all media equal access to the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Other stories may bump coverage of your event -Reporters (esp. TV) need visuals - Most reporters will want to individualize their story
<p><i>One-on-one meeting(s) w/reporter</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To present a message that is complex, detailed or sensitive -To respond to a specific story by that reporter, provide an update and explain how your agency is or will be addressing the issue -To offer your side of the story before there is a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Opportunity to humanize the issue and show reporter the "insider's" perspective -Can have staff present, can provide written materials (fact sheets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reporter deadlines may not allow enough time for one-on-one -Reporters may write/tell their own story anyway
<p><i>Direct communication with key external audiences (partners, stakeholders)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --letters or emails --briefings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To recognize key players' special interest in the news that's being reported -To provide supplemental information to those most directly affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keeps partners in the loop...no rumors -Builds alliances and trust between partners and agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can duplicate effort of press release and/or press conference

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<p><i>Direct communication with internal audiences (staff, employees)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --letters or emails --briefings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prior to releasing significant information to media or to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keeps staff in the loop...no rumors -Builds alliances and trust between staff and decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communicating with busy staff is difficult – they may miss it. -If material is sensitive, timing may be an issue...once staff is informed, the general public will know
<p><i>Newspaper editorial board meeting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Repeated negative stories with inaccurate information or misinformation -Need to “set the record straight” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Opportunity to meet with editors/reporters one-on-one, answer questions and clarify information -Humanizes the agency, allows you to present your perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Subject to one-on-one cross examination by editors
<p><i>Guest opinion editorial</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To respond to misinformation -To present a thoughtful perspective on a public concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can explain in own words and focus on key messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can't guarantee timeliness of story publication
<p><i>Local news/talk shows on TV and radio</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To provide additional information about reported events -To humanize the agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Friendly formats allow you to tell your story directly to a broad audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It's possible to be surprised by an unexpected question or hostile caller.