



Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)

Topic: Meet the Press

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Welcome

You may have the opportunity to meet the press in a variety of situations associated with your meeting or event. You may:

- Hold a press conference
- Manage media attention whether you want it or not
- Seek additional press

This issue of Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events offer suggestions for all these situations.

I was inspired by the idea for this issue by a great article written by Stephen Regenold, associate editor of Presentations magazine. It was originally published in the March 2005 issue of Presentations magazine. [Presentations](#)

Here's the link:

http://www.presentations.com/presentations/delivery/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000881823

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Going to Press

How do you manage to make the most of press conferences, product launches and other media events?

Do it right because the news media can get your message out to thousands or millions of people through print, radio broadcast, television broadcast and Web distribution.

Reporters have special demands and idiosyncrasies.

The #1 Thing: Reporters are interested in only one thing: the relevance of any given piece of information to their audience. Your press conference must offer a solid pitch and a story angle that fits their readership or viewing audience.

Other Do's and Don'ts.

- The event must be held in a venue that's convenient
- Parking must be available for reporters
- The site should be accessible to broadcast trucks from television stations
- The event must not conflict with other local happenings of interest to the press, such as speeches by government officials or the press conferences of other local companies.
- The preferred time is during the morning, early in the week, when journalists are typically less busy and more inclined to attend

Keep in mind that sometimes other presentations rather than big press events may be most effective. PowerPoint has made its mark with journalists too! A Microsoft PowerPoint slideshow presented via a laptop to a single reporter or a small group of media professionals may serve the trick. Or a telephone interview. Everyone's time is at a premium and a Press Conference may be overkill for your "issue".

Feed them

Whether you are garnering wanted or unwanted publicity, the press will always want a comment. If you don't give them the comment, they will search for someone else to offer them an opinion, insight or tidbit. (More on un-asked for publicity in the next section.)

During the occasions, when you are able to manage the publicity, be ready to "feed" the press. To insure your journalists are well fed:

- Tell them a good story
- Tell them what's unique or interesting
- Give them facts
- Drop the hype
- Be honest

Of course, specific tools or information will help journalists cover your story. Common items in a press

kit are:

- News releases
- Executive bios
- Company background
- Financial data
- Product data sheets
- Price lists
- White papers
- Company contact information
- Image CDs with high-resolution, print-ready images (a 5 x 7-inch image at 300 dots-per-inch resolution)
- B-roll video (relevant extra video clips) for television

This kind of leave-behind material is crucial when working with the media, as it makes their jobs easier. The more information you hand out, and the more convenient you make it for a journalist to use, the likelier it is you'll get coverage.

Don't Quote Me

Sometimes press is unwanted - as in the case of bad news. We don't have to go too far back in history to recall some bungled and better-handled crisis situations.

The characteristics of a crisis or controversy can include:

1. Surprise
2. Insufficient information provided at the first sign of a problem
3. Escalating flow of problems
4. Loss of control
5. Intense external scrutiny
6. Bunker or siege mentality ("If I stay in the bunker it'll go away")
7. Panic
8. Short-term outlook

James Lukaszewski, Chairman of the The Lukaszewski Group Inc. identifies four types of crises:

- Operating - what the organization does as a matter of a day-to-day business
- Non-operating - these crises damage reputation and other aspects of a organization's relationship with outsiders. Examples include crime, environmental threats, malfeasance, stupidity, sexual harassment, violence, unexpectedly bad behavior by management. Non-operating crises are approximately 5 -10% of all corporate crisis situations and tend to cause 120% of the damage.
- Double Whammy (my term)- This is a combination crisis event. There are both operating and non-operating problems to resolve.
- Virtual - Web-based attack on a corporation's reputation, its products, and often its leadership. If you are a big brand, you are a big target.

When hit with a crisis, keep in mind:

- It's a 24 x 7 world. Deadlines no longer exist in the traditional sense. Deadlines are now. Disclosure is now 24/7.
- Responses should include:
 - Emotional response -- the emotional response shows you care and are responding. Lukaszewski identifies these gut-level issues
 - § Family health and safety
 - § Family economic security
 - § Protection of property values
 - § Peace of mind
 - § Pride in community
 - § Absence of conflict
 - The complete details as known including what happened, an explanation of how you are solving the problem, who you are working with (critics, government, agencies, employees, and victims), and what future steps are to be taken to prevent the situation from reoccurring.
 - When communicating about a crisis, the media is only one of your audiences. In addition, there are also:
 - § Victims
 - § Employees
 - § Those indirectly affected
 - § Critics or advocates
- The best defense is preparation:
 - Identify likely scenarios
 - Establish relationships
 - Test your response plan

More than Press Releases

Press releases are great and can garner interest in your meeting or event. Keep them short - no more than one page. And be sure to include the the pertinent details. Include the '4 W's' of your event – who, where, when and why.

But consider other more innovative options:

- Cultivate relationships now. Keep a running file of articles written by journalists that you may contact in the future. Reference their previous articles. Also keep a list of the journalists or photographers who attend your event so you can contact them about future events.
- Wendy Lane, president of Portland, Ore.-based Lane Marketing Communications, uses a "media brief," a 1.5-page document modeled after a legal brief. Meant to be used in small, informal presentation settings, the media brief lays out the facts of a company announcement in a concise, straightforward manner.
- Involve members of the media on your publicity committee to develop feature stories and other tools.
- Leverage all relationships. Assign people within your organization to a hot list of prospects they know personally to generate interest or involvement.
- Cable TV is playing a more active role in covering community events and is capturing a larger local audience. Cable also has more time to deal with issues than traditional media has.
- Create an online newsrooms on your company website. These portals to company news releases, background information, pricing, availability and product images can be an invaluable resource for journalists on deadline.
- Letters pages in the local press are widely read. Writing a letter to the editors of your local newspapers is a good way of getting your message across. Your letter should be no more than four short paragraphs.
- Be visual - If you have a great photographic moment, play that up. Important: Don't forget to get the permission of people appearing in your photographs. Also obtain permission from parents/guardians of photos involving children. Never provide last names or addresses that could identify children.

It is Time

Timeline for Event Publicity:

16 weeks prior

Create Campaign Plan: Budget, goals, audience and methods (Direct mail, telemarketing, Email blasts, newsletter, Fax, web-sites)

Contact tourism officials or other companies and investigate being included in promotions or festivals.

6-10 weeks prior to event

Mail invitations or announcements.

4 weeks prior to event

Start placement of public service announcements

3 weeks prior to event

Place newspaper announcement of event

2 weeks prior to event

Try to get news feature story about event or persons involved in event

1-2 weeks prior to event

Get announcements in weekly and community newspapers

Day before the event

Finalize coverage of event itself. Arrange for volunteer escorts for press representatives.

Week after the event

Plant stories of results of event. Send thank you letters for press coverage.

Freebies: [New News](#)

FREEBIES: [New News](#)

Find out what people are buying and sell it to them..."

The same is true when you're trying to sell a journalist a story idea that will result in publicity for you, your product, or your service. You have to find out what's "hot," i.e., what has already attracted the attention of journalists.

Fortunately there are several wonderful Internet resources for figuring this out quickly and easily. There are three that are most popular: Google, Yahoo, and Topix.

Google, for instance, has developed an automated grouping process that pulls together related headlines and photos from approximately 4500 sources. You can even trace the history of a developing issue by clicking the "sort by date" function on the page containing all reports on a given topic.

Start at www.news.google.com. Type a keyword of your choice into the search box next to the "Google News" logo.

Once you click enter, a page full of links will appear. These links connect to all the stories Google News has found that contain the keyword you typed in. The stories will be in chronological order, with the most recent report placed first. To access the story, all you have to do is click on the link Google provides.

You can use Google News to see who's writing on your topics, contact them, and offer a follow-up, sidebar, additional angle, etc.

More FREEBIES For a list of the my favorite public relations books, click here [Best PR Books](#) or send an email to stinnish@ameritech.net.

Future T.I.M.E.

I will be speaking at the following conferences:

[Affordable Meetings, Washington, DC, April 6-7, 2005](#)

[Meeting Planner's Forum, September 23, 2005](#) You can register for this event after August 15th at www.cce.umn.edu/conferencecenter. Sponsored by the University of Minnesota, Continuing Education and Conference Center, 1890 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108; 888-501-2268.

I love to see familiar faces in the audience. Please come and see me!

Off the subject of innovative meetings, I am assembling a group of innovative women to [attend Wicked in Chicago on Wednesday, November 16](#). Our seats are in the first rows of the regular balcony, rows E and F. Tickets for this section are normally \$67.30 per ticket. (\$55.50 per ticket + \$9.30 handling charge + \$2.50 facility charge + \$4.50 per order = \$67.30 not including the one-time order fee.) I have a few tickets still available for the **bargain price of \$60.00**. Join a group of creative, fun business women. Please email me if you are interested at: stinnish@ameritech.net or click here [Wicked Tickets](#)

Finally, I would appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button at the end of the newsletter.

T.I.M.E. Gone By

If you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues [Back Issue Request](#):

- May 2000: **Teambuilding**
- June 2000: **Green Meetings**
- July 2000: **Values**
- August 2000: **Minimum/Minimal Meetings**
- October 2000: **Evaluations**
- November 2000: **Politics**
- December 2000: **Toys**

- January 2001: **Sales, Award Presentations**
- February 2001: **Change and Communicating Change**
- March 2001: **Open Space Technology**
- April 2001: **Adult Learning Styles**
- May 2001: **Trade Shows**
- June 2001: **Emotional Intelligence**
- July 2001: **Presentation Tips**
- August 2001: **Ice Breakers**
- September 2001: **Facilitation**
- October 2001: **Humor**
- November 2001: **Customer Care**

December 2001: [Slack](#)

January 2002: [Teambuilding Options](#)

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January 2003: [Everyday Meetings](#)

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June 2003: [Balance in Meetings and child caret](#)

July 2003: [Mobile Events](#)

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November 2003: [Data, Information and Number Crunching](#)

December 2003: [Deja View](#)

January 2004: [Branding](#)

February 2004: [Audio Visuals](#)

March 2004: [Networking](#)

April 2004: [Strategic Budgeting](#)

May 2004: [Sensory Meetings](#)

June 2004: [Board Meetings](#)

July 2004: [Leadership](#)

August 2004: [Barrier-free Meetings](#)

September 2004: [Time Management & Meetings](#)

October 2004: [The Travel Experience & Stress](#)

November 2004: [Voting Techniques](#)

December 2004: [Deja View II](#)

January 2005: [New Year's Resolutions](#)

February 2005: [Brainy Side of F&B](#)

March 2005: [Sarbanes-Oxley and Meetings](#)

April 2005: [Visual Aids](#)

May 2005: [Experiential Teambuilding](#)

June 2005: [Emotional Meetings](#)

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