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MEDIA RELATIONS WORKSHOP

SPONSORED BY

THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (CIPE)
AND
THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA
JANUARY 11 AND 12, 2001

Center for International Private Enterprise

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January 11, 2001

Dear Participant:

On behalf of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) it is my pleasure to welcome you to this media relations seminar. The next two days will be filled with interactive, practical information on how you can increase your presence and power with the media.

Maintaining a good relationship with the media is not magic, it is a science that must be practiced and fine-tuned. It is our goal for you to build your skills in this area so that you can assist your association in developing a media relations strategy that enables it to communicate its message consistently and clearly.

Our facilitator, Dr. Stan Jones, is an expert in the area of media relations and is also a professional speaker and consultant. His expertise, along with that of our panelists, will provide a great baseline for discussion, as will the printed materials provided in this folder.

As always, CIPE thanks USAID for its generous financial support of this and other programs. Again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Mark T. McCord, CCE
Chief of Party

Participants
in CIPE sponsored
Media Relations Seminar
11-12 January, 2001

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AGENDA

Effective Communications with the Media

The to Success is in *Effective* Communications

Wild geese have been known to fly up to 5000 kilometers to reach their winter destinations. During this long journey, the flock travels and is kept together by mutual cooperation and **effective communication.**

Thursday, 11 January 2001

8:30	Registration & Coffee	
9:00	Welcome & Introductions	Mark T. McCord, CCE Chief of Party CIPE Romania
9:05	Cover Agenda Objectives & Goals for Seminar	Dr. H. Stanley Jones Certified Speaking Professional CIPE Volunteer
9:07	Brief Introduction by each Participant	The Participants
9:12	Interview of your seatmate	The Participants
9:20	Introduction of your seatmate	The Participants
9:50	Interview of another	The Participants
10:30	Refreshment Break	All
10:45	5 Minute Prepared Talks	The Participants
11:45	3 Minute Prepared Talks	The Participants
12:15	2 Minute Impromptu Talks	The Participants
12:25	Review of the Morning	Stan Jones
12:45	Lunch Buffet - downstairs	All
2:00	Introduction & Presentations by Guest Speakers From the Print Media From the Radio Media From the TV Media	
3:15	Refreshment Break	All
3:30	Panel of Experts Q & A Session	Media Representatives The Participants
4:00	Tips & Tidbits to Being a More Effective Public Communicator	Stan Jones
4:45	Assignments for Tomorrow	Stan Jones
4:50	Review of the Day	Stan Jones
5:00	Adjourn	All

Friday, 12 January 2001

8:30	Coffee	All
9:00	Homework Good & Bad Headlines Good & Bad Articles Good & Bad Advertisements	All
9:30	Tips on Writing Effective Press Releases	Stan Jones
9:45	Writing a Press Release	All Participants
10:05	Reading & Discussion of 5 Individual Press Releases	All Participants
10:30	Refreshment Break	All
10:45	Reading & Discussion of Second Group of Press Releases	All Participants
11:10	Tips & Tidbits to Being a More Effective Public Communicator	Stan Jones
11:55	Radio Interviews	All Participants
12:55	Lunch	All
2:00	Radio Interviews	All Participants
2:45	Tips & Tidbits to Being a More Effective Communicator	Stan Jones
3:15	Break	All
3:30	TV Interviews	All Participants
4:40	Summary, Awards of Certificates of Completion, Pictures	Stan Jones
5:00	Adjourn	

ARTICLES BY NOTED EXPERTS

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA: A PRIMER FOR ENTREPRENEURS

by

Michael Owen Schwager

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Public relations/publicity is an excellent vehicle for entrepreneurs of fast-growing companies. The entrepreneurial spirit, when applied to seeking more cost-effective and creative ways of marketing one's company, products, services or ideas, can work well in the context of "p.r."

Some Basic Assumptions:

- **Always** tell the truth. Make sure your product or service does what it says it does and your information is accurate. If you're asked a question that sounds unfavorable to your organization, try to respond or get back to the reporter with the information. Remember, if you don't, the info will come from someone else--and not necessarily from a source that will help your organization. Also remember, candor usually equals **credibility.**
- **Know** your outlet before you call. Have you read the magazine or newspaper in advance? Moreover, do you know the specific beat of the editor or reporter you intend to make contact with? Have you read his/her stories? It's fine to cold call but don't cold call blindly (unless there really is vagueness about that person's turf). Same principle applies to TV or radio.
- **Attitude**. Make sure that whoever approaches a journalist has enough life experience under his/her belt and sufficient self-confidence so as not to be intimidated by an editor or producer (nor to convey that impression). Be warm & polite, professional...and clear. See that individual as a peer and colleague. If they're brusque in the moment, they may be having a bad day. Simply ask if there's a better time to get back to them.
- That said, **believe in your story**. The best p.r. people see themselves as resources of news and information who work with journalists to fill valuable time & print space.
- **Don't waste their time.** When you call, communicate, in sharp and crystallized fashion, the essence of the story. Keep it brief, respect deadlines and ask in advance if the moment is clear for that editor/ producer. NEVER call when you know an editor is under deadline pressure.
- **Personalize.** I've seen too many impersonal, photocopied pitch letters. If you send something in advance to a call, or as a follow-up to a call, personalize. Keep your cover note as brief as possible.
- **Listen to the editor.** It's as important to listen as it is to talk. Be sensitive to any verbal feedback, cues or clues that can assist you in fine-tuning your pitch. Keep your antennae fully extended.
- **Respect the 'no' and be prepared for it.** Ask quick, important questions: What is it about

this story that doesn't seem right for you? Is there anyone else for whom this story might work better? Suggest how the story can be adapted to the outlet's needs. Best of all, suggest three to five different angles in advance. This reduces chances for rejection.

- **But when you get your final no**, let it go and release it. YOU haven't been rejected, just your story. And if you've handled the approach professionally and cordially, you'll always be able to come back with another story at another time. Regard your list of cultivated contacts as resources and investments for the long-haul, not for quick fix purposes.
- Occasionally, **pass along an item of interest** that lies outside your own sphere of self-interest. Be someone who's not always out to get something. Also, supply your most important contacts with your home phone number.
- **Get out from behind your desk.** The better you get to know the journalist on a one-to-one basis, the better your chance of a receptive ear.
- **Getting beyond voice mail.** Leave a succinct, provocative, targeted message. If you don't hear from them in two days, try calling well before 9 AM, or leave a message with an editorial assistant or colleague. Call back that other person to learn if your message was received and if there's a return message. Sometimes, you can ask the switchboard for the department that person works in, rather than a specific voice mail.

Remember that an editor or producer is buying you as well as your story. The bottom line is trust. It's up to you to earn it.

Creative Formatting

Publicity is an important and often overlooked tool of creative selling. If you don't have a HARD NEWS STORY - and most companies don't - there are some techniques involving creative conceptualization and application, and all of them work through the print and broadcast media.

1 - Use News to Make News.

When you prepare a press release, keep the following editorial criteria in mind:

- Relevance (how valid and appropriate is this story?)
- Impact (does this story affect a large number of people?)
- Timeliness (is the story current?)
- Novelty (does the story have an unusual or unique twist to it?)

Your topic should tie in with current news issues and/or subjects that concern the public. In my earlier p.r. days, I promoted one product by showing how it could be used to the advantage of a specific news item of the day. In this case, the issue was government waste. Revelations were surfacing that various federal agencies were buying products at absurd prices above retail: you may remember $500 toilet seats and $75 rulers. The American taxpayer was being seriously abused by bureaucratic waste.

Our client was a publishing house that had just come out with a directory for buyers at government agencies. The directory listed major manufacturers all over the country who were **not** in the business of ripping off Uncle Sam. The directory was distributed to the agencies free of charge. The publishing house made its money by selling ad pages to companies who wanted to attract the attention of these buying officials.

We attracted a significant amount of publicity by telling editors that the publishing company had come up with a partial solution to the problem of wasteful government spending. The story was

picked up by the wire services and nationally syndicated TV newscasts.

2 - Seasonal Tie-ins

News editors are always looking for feature stories that tie in with holiday or seasonal happenings. I remember a very successful campaign for a manufacturer of postage meter equipment. Eight weeks before Christmas, we convinced the manufacturer to designate a Holiday Consumer Affairs Specialist who could talk about "everything you wanted to know about mailing gifts for the holidays."

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we arranged dozens of phone interviews with reporters at large radio stations in major markets. The company was plugged in every interview and the entire campaign tied-in with a major catalogue and in-store p.o.p. merchandising campaign. Sometimes, a creative p.r. idea can pave the way for a strategic marketing campaign.

Another successful campaign tied in with the advent of winter and escalating fuel prices due to an international oil crisis. One of our clients manufactured a draft sealer, a simple rubber plug that fit into electrical wall outlets. The sealer kept cold outside air from coming into the home and kept warm air inside from leaking out. Consumers could save money on their fuel bills. We convinced the Today Show to do a live five minute segment on a new energy-saving device for the home.

3 - Products Are Newsworthy When They Are Evolutionary or Revolutionary

On Sunday, May 29, 1994, we generated a story in the Business Section of the New York Times on a new kind of paper that changed color upon the touch of the hand. We knew the story had merit, because the product represents a revolutionary leap forward in paper goods.

Several years ago, a new product created by a camera manufacturer, an instant slide processor that develops slides in seconds, represented an evolutionary step up in instant photography. We offered Good Morning, America a first exclusive on the announcement, and we convinced the show's producers to have host Joan Lunden demonstrate the product live in a five minute segment. The product sold out nationally.

4 - Anniversaries

If the product is vital to the American way of life, the media might click with a suggestion for a story on a major anniversary of the product. This includes biggies like television, radio, refrigerators and cars all the way to such mundane indispensables as zippers and toothpaste.

Other kinds of anniversaries work too. During the centennial celebrations for the Statue of Liberty, we convinced Kelloggs to sponsor a campaign that publicized the closest living relative to the man who designed and built Lady Liberty. This included the scripting and shooting of a video news feature story for television newscasts around the country, and our pickup was enormous--including some very nice positive image reinforcement for Kelloggs.

5. Controlled Messages

A controlled message is a message that you prepare in advance and place with various media as a finished product. When we promoted a book that turned into a major bestseller called *Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive* by Harvey Mackay, we employed a number of techniques that come under this category.

Three examples of this technique are the video news feature, matted columns for suburban newspapers, and by-lined articles for specialized trade publications.

A **video news feature** is simply a 90-second to two-minute news piece that gets scripted, shot and distributed to newscasts around the country. The local newscast incorporates the piece as part of its news coverage, and the average viewer has no idea these stories are supplied by outside sources.

A **matted column** is simply a one-column or two-column story that is sent to suburban news weeklies as camera-ready copy. They don't have to edit it or prepare it for print. The column usually offers some kind of consumer advice, with a discreet yet effective plug within the story.

Vertical trade publications are magazines that are published for a specific audience or industry. Hundreds of them are published each month. Years ago, we ghosted by-lined articles for the president of a company that analyzed utility rates for other companies, showing them how to save thousands of dollars every year. These articles were placed with dozens of magazines that catered to a variety of industries. This campaign was the company's sole marketing vehicle for many years.

6 - Trends

When one of our clients, a major photography magazine, needed to increase its exposure, we designed a segment on The Today Show in which one of the magazine's editors brought the very latest camera equipment to the program. For seven minutes, he demonstrated the most current camera technology to millions of viewers. He also achieved some substantial awareness for his magazine.

Another client, the Magazine Publishers Association, was interested in increasing recognition. They wanted to establish the fact that magazines are at the leading edge of creative advertising communication. We designed a segment on The Today Show that displayed the latest in pop-up ads in various magazines.

In another situation, a German beer company wanted to increase sales in the USA. The company turned to us, asking us to increase their name recognition with a publicity program instead of advertising. The built-in challenge was that very little can be done editorially for alcoholic beverages. The solution was to look for secondary uses which would nonetheless position the beer in a meaningful and positive way.

We convinced a well-known German restaurant to develop dishes prepared with beer as an ingredient. We invited the entire national food press to a Cooking With Beer Festival. The food writers for every major magazine and newspaper attended. Media coverage was staggering. Many products can be used in special publicity events. By promoting indirectly, sponsors can reap media coverage.

POSITIVE PUBLICITY SELLS. A creative publicity program can be a powerful tool for selling your product or service. Publicity efforts can be **more** cost-effective than traditional advertising. Plus, they pack more power because the publicity comes from recognized media sources instead of from your company. This increases consumer confidence and promotes a positive public image. The end result of creative publicity is an increased awareness that attracts potential customers.

Positioning Your Messages For Television

Lesson #1: How to take control

- Carve out communications objectives or copy points.
- Plan the timing of the copy points.
- Develop and anticipate key questions.
- Turn negatives into positives (turn lemons into lemonade).
- Rehearse out loud.
- Preview the interviewer and the program.

Lesson #2: How to achieve credibility

- Establish rapport.
- Communication: use short word and simple sentences; convey poise in body language and dress, use high energy but modulated based on interviewer's style.

Lesson #3: How to confront crisis and hostility

- Keep the problem in perspective.
- Pay attention to company positioning.
- Show compassion for victims.
- Be consistent, be as candid as possible.
- Admit mistakes.
- Avoid "no comments".

About Michael O. Schwager - What Others Have Said
Our Capabilities - Who We Have Served

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MEDIA RELATIONS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Use email, video news releases, virtual press conferences, Internet-based media tours, and media-friendly company websites (and mail and fax) to convey your message to the press.

By David M. Freedman and Debbi Giacone

Emerging communication technologies are revolutionizing the way we share news and background information with the press. The Internet, especially, continues to push the boundaries of how quickly and efficiently messages can be disseminated across the globe -- or across the aisle. The kinds of content that can be widely and instantly shared, from plain text and photographs to narrated slide shows and streaming video, continue to mushroom as well.

The traditional methods of disseminating information, especially face-to-face interactions with members of the press, will still be an important aspect of media relations. But new technologies will blend with the traditional to create greater efficiency and impact for people on both sides of the desk: the publicist and the media outlet.

The Internet is a two-way street

Marketing pros who want to stay competitive in this brave new world should make it a point to understand how members of the media use the Internet to retrieve and process information. Roger Ardan, senior vice president of legal marketing for Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, urges clients to take advantage of technology. "The electronic media are here to stay, and the more savvy law firms will use it to position themselves in the marketplace."

The power of the internet is that it transforms what was once a one-way communication from publicists to the press into a two-way exchange. Media relations professionals can use the Internet to distribute their press releases to the media in a variety of ways. The press can then log on to retrieve archived documents, conduct interviews, or even participate in a cyber press conference without leaving the newsroom.

E-mail saves editors time
Newsrooms are increasingly incorporating email into their daily routines. A growing number of editors and journalists now prefer that you e-mail press releases to them, rather than fax or mail. Even those who don't want to *receive* press releases electronically often use email to contact their news sources directly.

Francine Schwadel, legal editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, uses email to follow up on story ideas regardless of how she received them. "I generally don't give out my email address unless I'm sure I want an item. But I've found that email is convenient for corresponding with contacts and setting up meetings with marketing people," she says.

Newsrooms that have access to e-mail find that it‰s streamlining their operations. Many reporters now prefer e-mail to snail mail or faxes because they can just cut and paste the information into their notes or manuscripts, which saves time (and paper resources) and drastically reduces the occurrence of errors. Email is easy to filter, sort, store, and delete.

Used properly, email is a quick and efficient way for firms to send press releases. You can develop your own media contact list, with email addresses for those outlets that have them, or you can use any of the dozens of on-line services that will distribute your release to targeted media lists. But of course, email is easy to delete, so follow these simple guidelines to increase the chances that your message will be read.

- The first thing that most reporters look for is the name or email address of the sender. If they recognize it as a reliable source, they'll usually open the message and read it. If the sender isn't familiar, they'll look next at the "subject" field.
- If the subject appears to be unsolicited junk, they'll delete the message without opening it. You know what junk email typically looks like, so don't write a junky subject. You can say, for example, "Analysis of the XYZ verdict in Federal Court: how it affects area businesses," or "Two local accounting firms merge to form state's biggest tax and consulting practice."
- The next most important aspect of your release is the headline. Many big-city newspapers use interns to screen news releases based mainly on headlines. So if you don't want your release to be summarily deleted, make the headline compelling, and format the release just as you would a release on paper --

with contact information and double-spaced text.
- Don't send your release as an attachment to email. Place it in the main message as plain text, unless the reporter specifically asks for it in another form.
- Include a signature file at the end, with your full contact information.
- Never send a press release to your entire media list, with the whole list visible. If possible, tailor each release to the individual recipient.

Faxes still in demand
Despite the available technology, some newsroom editors still prefer to get their information the "old fashioned" way -- via U.S. mail, fax, or a combination of both. It's all a matter of each reporter's personal preference.

When you build your media contact list, you should contact each person on the list and ask how they prefer to receive releases, and update the list regularly. This personal attention puts the *relations* back in media relations, and gets you better results.

Websites let the media come to you
The World Wide Web is becoming a media magnet, drawing growing numbers of journalists who use it to research stories and communicate with sources. If your firm has a website, be sure you direct reporters to your "what's new" page, and post your most recent releases there, as well as any announcements and answers to questions that reporters frequently ask you. "For professional services and high-tech firms, having an Internet presence is becoming more and more important," says Shari L. Goldstein, president of a New York City PR firm whose clients include such firms. "Journalists on deadline who need background information about a company and its services will often check the company's website for these details."

The Internet Journalists Guild offers these suggestions for firms to create "press friendly" web sites:

- Make it easy for press to access the media section of your firm's web site.
- Place the name, phone number, and email address of your marketing director, managing partner, or other spokesperson where a reporter can find it fast.
- Include a page that lists the firm's partners and/or executives, with their titles and a downloadable picture of each. Give the media permission to publish the photos, along with the appropriate credits, so they don't have to call you each time they want to use one.
- To save download time, avoid gratuitous graphics.

Videotape and satellites
Broadcast media outlets admit that a large chunk of their "breaking news" comes from public relations firms who provide video news releases (VNRs) and satellite media tours (SMTs). Local news outlets with restricted budgets especially use them, rather than dispatch camera crews, to cover remote events or to conduct interviews with newsmakers.

VNRs and SMTs can be cost-efficient ways to convey important messages to television news outlets at the local, national or international level. But high production costs -- anywhere from $5,000 to $100,000 -- make them of limited use to very small firms. Says Edelman's Roger Ardan, "For small firms to use VNRs and SMTs it has to be major news -- a merger, the creation of a megafirm, or a development of major significance to a particular industry. To use them for anything less wouldn't be an efficient use of resources."

Video news releases
Video news releases are completely assembled 1-1/2 to 2 minute news stories with scenes, interviews, and narration edited together as a "package" for TV broadcast. Most stations and news organizations further edit VNRs to meet their standards of broadcast style and policy. Often, material from several sources is combined to broaden the scope of the story or to present additional viewpoints.

You can deliver copies of your videotape to TV stations, or have them copied and distributed through VNR services, or distribute them digitally via the Internet. Several Internet-based services distribute VNR advisories, transmitted daily to television newsroom computer systems. The largest and best known service is Medialink (800-843-0677; www.medialink.com).

According to an AC Nielsen survey, the average video news release receives nine media placements, although hot stories can get several hundred. The key to a successful VNR, says Rick Leslie, president of Chicago-based Leslie Story & Video, is to make the piece newsworthy, not promotional; and focus on the message, not the messenger. Following this golden rule has pushed several of his hard-news VNRs past the 500-placement mark. Many advertising and media relations firms can help you produce VNRs.

Cyber media tours
Satellite media tours have been a staple of publicists for years. Now the Internet has revolutionized the media tour,

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as it has revolutionized the rest of civilization. The traditional media tour is a series of live, one-on-one interviews with broadcast news stations (including online media). Your firm's spokesperson sits in a studio where he or she is linked by satellite to a number of stations around the world, in succession, and reporters from those stations conduct live interviews, which have been booked in advance by your publicist.

Broadcasting an SMT over the Internet -- which was pioneered by Medialink -- opens the interview to questions from third-party journalists anywhere else in the world. They can submit questions by email or by a process similar to online chats. The tour becomes an online news conference.

Most members of the media agree: More important than how you send the message is whether the item is newsworthy. A business reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* recently complained, "Press releases clog up my mail, my e-mail, my fax machine, and only one out of 20 has something important to say!" The *WSJ's* Francine Schwadel agrees. "Marketers need to think about my audience and why this would be interesting to them. They should ask themselvesÖdo you see something like this in the *Wall Street Journal?"*

About the authors

David M. Freedman was a legal and financial journalist for 20 years before starting his own media relations firm, D. M. Freedman Company, based in the Chicago area. Debbi Giacone has been a marketing communications specialist in the business-to-business area for 16 years, and recently joined D. M. Freedman Company as an associate. They can be reached by phone at 847-433-5000, or via the web at www.dmfreedman.com.

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GET YOUR MEDIA MACHINE ROLLING

How to build a media contact list that's comprehensive, but not wasteful

By Jeffery D. Zbar and David M. Freedman
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Savvy small-business marketers learn how to use the media to get the exposure their companies need. When they introduce a new product or service, or want to publicly express an opinion about an important news event, they have a media-relations system in place so that they can react quickly and get a press release out on deadline.

Don't wait until the event occurs. Build your media machine now so that you can get it rolling when you need to act quickly. Following are six crucial steps for setting up a media-relations system for your firm.

- **Select the media outlets.** It's one thing to write a press release. It's another to get it to the right media outlets. By the "right" outlets, we mean those whose audiences include the people you want your message to reach.

  Be comprehensive. Search for all the media outlets, large and small, prominent and obscure, that are read by members of your target audiences. Ask members of your audience, "What media do you use to get news, information, updates, advice, or entertainment?" Include newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, wire services, newsletters, trade journals, and Internet. Identify the appropriate sections or departments of those outlets (business, arts & leisure, sports, local, entertainment, technology, etc.).

Be discriminating. Don't put media outlets on your list unless they really would be interested in your message. Customize the list each time you send out a release, to weed out those that are not appropriate. One way to alienate the press is to inundate them with releases that don't apply to their audiences.

- **Know the market.** You are probably familiar with some of the local news media, and no doubt you read professional or trade publications in your field. In addition, you should thoroughly review media directories, which are available in the reference section of most public libraries, to identify and list all the publications in which exposure would help your marketing effort. If you don't have access to a library, you can purchase media directories from Burrelle's (800-631-1160, www.burrelles.com), Bacon's (201-992-6600, www.baconsinfo.com), or Gebbie Press (914-255-7560, www.gebbieinc.com), among others.

- **Know the publications.** Spend an afternoon at the library flipping through the publications on your list, or send for sample copies of them. Watch the TV shows and listen to the radio talk shows. You should get a feel for the content, format, editorial slant, and tone of each. You'll want to write your releases to fit the style of the media; often you'll be writing different versions of a release for different kinds of media.

- **Build a media contact list,** with names of individual contacts. Media directories, as well as the mastheads of newspapers and magazines, will provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people to whom you will be sending your releases. They typically are beat reporters, section or department editors, managing editors, and broadcast news directors. Call each one personally to confirm the contact information; there's always a lot of turnover in these positions.

  While you've got them on the phone, introduce yourself and mention that you'll be sending news releases and pitching story ideas from time to time; and invite them to call you whenever they need information about your profession or area of expertise.

You can learn a lot about media relations when you make these initial calls, if you can relax and "chat them up."

- **Update your contact list** at least twice a year, adding fax numbers and e-mail addresses when available. But don't send releases by fax or e-mail unless you're invited to do so.

- **Get to know the reporters' deadlines,** and respect them. ("It's the 6:00 news, not the 6:10 news."). Reporters and editors at daily publications usually are easier to reach in the mornings.

Keep your media relations machine idling, and at a moment's notice you can rev it up for the dissemination of releases, announcements, and pitches.

For more information, we recommend Effective Media Relations, by Wilma K. Mathews (International Association of Business Communicators, San Francisco, CA, 1998, 415-433-3400, www.iabc.com. Also, for tips on writing press releases, see "Advanced Press Release-ology"

About the authors

Jeffery D. Zbar is a home-based journalist and business coach specializing in work-at-home, alternative officing, and small business issues. He is the author of Home Office Know-How (Upstart Publishing, Chicago, 1998). His CD-ROM, Your Profitable Home Business Made E-Z (Made E-Z Products, Inc., Deerfield Beach, Fla.), will debut this fall. He also publishes the free e-zine, Home Office Success Stories. You can reach him by e-mail at jeff@goinsoho.com.

David M. Freedman is a Chicago-based writer, editor, and media relations consultant. He has served on the editorial staffs of consumer, business, professional, and trade publications, and he successfully launched a commercial newsletter. He has collaborated on feature articles with attorneys, accountants, and other professional practitioners. He is also the author of two non-fiction books. Mr. Freedman has done media relations work for professional service firms, high-tech startups, and small businesses. You can reach him by e-mail at dave@dmfreedman.com, or call 847-433-5000.

ADVANCED PRESS RELEASE-OLOGY

How to prepare releases that get results -- and win the respect of journalists

Contents:

Introduction: two perspectives
The key to success: thorough preparation
Guidelines for creating excellent releases
Following up (or not)

By David M. Freedman
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Most experienced editors have a love-hate relationship with press releases. They rely on releases (and the people who write them) for story ideas, facts, and valuable sources. A good news release can be a lifesaver when it arrives just in the nick of time with a nifty story idea and an arresting headline, compelling lead, powerful quotes, maybe even a publishable photo.

On the other hand, editors typically have to slog through hundreds of poorly conceived, hastily written, misdirected releases before finding one that's worthwhile. Some releases are so junky that you wonder how the people who write such drivel ever got jobs in the "communications" business.

PERSPECTIVE

When it comes to news releases, I've been on both sides of the desk. I was a journalist for 20 years, mostly as a magazine and newsletter editor. I've slogged through thousands of news releases, and learned to distinguish the wifty from the nifty in less than thirty seconds.

When I did receive a great news release, I got excited. Not only because a good story had landed in my lap for "free," but also because I had found a new PR contact I could count on for good ideas. I tended to want to reward

that person.

On the other side of the desk, I've done a fair amount of freelance media relations work for small businesses and professional service firms. That work has included composing and distributing news releases, backgrounders, and fact sheets to the media. I know it's not easy to write good news releases that succeed in (a) getting publicity for the client, or (b) persuading the press to appreciate the client's your point of view. Even if the release is well written (which takes practice), newsworthy (which takes creativity), concise (which takes energy), and responsive to the needs of a particular audience (which requires actually reading the publication), the editor simply may not be in the mood for it. But my releases have succeeded in getting good publicity, mainly because I think like a journalist and know exactly what they need -- or if I don't know what they need, I know how to find out.

PRECISION VS. SHOTGUN

The way to increase your chances of success is not by writing news releases more frequently and scattering them over a wider range of media outlets. That's the old shotgun approach, the classic numbers game: If you send enough of them out, maybe someone will use it.

To increase your chances of success, improve your writing skills, learn more about the subject, research your target audience and the publications they read, and target the media more precisely.

FOCUS

The next time you get an assignment to write a news release, stop and think about it before you start writing. Put your feet up on the desk and focus your brain. Bill the client for the time you spend thinking and focusing.

Imagine you're having lunch with members of the target audience. They ask you, "What're you pitching today?" You tell them about the news release you've been assigned to write. They're savvy and they're skeptical,

and they ask, "What's the news there? What's so new about that? So what? How does it affect me? Why should I believe it? Who told you that?" If you can't answer those questions clearly, succinctly, and persuasively, get back to the client for more information and inspiration. Research the topic. Study the target media outlets (and cross those off your mailing list that won't really be interested in the story). Interview members of the audience; take a bunch of them to lunch really. If you still can't answer those questions, tell the client they're wasting their time. There are better ways to get good publicity than spewing pointless verbiage all over the media -- like doing *pro bono* work in the community.

All that researching, studying, interviewing, and entertaining takes time and money. If you can't bill the client for the cost, eat it. It's an excellent investment. If you want to rise to the pinnacle of your profession, and earn huge fees because you have a reputation for getting superlative results, you must be thorough.

Carry that philosophy through all aspects of your professional career. If a fact seems the least bit implausible, check it again. If a claim sounds exaggerated, verify it. If a quote isn't compelling, get a better one. Call all the phone numbers and visit all the Web sites given in the press release before you send it, to insure accuracy. Don't hurry impatiently through interviews -- let your sources blather on because they might reveal something you didn't think to ask about. Go to meetings and presentations thoroughly, thoroughly prepared. Think like an investigative reporter, because your work will be scrutinized by skeptical, cynical bloodhounds.

POSITIVE, UPBEAT GUIDELINES

Reporters are so sick of crummy releases that when they issue guidelines on how to write releases, many of them tend to present a list of dont's, common mistakes, pet peeves, or deadly sins. They're written in condescending tones with titles like, "How to alienate a reporter."

I'll spare you the affront. Here are some positive, upbeat tips for writing a news release that grabs editors' attention and makes them want to reward you.

GUIDELINE #1

The most important skill in media relations is the ability to write a clear, unambiguous sentence. An engaging personality and tremendous enthusiasm can't compensate for a lack of clarity.

THOROUGH PREPARATION

You have to learn to think like a reporter, assignment editor, and program director. What do they need from you? If you're not sure, invite them to lunch (one publication or station at a time), and ask how you can help make their jobs easier. Are they interested in events, hard news, trends, background information, a local angle on a national story? Do they like case studies, success stories, the problem-solution approach?

Be sure to review their publications or listen to their news broadcasts before you meet with them. Ask about their editorial mix, their political leanings, their reader/listener demographics. If you demonstrate a familiarity with, and curiosity about, their publication or format, they'll love you. If you aren't familiar, they'll smell it in five minutes.

Ask them all about their beat or their specialized field. Reporters and editors love to be treated as experts and ambassadors for their industries -- they long to be treated as a member of the occupational community. Ask them to mail you copies of the best news releases they've received recently, or to save the good ones for you as they come in, so you can learn what rings their chimes. Put the *relations* back in media relations!

Offer to buy lunch, but don't be surprised if the reporter insists on going Dutch as a matter of policy. If your employer or client won't reimburse you for these lunches, pay for them yourself. This is continuing

education, much more valuable -- and still cheaper -- than a college degree.

THE NEWS, THE ANGLE, AND THE HOOK

The best way to learn what qualifies as newsworthy in any field, or what angle to take in a release, or what sort of hook will appeal to the audience, is to study the publications, attend some conferences -- listen to the kinds of questions the audiences ask -- and get to know the leaders in that field. Make a special effort to befriend the executive directors of professional and trade associations -- when you show up at their conferences (and stay awake through most of them), they'll go out of their way to help you with research and introduce you to big shots.

In the case of business-to-consumer PR, hang out with the audience wherever they hang out.

Don't say you lack the time and budget to attend conferences, meet big shots, or hang out. Just find a way to do it. It's a low-risk investment that yields extraordinary returns.

I've seen several PR books and a few articles published on the Web that list criteria for newsworthiness, and suggest ways to create news when there isn't any. (One of the best articles is "Working With the Media: A Primer for Entrepreneurs," by Michael Owen Schwager, a veteran media relations consultant in New York.) Read the articles, but don't rely on them. Develop your own sense of what's news by reading, snooping, and asking lots of challenging questions.

As far as the angle is concerned, focus on people. Especially how the news affects people in the audience. Especially local people and "people like us."

Local media love local angles. Search one out. A local angle isn't always necessary, though. Don't strain to contrive a local angle when there is none.

STYLE

Since this is an "advanced" article, I'm not

going to run through all the fundamentals of writing an effective press release. Two good sources for that are Chapter 6 of *Handbook for Public Relations Writing, 4th Edition,* by Thomas H. Bivins (NTC Business Books, Chicago, 1999), and the Community Media Workshop's website www.newstips.org.

Practice writing in the classic journalistic style, best known as the inverted pyramid. Put all the crucial information concisely in the first two or three paragraphs, as though the reader doesn't have time to read further. Then fill in the details in subsequent paragraphs, just in case the reader's interest is piqued and he or she manages to find the time. The least important information goes toward the end, so that if the release were truncated, the reader would still understand the story and benefit from reading it.

You increase the chances of your release being used by a reporter if it's written in the style in which the reporter is accustomed to writing. Of course, you can't rewrite the release for each individual publication (or can you?). But you can write one version of the release for trade journals, another for business publications, another for broadcast media, and another for online media, each in the appropriate style. Learn the styles by reading, listening, and viewing, reading, listening, and viewing some more.

Your headline (and sometimes a deck, if you need to expand on a more complex theme) and lead paragraph are keys to the success of the release. You must compete with dozens of other releases, capture the reader's attention, focus on the theme, generate interest, and offer a benefit in less than thirty seconds. Subscribe to the *New York Times* and study its heads and decks. Practice writing them.

The most common type of lead, and usually the most effective, is the summary lead. You know, the 5w+1h formula (who, what, where, when, why, how). You hit the news and tell how it has affected or is going to affect the audience. You must give the reader a benefit up front, a reason for reading on.

The alternative is the anecdotal lead. It's got to be very compelling, or the reader will either skip to the hard news, or toss it out summarily. Use the anecdotal lead sparingly and concisely. If the anecdote is a long one, give a short version in the lead and expand on it later, or attach a backgrounder or fact sheet (see below) with the full anecdote. Subscribe to the *Wall Street Journal* and study its leads.

Write concisely, but include all the important details in your release. If you can't fit them all in less than two pages, attach a fact sheet. Some self-appointed PR gurus advise that you leave out a few details that you know a reporter will want, so that the reporter will have to call you, and then you can really sell your story *mano a mano* - you can generate lots more enthusiasm over the phone than on paper. The problem with that approach is, if you're unavailable when the reporter calls, or if the reporter just doesn't have the time to call, he or she may not be able to run with the story if important facts are missing. Give them a little kit, everything they need to put together a complete story.

Above everything else, be truthful and accurate. Habitual exaggeration and inflation will eventually ruin your career. Keep adjectives and adverbs to a minimum. Understatement usually works better than hyperbole.

PROTOCOL

Most editors would prefer a newsworthy press release written in crayon on birch bark to a worthless one typed on 70# bond with "more" and "###" at the bottoms of the pages. Learn the formats and protocols, but don't sweat it. I recently read an article on how to write press releases that instructed readers to fasten the pages of a release together with a paper clip instead of a staple. Forget about these trivial details and focus on news value.

You can submit press releases by mail, fax, or e-mail. Ask what each party prefers, store that preference on your mailing list, and

submit accordingly. Lately, many reporters have become annoyed by unsolicited e-mailed releases because they can clog up the recipient's incoming mailbox. Before you send e-mail releases, be sure they're welcome -- and write PRESS RELEASE FROM (YOUR NAME) in the subject line.

TO FOLLOW UP OR NOT

You'll find articles written by self-proclaimed PR experts that caution you *never* to follow up a release with a phone call. Don't even call to confirm that the addressees received the release, never mind to find out if they are interested in the story.

Do not heed dogmatic guidelines that contain the word *never* or *always*. If it's the first time you've sent something to a particular publication or broadcast station, you may follow up to make sure the release arrived at the right desk, ask if there is anyone else in that organization to whom you should send copies of the release, and get reassurance that you're welcome to send them more releases in the future. (It's a good idea to call *before* your first release goes out, to introduce yourself and herald your inaugural release to that person -- and ask for a copy of the publication if you haven't seen it.) If you haven't called for several months, it can't hurt to call and touch base. Whether you should inquire about the level of interest in a particular story depends on your relationship with the reporter or program director.

If the reporter says the story you pitched is interesting but not right for their readers, you could suggest a couple other angles that might appeal to them. In fact, Michael Owen Schwager suggests that you think of three to five different angles before you make the phone call.

If you develop good rapport with certain reporters, and a reputation for scrupulous integrity, an occasional phone call to offer clarification, ask for feedback, or inquire about the industry won't be considered untoward. In general, your professionalism and forthrightness will determine whether your follow-up calls are considered

diplomacy or nuisance.

By the way, the news that you pass along to reporters doesn't always have to be about, or involve, you and your firm. Schwager urges that you occasionally give them items of interest that lie outside your own sphere of self-interest. You become a valuable source on whom reporters can depend.

HOW'D YOU DO THAT?

When you see people in your profession featured or quoted in the media and wonder how they managed to get such great publicity, call and ask them how they did it. Who writes their news releases? Can you have copies of the releases?

Make it your goal to have reporters, editors, and program directors look forward to reading your press releases, rather than have to slog through them. You'll be amply rewarded.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David M. Freedman is a Chicago-based freelance writer, editor, and media relations consultant. He has served on the editorial staffs of professional, trade, business, and consumer magazines; and successfully launched a commercial newsletter. He has helped professional service firms produce informative literature such as newsletters, handbooks, press releases and backgounders, and website content. He has done media relations work for professional service firms and high-tech startups. You can reach him by telephone at 847-433-5000, or by e-mail at dave@dmfreedman.com.

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Guidelines for Submitting Press Releases to Newspapers

By Dave Freedman

Let's hear it for the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Oregonian*! Those are the only two out of the nation's major dailies (with circulation over 300,000) whose websites offer guidelines for submitting press releases to their staffs. The *Chicago Tribune* website, I should point out, makes a feeble attempt to provide a few guidelines -- four bullet points, to be exact -- but curiously they are identical to the first four (of many) bullet points found at the *L.A. Times* website.

You can read the guidelines first-hand by visiting the following Web pages:

> *L.A. Times*:
> www.latimes.com/siteservices/talk_contacts.htm#guide
> *Oregonian*:
> www.oregonian.com/newsroom/sharing.html

For the convenience of Media Relations Central readers, I will combine, organize, and summarize the guidelines below. The source of each item is given in parentheses (LA or OR).

What is a press release?
In general, a good press release is a concise, complete description of an upcoming news event, a timely report of an event that has just occurred, notification of important personnel or procedural changes in an organization, or other news or feature tips. (LA)

The press release is the tool most often used to share information with newspapers when the story is *not* breaking news. The press release is a concise, informative and straightforward piece of writing that describes what you want the public to know. It also can convey ideas of potential stories to editors and remind them of upcoming

events. (OR)

Newsworthiness
To be newsworthy, your information or story should meet one or more of the following criteria (OR):

TIMELINESS - information that is currently relevant or has some immediate impact on readers.

NOVELTY - a story that is unusual or unique. You know the adage: when a dog bites a man, it's not news; when a man bites a dog, it is. The first, the best, the worst, the tallest, the shortest. If something stands out from everything else, it may be newsworthy.

CONSEQUENCE - information about a development that will have a significant impact on some or all of our readers.

HUMAN INTEREST - a story that reveals something quirky, colorful or otherwise dramatic about the human condition or character.

PROMINENCE - information or news about a public figure, organization or recognizable person.

PROXIMITY - information or news that has an effect on people living in the area.

Writing the release
A well-presented press release, typewritten or printed clearly, observes the following guidelines (LA, OR):

INVERTED PYRAMID - The structure of the press release puts the most important and indispensable information at the beginning of the story, the most expendable at the end. Address the who, what, where, why and when in the first two paragraphs.

PAPER - Use white, inexpensive 8 1/2" x 11".

LENGTH - Just the facts, please. Make every word, sentence and paragraph count. Keep it tight -- no longer than two pages, double-spaced.

CONTACT - Identify the organization or

individual sending the release and include the name and daytime *and evening* phone number (with area code) and e-mail address of someone the reporter can contact with questions. If possible, give a website address where further information is available.

DATE - Date the release and include whether the materials is for immediate use or for release at a later date.

SIMULTANEOUS SUBMISSIOSN - If you send materials to more than one of our sections simultaneously, attach a note telling us you are doing so. This will assist our editors in preventing duplication.

PROTOCOL: If the release is longer than one page, type "more" at the bottom of the first page and identify following pages with either the subject of the release or the name of your organization. Type "end" or "30" or "###" at the bottom of the last page.

Common mistakes
Here are the most common mistakes that people make that hurt their chances of getting any coverage (LA):

- Providing insufficient, incomplete, inaccurate, or vague information
- Omitting the name and phone number of someone editors can contact with questions
- Writing releases that are too long
- Submitting a release too late for a particular deadline

Submitting the release
Most newsrooms are organized by sections of the newspaper or by general subject areas. If you don't know which individual reporter or editor to send a release to, address it to the appropriate news desk (e.g., business desk, city desk, national new desk, sports desk, etc.).

If possible, send your release to the appropriate editor or reporter, the one whose beat includes the subject of your release. Many newspapers provide a directory of editors and reporters at their websites. You can also call the newsroom or managing editor to find out which individual to send your release to.

About the author
Dave Freedman is a freelance writer, editor, and media relations consultant. His business, D. M. Freedman Company,

PRESS RELEASE EXAMPLES

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January 9, 2001
Contact: Mary Kay Sones
770-488-5328

Obesity Experts Recommend Body Measurements To Predict Chronic Disease

As part of a nationwide effort to address obesity, experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and their counterparts in 10 countries are recommending the use of body measurements, such as body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference (WC), to predict mortality and the development of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes.

This recommendation, published in a report in the January issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, is the result of a CDC-sponsored workshop on the use of adult anthropometry (body measurement) for public health and primary health care.

"The data presented by the panel of international experts showed that cut-off points for body mass index and waist circumference consistently identify the health risks of excess weight.," said Dr. Frank Vinicor, director of CDC's diabetes program. "These are simple, inexpensive and reliable tools for primary care doctors to assess the state of their patients' health," Vinicor said.

BMI is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by height in meters squared. WC adds more health risk information by pointing at body fat distribution around the abdominal area.

According to the report, researchers suspect that, even though BMI and WC are scientifically sound predictors of common adult chronic conditions, primary care physicians have not utilized the guidelines issued by the National Institutes of Health and World Health Organization to assess and treat overweight and obesity in adults. In fact, the report points out, there are no data on how doctors currently assess obesity in their patients.

Because a large proportion of the adult population sees a primary care provider annually, routine monitoring of BMI and WC may provide opportunities to incorporate prevention into clinical management. Changes in weight or other body measurements could signal a potential health hazard, such as type 2 diabetes, and would assist the primary care provider to target interventions that could reduce the risks.

A recent study by CDC found a 33 percent increase in diabetes in the United States and the increase was strongly correlated with nationwide increases in obesity.

In addition to diabetes, the report suggests that BMI and WC measurements may also be beneficial in predicting other related health conditions such as coronary heart disease, arthritis and respiratory problems.

Copies of the meeting report can be obtained by calling the press contact above. For more information on diabetes and nutrition and physical activity, visit the following Web sites: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ or www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

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This page last reviewed January 9, 2001
URL: http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r010109.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

E-Mail the Contact Person

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Media Relations

Contact: Todd Sedmak **Phone:** (202) 885-5951
Release Type: General News About AU

American University Launches $40 Million Campaign For Katzen Arts Center and University Theater

WASHINGTON, D.C.—American University President Benjamin Ladner recently announced that the university will launch a $40 million campaign for the arts to support the Cyrus and Myrtle Katzen Arts Center and the University Theater. Gary Abramson, an AU alumnus, member of the Board of Trustees and partner with The Tower Companies, will chair the campaign.

Building a first-class home for the arts has been a long-time goal of the university. The $15 million gift from Dr. and Mrs. Cyrus Katzen in 1999, which included a $10 million commitment for the building and the family arts collection worth an estimated $5 million, provided the significant boost to make the arts projects a reality. In addition, another $6 million has already been raised over the past few years from several donors for the center and theater.

"This fund raising effort makes an important statement regarding our university's role as a center for the arts in Washington," said President Ladner. "These projects will be a significant addition to the quality of cultural offerings by the university and city."

The Katzen Arts Center will be located on Massachusetts Avenue at Ward Circle and will include studios for art and dance, instructional and faculty areas, music studios, rehearsal rooms, a performing arts library, a black box theatre, and a 200 seat concert hall and galleries for the Watkins and Katzen collections. Artwork by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, faculty and student pieces will be on display in the Center's gallery. AU's Watkins Gallery was the first place in Washington to exhibit the artwork of Willem De Kooning, Philip Guston, Jack Tworkov and several other prominent artists.

The University Theater will be the home of a 300-seat performance auditorium for live theater, dance and music productions, and will be located at 4200 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. AU's Department of Performing Arts utilizes the city's cultural wealth to offer a dynamic curriculum of theoretical and historical studies complemented by numerous performances. Each year, four main stage theater productions, two dance concerts and two choral and orchestra concerts are presented by AU's students and faculty.

This campaign is the first phase of a larger capital campaign now being planned to support the university's academic programs and endowment.

For more information, contact Todd Sedmak at (202) 885-5950.

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SAMPLE PRESS KIT

ABOUT THE CDC

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strives to achieve its vision, *Healthy People in a Healthy World--Through Prevention*, by promoting health and quality of life and preventing disease, injury, and disability. As a cornerstone of the nation's public health system, CDC collaborates with partners throughout the nation and the world to:

- Monitor health status and trends.
- Detect and investigate health problems.
- Conduct research to enhance prevention.
- Develop and advocate sound public health policies.
- Implement prevention strategies.
- Promote healthy behaviors.
- Foster safe and healthy environments.
- Provide leadership and training.

Six centers, one institute, and four program offices make up the CDC and reflect the scope of public health issues and activities in which the agency is engaged.

CENTERS

The **National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)** champions the prevention of disability and premature death from chronic diseases by promoting maternal, infant and adolescent health; conducting screening and detection of chronic disease; and promoting healthy personal behaviors. NCCDPHP collaborates with health and education agencies, major voluntary associations, the private sector, and others to reach its vision of enabling all people in an increasingly diverse society to lead long, healthy, satisfying lives.

The **National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)** promotes health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment outside the workplace. The center works on such issues as hazards in our water, food, and air; hazards in our homes; and birth defects and developmental disabilities. The center also serves as the national

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coordination point for programs working to prevent disabilities and secondary conditions that reduce independence for disabled persons.

The **National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)** collects, analyzes, and disseminates health data that are timely, accurate, and relevant in protecting and promoting the nation's health. The center monitors the health of Americans from birth to death to generate nationally representative estimates of disease prevalence and incidence and general health status and trends.

The **National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention (NCHSTP)** leads national efforts to prevent and control human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tuberculosis (TB). The center collaborates with partners at the community, state, national, and international levels, applying well-integrated, multi-disciplinary programs of research, surveillance, technical assistance and evaluation.

The **National Center for Infectious Diseases (NCID)** combats illness, disability, and death caused by infectious diseases in the United States and around the world. The center collaborates with state and local health departments and other organizations to conduct disease surveillance, epidemic investigations, epidemiologic and laboratory research, training, and public education programs. NCID continues to expand implementation of CDC's strategic plan for preventing and controlling microbial threats in the United States and internationally.

The **National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)** guides national efforts to reduce the incidence, severity, and adverse outcomes of intentional and unintentional injury in the United States. As the lead federal agency for injury prevention, NCIPC works closely with other federal agencies and national, state, and local organizations to reduce injury, disability, and premature death caused by motor-vehicle crashes, fires, drownings, poisonings, suicide, and homicides, and other preventable injuries and violent acts.

The Nation's Prevention Agency

CDC
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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INSTITUTE

The **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** provides national and world leadership in the identification and prevention of work-related illness, injury, and death. The institute uses public health strategies to track occupational health issues, diagnose problems, develop effective prevention approaches, and reduce or eliminate illnesses and injuries in the workplace.

OFFICES

The **Epidemiology Program Office (EPO)** strengthens the public health system by coordinating disease surveillance at CDC. This office also provides domestic and international support through scientific communications, statistical and epidemiologic consultation, and training of experts in surveillance, epidemiology, applied public health, and prevention effectiveness.

The **National Immunization Program (NIP)** promotes prevention of disease, disability, and death from vaccine-preventable diseases. NIP takes the lead in coordinating the planning and implementation of the Childhood Immunization Initiative and other vaccine programs for children and adults at the federal, state, and local levels.

The **Office of Global Health (OGH)** leads CDC's collaboration with other nations and international organizations to promote health and prevent disease worldwide. OGH facilitates all of CDC's international activities including strengthening the public health capacity of other nations, and providing scientific and management expertise for developing countries.

The **Public Health Practice Program Office (PHPPO)** is responsible for strengthening the public health system by building an effective public health work force, developing public health leadership, communicating information for public health action, and establishing a science base for public health practice.

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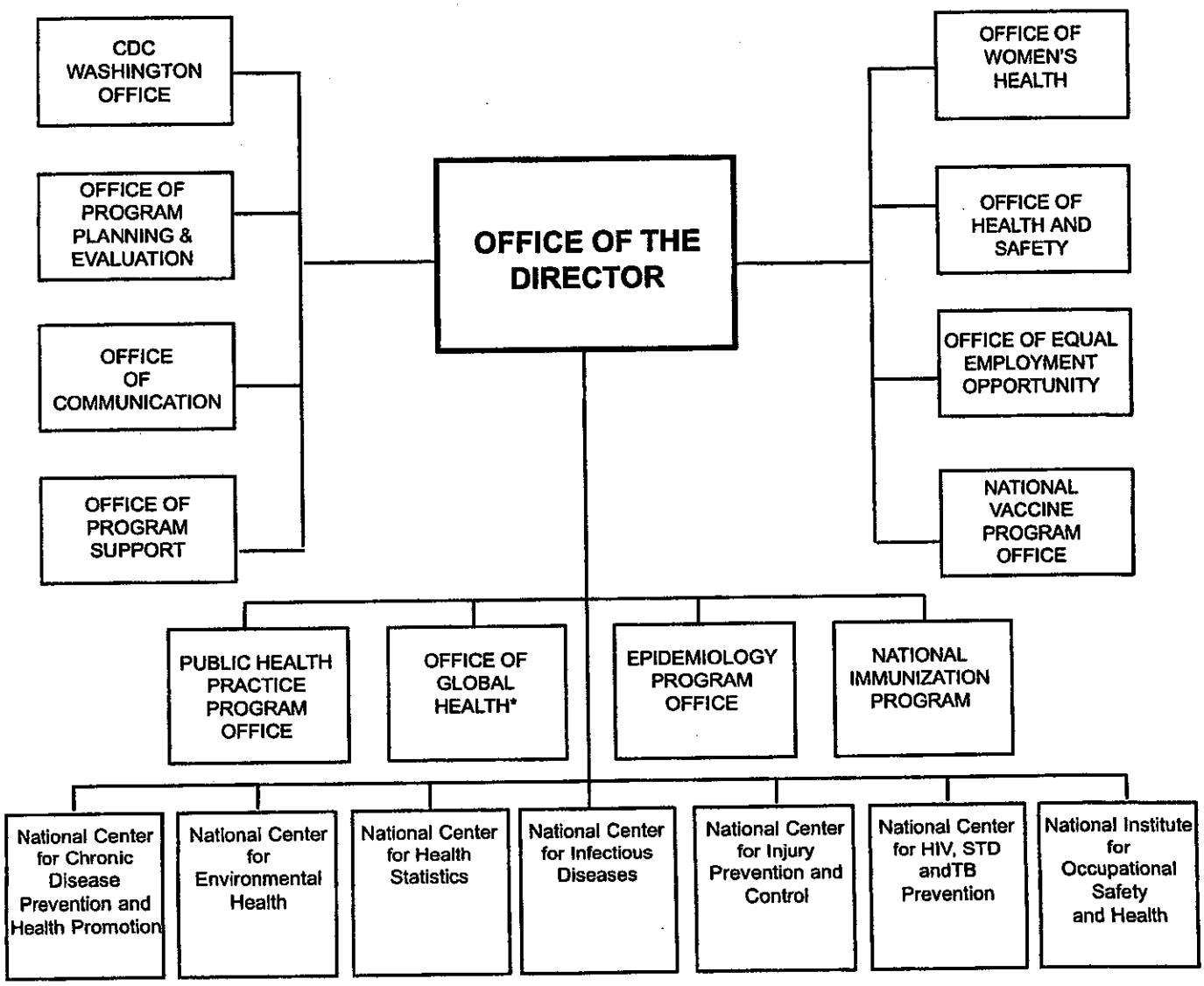
CDC ORGANIZATION



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AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND DISEASE REGISTRY

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease (ATSDR) was established in 1980 by the Comprehensive Environmental Compensation and Liability Act, also known as Superfund. The Agency has a broad mission: to prevent exposure and adverse human health effects and diminished quality of life associated with exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites, spills and other unplanned releases, and other sources of environmental pollution. The director of CDC serves as the administrator of ATSDR.

- ATSDR has evaluated public health threats in thousands of communities near hazardous waste sites. This involves gathering information about environmental contamination, community health concerns, and health outcome data. The agency uses this information to recommend health investigations, health education for the public and health-care providers, and public health actions to prevent or lessen exposure.

- ATSDR health investigations use epidemiology and surveillance to help understand the relationship between exposure to hazardous substances and illness. At particular hazardous waste sites, these investigations have found increases in the risk of birth defects, neurotoxic disorders, cancers, respiratory dysfunction, and immune disorders.

- ATSDR and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have jointly ranked 275 Superfund hazardous substances in order of health importance. ATSDR has prepared a toxicological profile for each of these about the known health effects of these substances.

- Since 1983, ATSDR has collected data on emergency events involving the release of hazardous substances in the United States to better understand the health effects. ATSDR also helps victims of these events by providing on-site and telephone technical assistance.

- ATSDR's *HazDat* is a unique integrated database that compiles information on hazardous substances released and the health effects they cause. Portions of *HazDat* are available on-line at http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/atsdrhome.html.

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E–Mail

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Environmental Health	cehinfo@cdc.gov
Epidemic Intelligence Service	eisepo@cdc.gov
Global Health Odyssey	global@cdc.gov
Health Statistics	paoquery@cdc.gov
HIV/AIDS	hivmail@cdc.gov
Immunization	niphomepage@cdc.gov
Infectious Diseases	NCID@CDC.GOV
Injuries	OHCINFO@cdc.gov
Occupational Safety/Health	pubstaft@cdc.gov
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	NCHSTP@cdc.gov
Tuberculosis	tbinfo@cdc.gov

Telephone Numbers

CDC	(800) 311–3435
Disease Information	(888) 232–3228
Division of Media Relations	(404) 639–3286
Epidemic Intelligence Service	(888) 496–8347
Freedom of Information Act Office	(404) 639–7270
Global Health Odyssey	(404) 639–7888
Job Line	(888) CDC–HIRE
Public Inquiries	(800) 311–3435

Internet

CDC
http://www.cdc.gov

CDC/Washington
http://www.cdc.gov/od/wash/

Associate Director for Minority Health
http://www.cdc.gov/od/admh/

Associate Director for Science
http://www.cdc.gov/od/ads/index.htm

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Epidemiology Program Office
http://www.cdc.gov/epo/index.htm

Freedom of Information Act Office
http://www.cdc.gov/od/foia/foi.htm

Global Health Odyssey
http://www.cdc.gov/global

Management Analysis and Services Office
http://www.cdc.gov/maso/

Division of Media Relations
http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/index.htm

National Center for Environmental Health
http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ncehhome.htm

National Center for Health Statistics
http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww

National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/nchstp.html

National Center for Infectious
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/ncid.htm

National Center for Injury Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/ncipchm.htm

National Immunization Program
http://www.cdc.gov/nip

Office of Genetics & Disease Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/genetics/default.htm

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Office of Global Health
http://www.cdc.gov/ogh/

Office of Women's Health
http://www.cdc.gov/od/owh/whhome.htm

Office of Safety & Health
http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/

Public Health Practice Program Office
http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
http://http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage .htm

Publications On-Line

- Blue Sheet (foreign travel)
  http://www.cdc.gov/travel/blusheet.htm
- The C.A.USE (antibiotic-resistance)
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/cause/cause.htm
- Chronic Disease Notes & Reports
  http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/cdnr.htm
- Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/eid.htm
- FOCUS (infectious diseases)
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/focus/index.htm
- Green Sheet (cruise ship inspections)
  ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/ship_inspections/shipscor.txt
- HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report
  http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/hiv_aids/dhap.htm
- Injury Control Update
  http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/newslett/2vol2.pdf
- *MMWR*
  http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/mmwr.html
- Monthly Vital Statistics
  http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/
- TB Notes
  http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/notes/notes.htm

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CDC HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The 1940s

1946 The **Communicable Disease Center**, or CDC, opens in the old Office of Malaria Control in War Areas in downtown Atlanta. Part of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), the CDC has a mission to work with state and local health officials in the fight against malaria (still prevalent in several Southern states), typhus, and other communicable diseases.

1947 CDC provides disaster assistance during **multiple chemical explosions** (Texas City, TX), that killed hundreds of people. Thereaf ter, designated as the PHS agency to administer aid in times of disaster or epidemics.

The 1950s

1951 The **Epidemic Intelligence Service** (EIS) is established. EIS quickly becomes the Nation's—and world's—response team for a wide range of health emergencies. EIS officers make house calls around the world.

CDC broadens its focus to include polio and establishes closer relationships with the states. **National disease surveillance** systems begin.

1955 The **Polio Surveillance** Unit is established.

CDC develops **fluorescent antibody test** for rapidly identifying bacterial and viral pathogens.

1957 The **Influenza Surveillance** Unit is established.

1958 CDC sends its **first team** of epidemiologists overseas — to Pakistan — in response to a request for help during an epidemic of cholera and smallpox in Southeast Asia.

1959 Develops a fluorescent antibody test for rabies and uses it in a field test with 100% accuracy.

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The 1960s

1960 CDC moves to its present headquaters: 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA.

1961 Takes over publication of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* ***(MMWR)***, which publishes important public health updates and data on deaths and certain diseases from every state every week.

1963 CDC begins tests of the **jet injector gun** and smallpox vaccines in the Pacific Island nation of Tonga.

1966 Launches the **Smallpox Eradication** Program to eradicate smallpox and control measles in 20 African countries. Smallpox, a disease that killed millions of people over the centuries, was eradicated from the world in the late 1970s.

CDC announces the first national **measles eradication** campaign.

1967 Establishes the **Family Planning** Evaluation Unit to provide technical assistance to newly established family planning clinics. The unit also helps to determine the safety and efficacy of contraceptive methods.

1968 CDC conducts the first major initiative in international **famine relief** in Nigeria, West Africa.

Investigates a puzzling epidemic of an unidentified, highly infectious respiratory disease in Pontiac, Michigan (later identified as **Legionnaire's disease**).

1969 CDC participates in the quarantine of **astronauts** returning from the first walk on the moon and the examination of moon rock specimens.

CDC holds a world conference on **Hong Kong flu**.

The 1970s

1970 The Communicable Disease Center is **renamed** the Center for Disease Control to reflect a broader mission in preventive health.

Begins the **Birth Defects** Monitoring Program.

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CDC establishes the National Nosocomial Infections Surveillance system to monitor trends in **infections acquired in hospital settings.**

1971 Discovers that hepatitis B is sexually transmitted.

1973 The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health **(NIOSH)**, which protects Americans from on-the-job hazards, becomes part of CDC.

1975 Establishes the **Vessel Sanitation Program** in cooperation with the cruise ship industry.

1976 CDC investigates an outbreak of illness in Philadelphia now called Legionnaire's disease. The following year, CDC isolates the causative agent for this disease: *Legionella pneumophilia.*

Leads public health teams to Zaire and the Sudan to investigate two large outbreaks of **Ebola** hemorrhagic fever.

1977 The last case of endemic smallpox in the world is reported in Somalia.

1978 CDC opens an expanded, maximum-containment laboratory **("hot zone")** to handle viruses too dangerous to handle in an ordinary laboratory.

1979 Investigates health effects related to the **Three-Mile Island** nuclear incident.

Begins trial studies of hepatitis B vaccines.

CDC assigned lead responsibility for environmental emergency response.

The 1980s

1980 The agency is **renamed** the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to reflect a change in organizational structure. *(Note: "s" added to Center)*

CDC organizes a task force on **toxic shock syndrome**.

Assists in the study of health effects related to the **Mount St. Helens** volcanic eruption.

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CDC assumes primary responsibility for promoting the **health of refugees** resettled in the United States.

1981 With the California Department of Health, CDC reports the first cases of an illness which later will be called acquired immunodeficiency syndrome **(AIDS)**. Organizes a task force of personnel from each CDC center to respond to evidence of an epidemic.

CDC assists in the first **redesign of the jackhammer** in 50 years to reduce "white finger" disease, a disabling occupational condition.

1982 CDC focuses on the prevention of disease and injury related to **alcohol abuse.**

Initiates the Fatal Accident Circumstances and Epidemiology Program. The program identifies state-specific leading causes of **workplace deaths**, and the types of jobs that put workers at greatest risk.

CDC receives first reports of AIDS in a person with hemophilia (from a blood transfusion), and in infants born to mothers with AIDS.

1983 CDC establishes a Violence Epidemiology Branch to apply public health prevention strategies to the problems of **child abuse, homicide, and suicide.**

Begins **National AIDS hotline** to answer growing concerns of U.S. citizens.

CDC identifies **exercise as a priority** research topic because of its influence on the reduction of heart disease, weight control, and symptoms of depression.

1984 Publishes infection control guidelines for **child care settings**.

CDC begins long-term assistance to **India** in assessing the health effects of a **poison gas leak** at a chemical plant in Bhopal (2,000 deaths; thousands injured).

1985 Reported cases of **TB** are rising sharply; evidence mounts of a

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multi-drug resistant strain of the disease.

CDC provides disaster relief assistance to Mexcio after a **major earthquake** in its capital (**Mexico City**), and to Puerto Rico and Colombia following devasting mud slides in those areas.

Co-sponsors the first International Conference on AIDS.

1986 The **Office on Smoking and Health**, which targets the Nation's primary preventable health problem, becomes part of CDC.

Establishes the Medical Examiner/Coroner Information Sharing Program to improve the quality of death investigation examinations and collection sharing among medical examiners, coroners, and public health officials.

1987 CDC reports a strong association between **Reye syndrome** and aspirin, noting that 90 percent of cases could be prevented by reducing the use of aspirin for treating children with chickenpox or flu-like illnesses.

1988 Sends information related to the prevention of HIV/AIDS — *Understanding AIDS* — to every household in America. The **largest mailing in CDC's history**.

1989 CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) establish a collaborating center for disaster preparedness.

Develops **new certificates** for reporting births, deaths, and fetal deaths, which are adopted nationwide. The new certificates provide data essential for prevention, research, and health education.

CDC identifies the agent (now called **hepatitis C**) of the majority of cases of parenterally transmitted non-A, non-B hepatitis.

The 1990s

1990 CDC begins development of a national strategic plan for the early detection and control of **breast and cervical cancers** among all American women.

Reports possible transmission of HIV to a patient during invasive dental procedures.

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CDC conducts the first national Youth Risk Behavior Survey to measure the prevalence of high-priority risk behaviors among teens.

1991 CDC conducts the **first large-scale health survey** to employ computer -assisted interviewing.

Establishes the Division of **Oral Health** to expand efforts to prevent oral disease and conditions.

CDC participates in an evaluation of the health effects of the **Kuwait oil fires.**

1992 Congress mandates a **new title for the agency** — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — but the CDC initials are retained. *(Note: "p" is not used).*

1993 CDC assists in the investigation of a "mystery" illness in the Four Corners region of the U.S. Later that year, CDC isolates a **new hantavirus**, Sin Nombre Virus.

Traces a serious outbreak of food poisoning in Washington state (and eventually three other states) to ground meat served at a restaurant chain. The hamburgers were contaminated with ***E. coli* O157:H7.**

CDC supports the screening of more than 1.7 million children for **lead poisoning**; 75,000 are found to have elevated blood lead levels.

Investigates risk factors for death and injury associated with the **World Trade Center explosion** and fire in New York City.

CDC traces outbreaks of serious illness to environmental exposures of ***Cryptosporidium*** in drinking water.

1994 CDC establishes the Office of **Women's Health.**

Releases the *Surgeon General's Report on Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People*, the **first report** to focus exclusively on **tobacco use by teens and young adults**. Also publishes an analysis of brand preferences of teen smokers, and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal among teens and young adult tobacco users in the U.S.

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1995 CDC goes onsite in Zaire to investigate an outbreak of deadly Ebola virus.

Recommends **AZT therapy** for HIV-infected pregnant women to reduce transmission of the virus to their babies.

CDC publishes a prevention strategy for addressing **emerging infectious disease** threats in the United States.

1996 CDC **celebrates 50 years** as the "Nation's Prevention Agency" and a first-rate response team for a wide range of health emergencies both at home and abroad.

Opens the **Global Health Odyssey** (GHO), a special exhibit area that is both a visitors' center and an interactive educational facility. The GHO serves as a bridge to the public that supports CDC's mission by educating all who visit about the value of prevention-based public health.

1997 CDC participates in the **Presidential Apology on the Tuskegee Study** — a nationally televised White House event — to redress the wrongs of the past and help restore the confidence of Americans in their government.

CDC assists in the investigation of a new strain of flu in humans in Hong Kong; 18 cases and six deaths due to **influenza A (H5N1)** are reported.

CDC issues its **first report on fertility clinics**, 1995 Assisted Reproductive Technology Success Rates, National Summary and Fertility Clinic Reports. "

1998 The first SurgeonGeneral's report to focus on **tobacco use among minorities in the United States** is released; *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/EthnicMinority Groups.*

1999 For the first time, **CDC names a campus and a building after a person.** The Edward R. Roybal campus and the Edward R. Roybal Laboratory are named after Congressman Edward R. Roybal, a former public health funding for CDC buildings and research during his career.

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