

MEDIA OUTREACH: WHAT MAKES NEWS

The following document provides members of the Mothers' Milk Bank (MMB) network with guidance on how to execute effective public relations efforts for their respective locations. If you have any questions regarding public relations for your organization please contact:

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An Overview of Public Relations:

What is Public Relations?

In short, public relations is about telling the story that you want to tell to the audiences you want to hear it.

One basic purpose of public relations is to shape and maintain the image of a company, organization or individual in the eyes of the client's various audiences. In PR terms, audiences are anyone who ever has or ever will form an opinion about you and/or your company. For milk banks, these audiences can include pregnant mothers, lactating mothers, mothers of milk recipients, members of the local community, members of the media, online communities and more.

While PR is most often associated with media relations, it can involve numerous services including:

- Media relations
- Public affairs
- Civic and community engagement
- Crisis communications
- Market research
- Social media

Media Outreach 101

The media consists of different vehicles used to disseminate newsworthy information including:

- Daily newspapers
- Weekly, community newspapers
- Radio
- Television
- Professional/specialized trade publications
- Online/Internet outlets including websites, blogs, etc.

Earned vs. Paid Media

Many marketing communication plans include paid advertising. At the heart of public relations, however, is "earned media."

In contrast to paid advertising, with "earned media" you don't buy ads in the newspaper, on the radio or on television. Instead, you earn stories and coverage by developing ideas to "pitch" to the media, garnering their interest on featuring your story as part of their coverage.

A benefit to "earned" media is third-party credibility. With earned media, you are not telling your story through an advertisement, but through a credible community news source that is choosing to feature your organization and share your story with their audience.

What Makes News?

The news media is constantly looking for new and interesting things to cover. The perception of what is and what is not news varies between reporters, editors and news outlets.

In order to successfully pitch a story to the media, it is important to look at story possibilities through the eyes of the reporter and their readers/viewers. What is likely to interest them and why? In general, you are more likely to be successful with a story idea when it:

- Provides a local angle to a regional or national story
- Tells a compelling personal story
- Highlights a developing trend or new initiative
- Piggybacks on a local, regional or national news event
- Highlights unique or new programs/features/plans for the business
- Connects a unique and significant historical angle to a current, timely story
- Demonstrates the broad impact of your organization or business in the community

Pitching to Different Outlets

While there are no concrete rules to what a specific outlet will run, there are some key factors to keep in mind that may play into an outlet's decision to cover a specific story, for example:

- *Daily publications* are often concerned with "tomorrow's news...today," they often desire breaking stories and the latest news.
- *Community newspapers* are largely ultra-local. They usually target a specific community, whether defined by location or by ethnicity, race or interest. Often the decision on whether or not a community publication will run a story is whether or not it has an explicit tie to the community it represents.
- *Magazines*, whether weekly, bi-weekly or monthly are often concerned with aspects of a news story that have not yet been reported. Because they don't run a daily publication, their reporting often comes out after the initial news breaks, thus they are looking to populate their magazine with new ways to look at what might be an "old" story. They are also more likely to report more in-depth coverage, because they often have more time to complete it before their deadline.
- *Television* coverage is most notably concerned with capturing a visual. Pitching a local television station requires you to paint a picture of what the viewer will see if the camera crew decides to capture coverage.
- *Radio* is often about providing perspective and expert resources. Radio talk shows often look for local opinion leaders and experts to weigh in on topics that will spark an interesting discussion for listeners, and prompt numerous call-ins.

Suggesting Story Ideas

Members of the MMB network are making news everyday. It is a team effort to identify and promote opportunities. By working together, we can position the MMB network as a community resource and a source of human milk industry information for the media and community on issues such as:

- Benefits of human milk
- Needs of human milk in the local community
- Donor/recipient profile
- Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Food and Drug Administration and more

The "Over the Fence" Test

Often the best opportunities will come from personal interests, successes and community involvement. If something happens that is so unique or exciting that you can't wait to tell your colleagues, friends, family or neighbor "over the fence," chances are it is newsworthy.

- Are you excited about a new program, industry trend or initiative your organization is participating in or supporting?
- Are you moved by the story of a human milk donor or recipient?
- Do any of your staff members have a unique story behind his or her career?

I Have An Idea. Now What?

You know your community best and we need your assistance to work with your local media successfully. Be on the lookout for interesting, out-of-the-ordinary stories from your organization and let us know when you have them. Likewise, we will contact you when we have a relevant story for your area.

Please refer to the news release and news advisory templates in this media toolkit for your media relations efforts. If you would like assistance please contact Julie Alcorn anytime. The more lead-time you can provide on a story idea, the more likely we will be able to help secure interest from a targeted media outlet.

How to Interview

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Develop a message platform.
- Learn about the reporter/producer.
 - Understand the reporter's need. Know their angle for the story.
 - Look at the relationship with the reporter as long term.
 - Know the reporter's deadline for the story.
- Understand your audience.
- Rehearse.
- Line up testimonials, if warranted.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Remember that nothing is "off-the-record."
- Be brief, concise and honest.
 - KISS – Keep it short and simple.
- Plug your product or service.
- Stop talking.
- Speak in terms the lay public can understand.
- Use analogies. Use colorful, action-oriented words.
- Provide context, facts and perspective.
- Use appropriate interview delivery techniques.
 - Bridging
 - Switching the subject to what you want to talk about.
 - Example: "Don't know, but I do know...."
 - Hooking
 - Prompting the next question by concluding your answer with a statement that sparks curiosity.
 - Example: "And that's not all we're working on now..."
 - Flagging
 - Verbally highlighting key messages
 - Example: "The bottom line is..."
 - Find words other than no comment; explain why you can't talk about it.
 - Emphasize key messages at every opportunity.
 - Share your web address or phone number.
 - Stay calm. Avoid speculation. Take the high road. Don't argue.
 - "Arguing with a reporter is like wrestling with a pig in the mud; eventually you realize the pig enjoys it." -Anonymous.
- Be aware of the following techniques used by interviewer.
 - Rapid fire questions
 - Questions that come quickly to manipulate you into answering without thinking.
 - Quick fix: Choose the question that allows you to control the conversation and deliver your message.
 - Example: "Let me start by answering your first question..."
 - Interrupting
 - Does not let you finish your statement.
 - Quick fix: Politely continue
 - Example: "As I was saying..."
 - Paraphrasing
 - Puts words in your mouth, trying to get you to agree to a misrepresentation.
 - Quick fix: Restate your message correctly.
 - Example: "Perhaps I wasn't clear, I said..."
 - Sour grapes
 - Uses hostile, negative language to describe you or your company.
 - Quick fix: Ignore the attack and use a control technique to return to the issue at hand.

- Example: “We’ve gotten off-track. Let’s back up and talk about the issue at hand...”
- Charm
 - Innocent banter to lull you into possibly providing careless answers.
 - Quick fix: Stay polite but on-track and focused at all times.

ON-CAMERA INTERVIEWS

- Dress in an appropriate manner avoiding white or busy clothing.
- Do not look at the camera. Look at interviewer.
- If possible, don’t wear tinted or reflective glasses.
- Use natural gestures and facial expressions.
- Always use appropriate body language. Avoid nodding while the interviewer speaks.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Thank the reporter, producer and photographer.
- Notify your internal audience BEFORE the story airs.
- Follow-up with the reporter if necessary.
- Reassess, reflect and hone your messages.

Social Media Tips

Social media activity strengthens public relations efforts. Please like MMB’s Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/milkbankcolorado>

- Like, comment on and share our posts from your personal page as you see fit.
- Utilize common hashtags MMB’s page uses, i.e. #MilkDonationsMatter.
- Share photos from your organization’s operations on our wall or email them to Julie Alcorn.
- Does your organization have its own Facebook page or is your organization located inside a hospital that has a Facebook page? Please ask the social media manager of these pages if they would consider engaging with MMB’s Facebook page. This involves liking, commenting and sharing MMB’s posts.
- Does your organization or hospital have a blog? We would love to provide guest blog content about your organization and the history of MMB.