

Media Relations for Collections

Connecting to Collections: Raising the Bar
IMLS / Heritage Preservation

annedgar

1

How is press coverage different from
an advertisement?

2

Poll question: What's your role? Who's here
today?

- Communications / Press Officer
- Librarian
- Curator
- Archivist
- Educator
- Conservator
- Other
- Some of the above
- All of the above (EEEEEEK!)

3

What percentage of your time do you spend on
publicity outreach each week?

4

The news media tells stories.
So do we, when we do publicity.

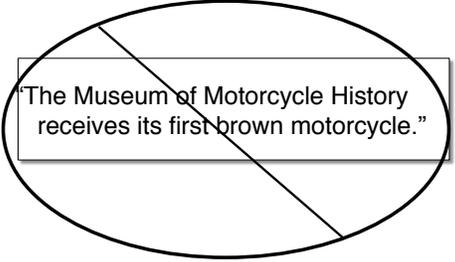
5

The Idea of 'newsworthy'

6

Is this NEWSWORTHY?

The Museum of Motorcycle History receives its first brown motorcycle.



"Museum of Motorcycle History acquires the only brown motorcycle ever made."



What makes something newsworthy?

MAN BITES DOG!

- It's new, a first
- Never been seen before
- Rare
- Old, very old, *unbelievably old*
- Expensive, very expensive, *unbelievably expensive*

News is often **Human Interest**

WHO →

- Owned
- Made
- Found/Saved
- Conserved

...the **OBJECT?**

Cultural news often can be ignored because it is...

EVERGREEN



WHAT'S THE OPPOSITE OF EVERGREEN?

... SOMETHING THAT'S HAPPENING
THAT VERY MINUTE
ONLY ON ONE DAY
ONLY DURING ONE SEASON

There's an industry term for
creating the reason that your
story becomes newsworthy

13

What is

THE NEWS PEG

14

It can be a **Photo Opp**



15

It can be **tapping into what's already in
the mind** of the people around you

Connect with:

- News headlines
- Seasons
- Birthdays, anniversaries
- Cultural, social traditions
(i.e. baseball season)



16

TIMING:

Peg to season or holiday



17

• **BUNDLE:** Collaborate with other collections in
your region

• **PIGGYBACK:**



18

THE PRESS RELEASE

- What functions does it serve?
- Who should it go to?
- When do you share it?



19

WHAT A RELEASE CAN DO: It's a tool that...

- Serves as a follow-up to a phone conversation
- Legitimizes your announcement and acknowledges important partners with logos, boiler plates and support links
- Provides additional and detailed background information

20

Consider possible targets

REGULAR COLUMNS

- Travel outlets and sections
- Arts & entertainment guides



21

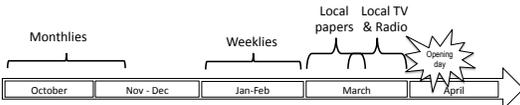
Consider the medium

- PRINT**  **needs the VISUAL**
 - The human face trumps all
- TV**  **needs the VISUAL**
 - Size, movement, color, quick impact
- RADIO**  **needs SOUND**
 - Good sound bites, music, interviews
- ONLINE**  **needs both VISUAL & SOUND**
 - Still images
 - Video files
 - Audio
 - Linkable and/or embeddable content

22

Consider the lead times

Baseball collections pitch: peg to **Opening Day in April**



- Pitch to Smithsonian & Sports Illustrated in October
- Pitch to your local paper on March 1
- Pitch to your local television news on March 25
- Pitch to radio on March 25

23

Planning ahead

PRINT		
Monthlies	Weeklies	Dailies
Feature: 5 months Item: 4 months	Feature: 2 months Item: 6 weeks Listing: 3 weeks	Feature: 1 month Item: 3 weeks Listing: 3 weeks

BROADCAST		ONLINE
TV	Radio	
Feature: 3 months News: 1 day / day of	Book interview: 1 month News: 1 week	1 week

24

How do you find the names and contact info of journalists?

- Read bylines
- Commercial publicity database
- A now-antique mailing list you inherited years ago
- Other
- All of the above

25

Getting to the right person

#1: Follow bylines

- Search websites
- Be shameless in asking colleagues for names: and use these referrals
- Google, use social media
- Cision/Burrelles database



26

Find journalists via social media

- Muckrack
- LinkedIn
- Journalist Tweets
- Twitter: search lists
 - We Follow
 - Twellow
 - Twibes



27

Make a list.



28

Making contact

- Phone call
- Personalized email pitches
- Press release / Press kit
- Photo opp / media alert



Best way to contact a journalist
is **one-to-one**

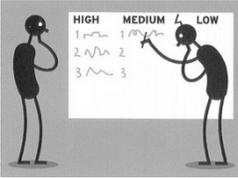
29

Sometimes this is all it takes...



30

Pitches



To Start

- Contact the **most important** outlets
- Contact the **longest lead time** outlets

31

Pitches



- **Pitch to freelance** journalists when possible.
- **Call** in the morning

32

Phone Pitches:

When you call a journalist, remember to make clear...

- That this a **museum or library** calling
- Why your pitch is **newsworthy**
- That the **lead time** is sufficient
- There is **reason to care** about this **now**

33

If turned down for a story,

convert that person to a helper

34

Email pitches

- Never count on general mailboxes:
Find and use the journalist's email address
- Never just send a news release:
Send along with **personal note** addressed to the journalist, with a specific message.
- Embed (don't attach) news releases / media alerts
- Don't send large jpegs
- Don't over-design

35

Email pitches

The **subject line** and **very top of your email** are all you have to interest a journalist.



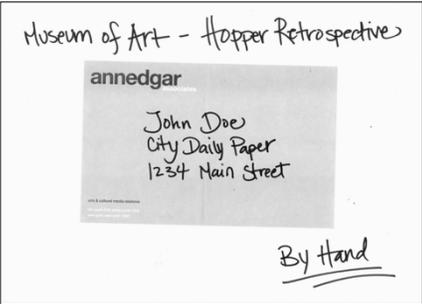
36

Pitch Letter:
A *personal note from you* can say things that the institution can't say in the press release



37

Museum of Art - Hopper Retrospective



By Hand

38

FINAL TIPS

39

If need be,
PAWN YOUR CHILDREN for

good photography

40



Be funny sometimes.



42

AND once you've done your homework...
*(you know your story is
newsworthy and when to showcase it)*

OFFER **ONE** JOURNALIST SOMETHING MORE



43

Let's talk about the power of the
EXCLUSIVE

44

Maybe an exclusive interview with a collector who
has just donated a collection of objects?

45

Maybe a before-and-after look at a restoration?

46

Go **“Behind the Scenes”**



47

Or the right to run, say, an announcement about
the new director hire..

BUT CHOOSE CAREFULLY
who you decide to give the exclusive to.

48

AP Associated Press

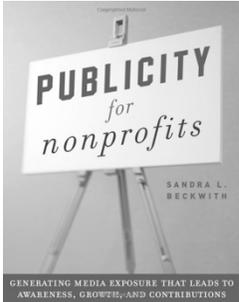
A story that "moves" nationally will be seen by AP's
1,700 U.S. newspaper members.

<http://www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html>

49

Resources

[Publicity for Nonprofits](#), Sandra L. Beckwith (Kaplan
Publishing, 2006)



50