Public Relations and Marketing Workshop for Centers for Independent Living

*Media Relations*

*Media Relations Activity*

September 19, 2013
1:15 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Presenter:
Janine Bertram-Kemp
Media: It’s All About Relationships

• RELATIONSHIPS relationships relationships
  – Most news generated by people sending press releases or breaking news tips … just like you

• Get to know who covers IL/Disability/Medicaid/health
  – Read, watch, listen to media in your local area
  – Subscribe to newspapers and magazines and track reporter interests
  – Bookmark media websites
  – Join organizations that media pros attend
Meeting Media

• Press contact lists
  - Yellow Book—$595 & has extensive updated contacts
    http://www.leadershipdirectories.com/Products/LeadershipPrintDirectories/Media/NewsMediaYellowBook.aspx
  - Build your own list—visit media websites
  - Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)
    http://fair.org/take-action-now/media-activism-kit/media-contact-list/
  - Local, state, regional nonprofits sometimes provide press lists like FAIR’s
Building Media Relationships

• Attend events—Press clubs, government events, city clubs
• Arrange meetings at their newspaper or TV/radio station
  – Editorial board meeting w/ CIL Director and Board President
  – Keep it brief—drop off press release or materials and introduce yourself
• Invite media contacts to your CIL
  – As featured speaker
  – Give award
  – Casual meeting to explain your program and expertise
Other Useful Beats

• Society Page
  - Special CIL events that feature community leaders

• Calendar Page
  - List CIL trainings and events

• Volunteer Listings
  - List CIL volunteer opportunities

• Sports Page
  - Who does disability/human interest sports stories?
Reporters are Mobile

- Keep press list updated
- Today’s health reporter might be tomorrow’s top editor
- The calendar page or obit writer might run tomorrow’s society page
- Beat reporter can move to anchor a top newscast
Monthly Contact

• Keep contact with key reporters
  – Send copy of a CIL publication with your card attached
  – Send invite to disability related event
  – Send email with story that may be of interest

• Social Media Sites
  – Find reporters on social media and follow them (Don’t pitch there)
Provide Newsworthy Info

- Pitch stories that are
  - New
  - Significant
  - Relevant to a large portion of the public
  - Human interest—personal triumph over adversity
  - Unusual (man bites dog)
  - Think of visual component (video) or photo op
Pitching for Them

• Think of what reporter wants
• Think of what public wants to know
• Don’t focus on what you and your CIL want
Avoid Newsworthy “Pitfalls”

• Bad pitching can threaten reporter relationships
  – Speak only truth to reporters
• Avoid yesterday’s news
• Avoid internal news
• Avoid routine events
  – Annual meetings
  – Galas and benefits (invite reporter friends as complimentary guests but don’t expect news coverage)
Finding Newsworthy

• Human interest
  - Walgreens commits to hiring 10% employees with disabilities
  - CIL consumer who is blind sails to Bahamas
  - Don’t forget man bites dog—tables turned or unusual

• Frontline sources
  - Ask staff and volunteers to tell you story ideas
  - Best ideas often come from front lines
Fit CIL/Disability Into Newsworthy

• My Medicaid Matters Example
• ADAPT/NCIL/AAPD Rally and Press Push
• Pitch during national NCIL conference/ADAPT action and secured coverage
• Stopped press push before linking to HCBS policy
Pitching Newsworthy

• What is hot in your community
  - Civil rights is cost effective
  - Affordable care act, Medicaid/health cuts
  - Employment/unemployment

• Human interest--not supercrip or pity

• Write a strong press release
  • 5 W’s
  • Lede—That first sentence is EVERYTHING
  • 1 page
  • Follow up breaking news release with phone call
Sample Press Release

• See handout
More on Pitching

- Always use photos/video with press release
  - Photos bring 3 x callbacks
  - Videos top for Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
  - Also explain photo ops when doing follow up press calls
  - When you use photos, remember to credit and pay photographer
- From medical model to IL Policy—you are educating non-disabled media pros and it’s a BIG job
OP ED Contributions

• Opinion piece
  - NDY example—led to Supreme’s mention
• Letter to the editor campaigns
  • Most widely read section of paper
Virtual “Press Room” on Website

• Basic CIL Info
  - Mission/goals
  - History
  - Profiles/Photos of board and key staff
  - Annual report
Virtual Press Room

- Recent press releases
- Video stories of consumers
  - AAPD interns example—what the ADA means
- CLEAR contact info
  - Your (press officer) email and phone
  - Board and key staff contact
  - Expert’s contact info
- Avoid contact forms
Breaking News

- Newsjacking* breaking news is best path to mainstream media coverage
- Keep steady eye on news
- Strike while the proverbial iron is hot
  - Be ready to stage event to piggyback
  - Market yourself as expert source
  - Capitol Area ADAPT example

*term coined by David Meerman Scott (this guy is fun!)
Newsjacking Basics

• Breaking news bell curve
• Insert your story after news breaks/before reporters write
  - Probably within 2-4 hours of story breaking
  - 6-8 hours reporters write
  - 10-14 hours interest peaks then old news
• Reporters search for second paragraph
  - Give reporters your spin and you may direct story
More on Newsjacking

- Target mainstream news
  - Do homework
  - Make sure you are seen as serving, not exploiting
- Blogs and websites are searchable
- Blog newsjacking/post on web page
  - Up your SEO
Prepare to Newsjack

- Monitor News 24/7
  - National
  - Local
  - Topic relevant (Government, health, civil rights)
  - Key bloggers/reporters
Real Time Disability Journalism

• Speed and Agility Key
  – Stories break when least expected
  – Get CEO (Board) preapproval and strike while iron is hot
  – Your media team needs to take advantage when time is right
  • Assign staff to monitor news

• Two Kinds of Newsjacking
  – Preplanned
  – Unexpected
Newsjacking Examples

• Preplanned—Super Bowl Power Outage/ Oreo Tweet
  – 3,480 mainstream media hits
• Clueless it’s coming—Obama/Romney Debate: Romney pledged to defund PBS
  – Newsjack played as Romney Kills Bigbird
  – Story got over a million hits mainstream and social
Just a Bit More Newsjacking

• Newsjacking negative stories
  - Can backfire so be sensitive (e.g. business offered post hurricane discount on raingear and tanked but Duracell cleaned up with mobile charging unit)
  - A CIL or non-profit has advantage in being seen as proactive when newsjacking a negative story (post hurricane human interest on accessible emergency shelter/evacuation)

• Remember to Tweet and Facebook each newsjacking
Media, More Media

• Media alert (advisory)
  - Notifies of press conference or any other event that makes news
  - One page, brief but compelling (who, what, where, when, why)
  - Visual opportunities for TV cameras and print photographer.
  - May be a newsjacking tool

• Professional release/alert distribution service
  - PR Newswire
  - PR Web
Sample Media Alert

• Your Letter Head

    MEDIA ALERT

WHAT:  Press Conference Targets Medicaid Cuts
When:  Date and Time
Where:  Address
Why:  State Medicaid Cuts Impact Lives
Who:  Governor will attend, Independence CIL sponsors
Closing Thought

• Fun instructive free Web learning everywhere
• David Merman Scott is one amusing marketing geek
  —www.webinknow.com
• There are many others
• Spend a weekend on Web and—SHAZAM—instant media maven
Media Relations Activity

• Refer to worksheet
Contact Information

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