

## Media Guide 4 - Running a Press Conference

This is when you invite journalists/reporters to find out more about your story. They can take a lot of time and effort to organise, so you have to be sure you have something more to offer than can be contained in a press release. At a well organised, tightly run press conference you will be able to get across a lot more information, have experts on hand for interviews and quotes, and provide photo/film/recording opportunities.

### ***Is there a good reason for having a press conference?***

If you are launching a complex project, it is often easier to describe and demonstrate this at a press conference, rather than in a media release. You can also organise a press conference as part of a wider launch event or open day, but a generic 'come along and see what we are doing' will not excite much interest. Have a specific announcement to make, or a celebrity appearance, or news angle.

### ***Invitations***

These should be sent out well in advance, make clear what will be announced and who will be present and give a taster but not the story. Many press conferences can be very boring, so make yours sound exciting, informative and well organised.

### ***Time***

Daily news media often have morning conferences to plan their edition/day, so it's best to aim for either an early 'breakfast slot' or later in the morning.

### ***Venue***

Unusual venues for press conferences can be an attraction in themselves. Be imaginative, but make sure your venue meets the basic requirements you need. It should be easily accessible, as central to your media contacts as possible and have facilities for refreshments. Have a quiet room for interviews - and a ready-made backdrop for TV/photos.

### ***Spokespeople***

Don't have too many. Each speaker should have a reason for being there. Plan what you want to get across then choose the best people to do it. Giving interviews can be daunting, so choose someone who is confident and can communicate well. Brief them well, make sure they know who is present, who else is going to speak and what they are going to say. Keep it short, 20-30 minutes maximum, with another 10-15 minutes for questions and answers. Make sure they are available both before and after the conference for interviews and photos. Fine a good chairperson for the event.

### ***Welcome***

Have a welcome desk where media can sign in, pick up a press pack and ask about interview possibilities. Give everyone badges for easy identification.

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## ***Media packs***

Prepare a media pack for the day - this should contain:

- a press release,
- background,
- text of speeches and,
- where they can get photos from.

Hand out on the day and send immediately to those who don't attend.

## ***Photographs***

A picture is worth a thousand words, but only if it's a good one.

Always have your own photographer on hand, just in case the media don't send a photographer along. You can distribute these photos afterwards. Approach the local college/university to see if anyone taking a photography course would be interested in helping you. They often have students looking for assignments and it's good for their portfolio if they can show published work.

Be aware of the types of photographs that are used in newspapers and magazines - interesting action shots are more visually appealing.

## ***Be available***

Have someone in the office who can answer enquiries while the event is taking place or on a mobile phone.

## ***Thank you***

Try to thank everyone who turns up on the day and afterwards for any coverage you get.

