



Nonprofits: How to Pitch to the Media

Great press coverage can transform a nonprofit's bottom line

From crafting your message and creating media-ready materials to suggesting story angles that journalists will want to cover, we asked Josh Weiss of 10to1 Public Relations for tips on pitching the media. Learn how to tell — and sell — your story.

Tip 1: Set yourself apart.

"The hardest part is the amount of competition leading up to Arizona Gives Day — nonprofits are trying to get the same story covered at the same time," Weiss says. So focus on finding the right story to tell. "Saying it is Arizona Gives Day, and we want your money isn't a great strategy," he says. "Reporters need an actual story and people want to give to something specific, so paint the picture of where the money goes. If you're collecting money to pay for 25 kids to go to camp, help the reporter tell that story."

Tip 2: Keep it local.

"Why would a newspaper in Prescott care about a Tucson nonprofit? Chances are, they wouldn't," Weiss says. Focus on pitching your stories to the publications that cover the communities you work in. "If there's a local recipient of your charity willing to share their story, that's a lot more interesting to the newspapers in that area." Make it easy for them by providing a print-ready, fleshed-out story.

Tip 3: Reach out to the right people.

"Start by identifying the publications and media outlets in your backyard," Weiss says. "Read some of their work and take note of the types of stories they cover and who covers what. If you see one reporter covers nonprofits, this tells you who you need to contact." But because there isn't always a nonprofit beat at every local paper, get creative and look for the reporter who writes about a topic your charity focuses on. "If you teach young people how to manage money, contact the business writer. If you help kids with cancer, reach out to the health reporter," Weiss says.

Tip 4: Ask for help.

"Don't be afraid to play the newbie card when calling on the media," Weiss says. "Explain what you're working on and if they aren't the right person, ask if they can direct you to someone who is. And don't overlook manners — they can go a long way."

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