

How to work with the media

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Working with the media can also be an important component to an advocacy strategy. It can **increase public awareness** and can also catch the attention of **elected officials**. You may find yourself engaging with the media through **writing press releases** and **letters to the editor**, or offering information to a **journalist**. The media may also **contact you** for an interview. It's important to know how to approach the media and how to get your voice heard through **newspapers, television, and the radio**.

How to approach the media

- You should approach **newspapers first** because TV and radio journalists often get their stories from the newspaper. They are also able to go more in-depth on a topic.
- Mondays and Fridays are generally slow news days, so approaching a newspaper on **Sunday** or **Thursday** is best.
- When you see an article or story that you like, or if you see a negative or incorrect story, **write a letter to the editor**.
- The best way to approach a journalist is to **write a to-the-point email** and **follow up with a phone call**. Show the reporter that you are not trying to sell them on your view,

but trying to help them do their job by providing useful information and an interesting story.

- **Send press releases** following meetings with MPs (make sure that you let the MP know that the meeting is “on the record”), after newsworthy events relating to your issue, and before events that you or your group plan.
- For a more in-depth campaign, you may want to send an entire **press kit**, which includes a press release, your [one-page brief](#) [1], a factsheet, and a biography of the organization or spokesperson.

What to do when the media contacts you for an interview

- **Write down** the name of the publication and the name of the journalist. Ask him questions about the focus of the story, who else will be interviewed, etc.
- **If you need time** to prepare, ask him to call back later.
- **Be prepared** with statistics and anecdotes.
- Keep in mind the **key messages** of your campaign so that you do not get off track. Keep control of the interview by returning to them often.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and **offer to get back** to the journalist promptly.

Additional Resource

For more information, see Amanda Sussman's *The Art of the Possible* (McLelland and Stewart: Toronto, 2007).

<http://www.cpj.ca/en/content/how-work-media>