

Media Tips & Tactics

Media outreach is an essential part of the success of the “Grads of Life” campaign. As you conduct or consider any media outreach efforts, we encourage you to integrate “Grads of Life” key messages into your outreach. The campaign messages (see sections II, III and IV) should be emphasized in all written and oral communication with media including media pitches, fact sheets, social media and web site content. Feel free to use the messaging word-for-word or as a general framework to communicate about “Grads of Life”. Outlined below are best practices for engaging with media.

Building Relationships with Media

- **Become familiar with local media:** Read the newspapers and magazines, and listen to and/or watch local radio and TV programs.
- **Identify all possible outlets:** Consider mainstream papers, trade publications and all public and independent radio and TV stations.
- **No outlet is too small:** Frequently, the free publications and weekly community papers **are more widely read** than daily Newspapers.
- **Leverage personal contacts:** Reach out to journalists with whom you’ve engaged in the past, whether from previous coverage, or through family and friends.
- **Identify the right contact for your story:** Look through local and national papers for stories with similar themes to yours. Do not pitch reporters who do not cover your topic.
- **It is okay to “cold-call” a newspaper or local radio/TV station:** Ask for the name of the most relevant person to your story, e.g., the news editor, education reporter, features editor, metro editor or photo editor.



Tips for speaking with media

- **Preface your story:** Before the interview, provide background materials that explain your story.
- **Set objectives:** Set objectives you want to accomplish during the interview or pitch.
- **Be prepared:** Use examples to illustrate major points; use statistics only if you can make them meaningful.
- **Identify the needs of the reporter:** Be perceptive of the reporter’s specific needs and take a conversational approach.
- **Don’t go “off the record”:** Beware: everything is “on the record.” Do not offer information you do not want to be made public knowledge.
- **Understand the reporter’s questions:** Never answer a question that you don’t understand; ask the reporter to restate it.
- **State the important points first:** Place your most important points at the beginning of each response.
- **Brevity is key:** A concise answer gives the interviewer less opportunity to misunderstand you and lends itself to a better quote or “sound bite.”
- **Avoid jargon:** Use words the reader or audience can understand.