

Making Your Press Releases More Effective

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Libraries Are Essential
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LibraryWorks

Libraries Are Essential

Hi, I'm
Kathy,
and
I'm a
Real
Person!



Keys to Success

- Plan and set goals.
- Get out of your building.
- Anticipate & embrace change.
- Use your community connections.
- Become the community living room / sandbox.
- Don't wait until you're in trouble.
- Think creatively.

Three Keys to Getting Your Press Releases Picked Up

1. Knowing how to work with members of the media (those that are left in your area)
2. Targeting your messages carefully (if it should even be a press release)
3. Having very good communication and writing skills (even if you're not an expert)





Key #1: Working With the Media

It's as simple as **A, B, C:**

- **A**sk to meet with reporters & editors
(to understand how they work)
- **B**uild a press release template
- **C**reate a habit of “So what?” testing
(so you don't send unimportant news)

Ask to Meet

Call to ask who covers libraries, technology, and education.

- Rub elbows with them out in the community – at events, organizations' meetings, etc.
- Invite them to meet you, or set up a phone call if time is tight.
- Ask what topics they do & do not cover.
- Ask exactly how they prefer to receive PRs.
- Ask about deadlines.
- Build relationships!

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Sample Media Contact Chart

Media Outlet	Contact Name and Title	Phone # and Email	Deadline Schedule	How They Prefer Contact	Will or Won't Cover?	Stories They Have Run
The Town Star-Herald	Joe Column, Reporter	Column @Herald.com	Mondays at noon for Thursday's paper	PRs: attach to email with pics	Yes: Basic program lists & tech stories	"5 New Gates PCs" 9/30/17
WGRY-TV	Susie Kaserfed, Producer	250-123-4567	11am daily for the 6pm broadcast	Email PR, follow with phone	Major events only; no repeated programs	New Library Director 4/12/18

Build a Template

- Build a Word template for press releases that includes your branding, font, colors, & logo.
- Get managers' approval to make it mandatory.
- Teach staffers why standards matter.
- Build a press room into your website.

<https://www.libraryworks.com/product-page/why-your-library-website-should-include-a-press-room>)

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for the Indie Game Developer



Sample Press Releases and Info on Writing Them

- Look at PRs that your vendor sends you!
- <https://ereleases.com/press-release-template>
- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-to-write-a-press-release-with-examples>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/press-release-template-ht>

Create a Habit: “So What?”

- Create a habit of asking “So what?” before writing press releases.
- Will people care? Is this truly newsworthy outside of the library?
- Put yourself in the shoes of the media and its audience.
- Create staff awareness of the importance of this test.
- Consider writing a policy about what your library will and will not send out to the media.





Sample “So What?” Tests

Ask yourself if the media’s target audience will really care about your “news.” Be honest!

- ▶ The library got more copies of best-sellers.
- ▶ The library is changing its hours.
- ▶ The Teen Advisory Board is meeting.
- ▶ The Teen Advisory Board is having a car wash to raise funds to remodel the Teen Area.




What Else Matters to Members of the Media?

- Branding gets you recognized.
- Planning shows you're savvy.
- Knowing who to target, when, & why means you don't waste their time.
- Offering to help them with research makes it a two-way relationship.
- Writing well saves them time.
- Sharing quality images and useful links shows respect.
- **Trusting** that your info is right and real helps them look good.

Any Questions on Key #1?





Key #2: Targeting Your Messages

According to your “so what?” test, maybe this should not even be a media release. Ponder:

- Whom is this info for?
- Does it only warrant a social media or blog post?
- Is it similar to other content on that medium?
- Is the audience so narrow that your announcement should be a targeted email instead?

Who Should I Reach Out To?

Deciding who to reach, and how to do it, is what targeted marketing is all about.

- Your topic: Which people care?
- Your news: Local / regional / national?
- Your timing: Next week, next month?
- Would it work better as a targeted email?
- Self-publish on LinkedIn to reach other businesses?





Target as Narrowly as Possible

“The whole community” is not a valid target audience.

- The more narrow your target audience, the easier it is to write a message that will appeal directly to them.
- Think about the way your collections are segmented: Children, Teens, YA, Adults, Seniors. Your news and other promotional messages should follow this same pattern.
- Don't forget to send news to populations whose first language is not English – and of course, send that news in the language of those target audiences.
- Online-only publications usually want shorter items.

People Trust Local News

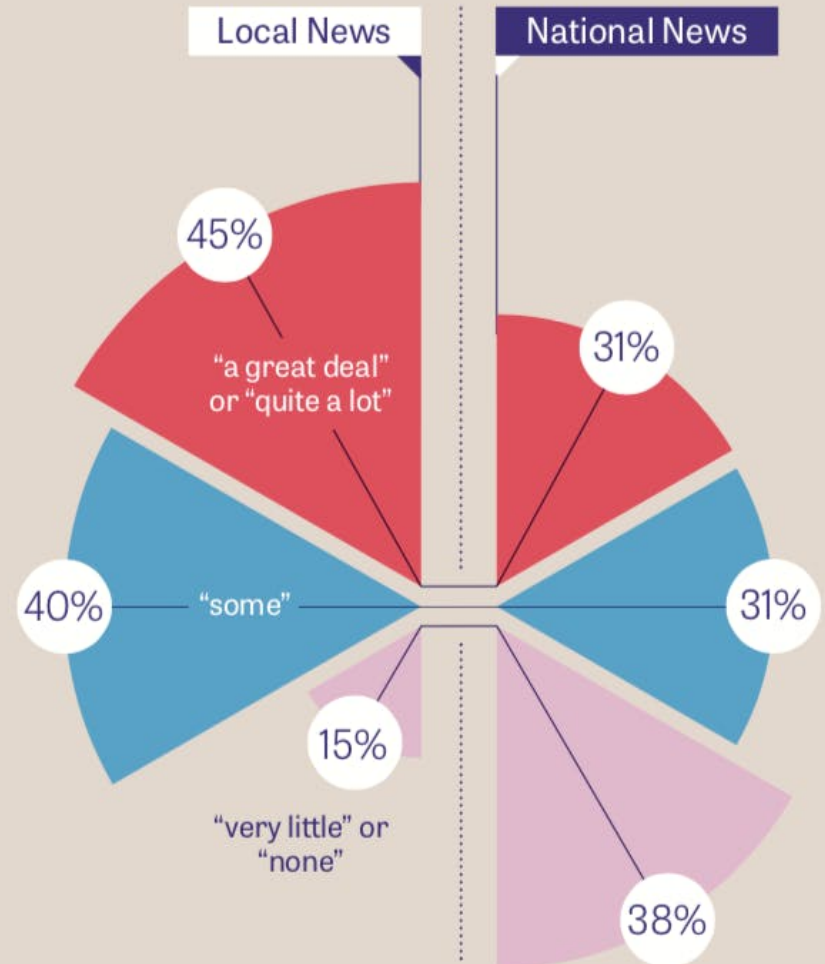
“But local news also ranks behind most other local institutions in public confidence, with only local government ranking lower: 37% express a great deal or quite a lot of trust for local news organizations, compared to **73% for local libraries** and 56% for law enforcement.”

<https://www.knightfoundation.org/articles/local-news-is-more-trusted-than-national-news-but-that-could-change>
10-29-19

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Americans Trust Local News Organizations More Than National News Organizations

In general, how much do you trust [national/local] news organizations when it comes to reporting the news?



Any Questions on Key #2?



Key #3:

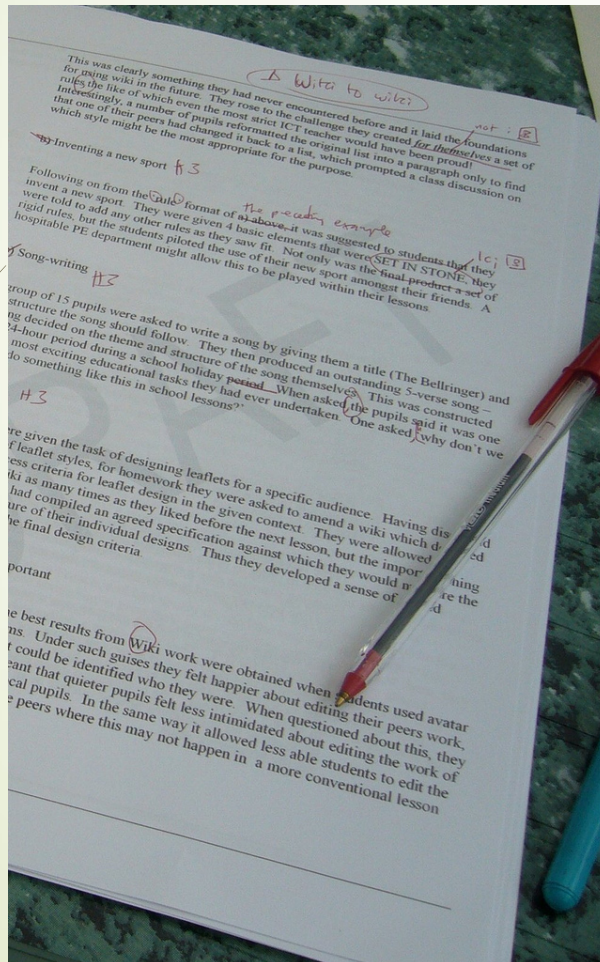
Good Communication Skills

Reporters and editors are [supposed to be] communication experts. They'll respect you more if you are too. That means:

- Clear writing
- Correct information
- Quality images
- Useful URLs



Tips for Effective Communication₁



- Don't try to get too fancy.
- Concentrate on Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.
- If you find writing difficult, ask someone else to write from a fact sheet you provide.
- Consider having an intern, student, or board member write if they're better at it.

Tips for Effective Communication₂

- Match the message & medium to the target audience.
- Talk benefits, not products.
- Have targets check your materials for clarity.
- Avoid library lingo!
- Have another person proofread, always!

CODE
50%
OFF

**50% Off Nose, Ear, Eyebrow and
Bread Trimmer**

Expires: 06/06/2018

Used 1 time • 100% Success



Show Coupon Code **72V**

Add a Comment

Any Questions on Key #3?





Tips for Getting Coverage

- Use a great subject line (clear, short, attention-getting).
- Write an enticing headline.
- Write a clear, informative opening paragraph.
- Choose clear writing over clever writing.
- Send high-quality images.
- Have short, useful links to more info (use www.bit.ly or www.tinyurl.com for simplicity and tracking).
- Always send news from the same email address.



Why the Media Ignores You₁

- Your subject line didn't catch their attention.
- Your news doesn't matter enough to the members of their audience.
- News came too late to use.
- They're out of space or airtime for coverage.
- Mass emails were blocked as spam.



Why the Media Ignores You₂

- Your press release lacked vital info or clarity.
- You overwhelm them with announcements or bother them with follow-up calls.
- Your communications are unprofessional, or show a lack of understanding of news media.
- They don't know you / know the library.
- They don't think libraries matter.

Top Takeaways



Librarians Build
Communities – ALA

- Build relationships.
- Make time to get organized & to plan.
- Understand various media & their targets.
- Use branding & templates to be professional.
- Aim for a target, not for everyone in general.
- Go for *quality* over quantity.
- Write clearly; always have others proofread.

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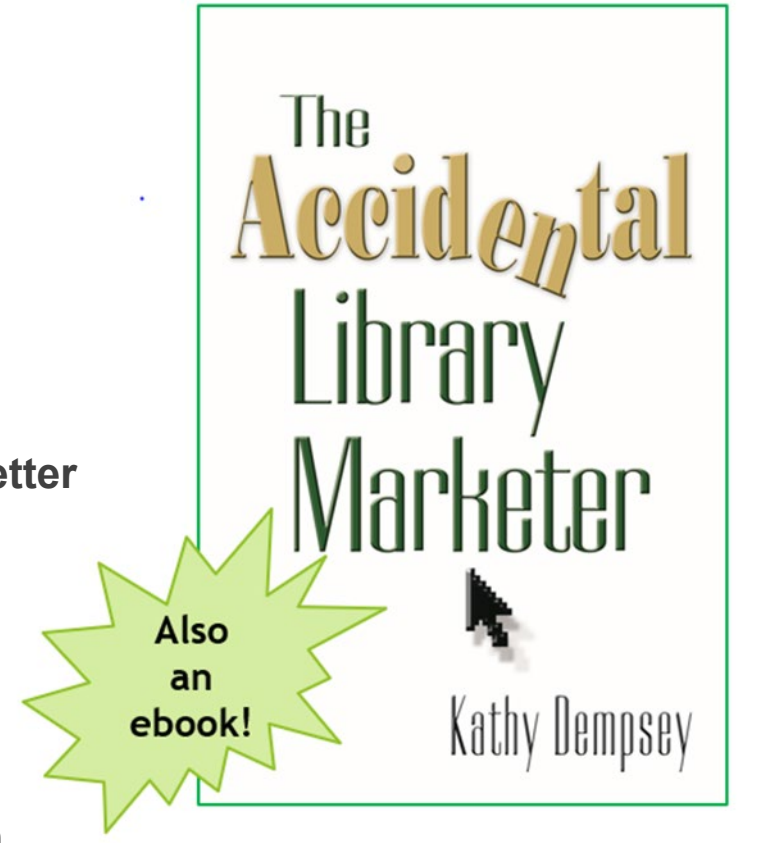
Marketing Library Services newsletter

www.infotoday.com/MLS

Blogger:

The M Word: Marketing Libraries

www.themwordblog.blogspot.com



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