

# Unit II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

## 5. Partnering with the Media

Nonprofit and government organizations need to communicate effectively with the public if they are to build support, attract new members, and draw participants to their programs and fundraising activities. Effective communication with the public helps to educate those in your community about your program; it may also increase volunteer interest, sponsorship, and financial resources.

By working with the media, including print, electronic, and social media, your organization can deliver important messages to the public. The media can exert enormous influence on people's attention, can raise awareness and support, and can favorably affect funding and other policy decisions.

## Decide Which Medium Works Best For Your Group

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Each medium is valued for some characteristics but may not be useful for others. Who is your audience? If you are trying to reach a specific age or income group, certain media are preferred over others. Is your objective to gain visibility, to invite more people to join your project, or to get political action? Your objective may affect your choice of medium.

### Print Media

Newspapers, both daily and weekly, are among the oldest forms of media. They are read primarily by those ages 50 and older. Major decision-makers also read the daily papers as one way to keep up with community news. In some communities weekly papers are a good venue; they sit around for a week and are read by multiple people in a household. Many newspapers, especially dailies, are cash-strapped. Their “news holes,” determined by the amount of advertising sold for any one day, indicate how much space is available for news. Weeklies, on the other hand, thrive on local news. Sometimes it’s easier to get your story printed in a weekly, especially if the story names people in its circulation area.

### Electronic Media

Radio, television, and Web sites are considered electronic media. If you have a local radio station, it will be listened to by many residents. Think about all the radios that play in workplaces and in cars. A few radio stations have news departments. Some stations have local programs that feature interviews about issues in the area. The programs are often aired early or late in the day. Consider sending public service announcements (PSAs) to radio and television stations.

Television stations may serve a large metropolitan area. They will be interested in airing a story that is visually interesting, often the culmination of a project. Consider public access television through your local cable provider; cable television is required to offer public access. Contact your local cable station to determine how you can use its services to get the community involved in your project.

Web sites are an increasingly important medium. Unlike newspaper, television, and radio, you control the content of Web sites and social media. Your community project can have its own Web site with information about the project, its objectives, the people who are involved, and contact information. Add podcasts and videos to your Web page to enhance knowledge about your project.

### Social Media

Social media include blogging, Facebook, and other electronic applications. If you want to connect with those under age 50, you should include one or more of these tools in your public relations tool bag. Many of these can drive visitors to your Web site through links.

Decide what your objective is and who your audience is, and then decide which media types are the best match.

## How Newsrooms Work

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Each newsroom, whether it’s print, radio, or television, is a little different based on the size of the organization; however, there are some similarities that are fairly universal. You can usually count on there being a publisher, an advertising manager, a circulation manager, a production manager, and a managing editor. The managing editor will generally oversee editors and/or reporters who are assigned to feature stories, sports, city news, lifestyle, and the papers’ photographers. In some communities one person may wear multiple hats: the sports editor may also be the editor for the city news section, or perhaps there is only one editor for the paper and a team of reporters. Duties will vary based on the level of staffing at the paper you are working with.

In some cases your press release may be printed as is; however, the goal of a press release should be to get a reporter to contact you to do a story. When you submit information to the paper in the form of a press release, someone at the paper will determine if it warrants a story, which section of the paper it should be placed in, and what additional sources should be used. The writing of the story is then assigned to a reporter from the appropriate section.

### Front Page Stories

The front page is often earmarked for stories of local interest; these will get read and talked about, and will help sell the newspaper. Such stories are sometimes serious, sometimes funny, and sometimes controversial. Statewide, national, or international hot topics may also be placed on the front page. However, most community papers try to use this space for items of local importance.

Front page stories are almost always (99.9 percent of the time) written by reporters at the paper. They are never taken verbatim from press releases and rarely come from the national media. Press releases, no matter how well written, are almost always destined for somewhere further back in the paper, unless the editor decides that the subject warrants an interview and a story by one of the paper's reporters and puts it on the front page.

The various sections of the newspaper operate by similar rules: the sports section will feature the top game of the week or news about something amazing or funny that happened in a game; the lifestyle section will feature information about a big cultural event going on in the region. These sections' purpose is to grab attention and get people to commit to reading them.

### Inside Pages

Most of what your organization does will be reported on the newspaper's inside pages in the appropriate section. Zoning issues, business meetings, stories about project impacts, requests for volunteers, information about upcoming workshops, and hundreds of other topics are all important news. However, these stories don't meet the criteria for being front page news. If you are working with the media on these types of stories, the more appealing you can make them, the better your placement will be. Share why the topic is important, how it affects those reading the story, and potentially how the reader can be involved. If you can't sell your story, if it does get published, it will most likely be published based on available room rather than where it will have the most impact or where it will get noticed.

Another thing you should consider is that there is often a fine line between a news story from a press release and an ad placement. If you are announcing a workshop sponsored by your organization and say that it costs \$25 per participant to register, the editor may decide that it isn't a story, but an ad. It won't be printed unless you contact the advertising department and pay for it. If, however, you announce that the topic of your workshop is important to the community and that you have developed a program to help readers address a specific issue, and don't mention a price, the paper may still print it as a story rather than considering it advertising.

### Feature Stories

Sometimes focusing on one person makes your project come alive. How will this project affect this person, representative of others like him or her? Or is this person an extraordinary driving force behind the project or mission despite handicaps he or she has? Photographs that help tell the story may be useful. When the story takes a personal turn, it is classified as a feature story. Features can be placed anywhere in the paper or during a broadcast, depending on how much news there is for the day. For instance, a story might appear on a holiday or weekend, when few staff are actually working. The story will have been prepared earlier and dropped into the slot.

### Editorial/Opinion Pages

The editorial/opinion page is intended to allow readers to state their opinions. Their input doesn't necessarily have to be fact based. Note that this section of the paper does not reflect the paper's opinion, but rather the opinion of one of its readers. This section is not written by reporters nor is the content edited by the editors.

With well-written press releases, an understanding of how story decisions are made, effectively selling the importance of your story, and building a relationship with the reporters and other staff at the paper, you should be able to get information about your organization, special interest stories, and the impacts of your projects published.

### Media Relations

The media can serve as an influential tool in public relations. Your job as a representative of your organization or government entity is to build relationships with members of the media, not just pitch stories to them every now and then. To develop good relations, one must engage with local reporters and editors through persuasive, honest communication and education. The abilities, service, contributions, and needs of your organization mean little when people do not know about them.

You may be wondering what it is reporters look for in printing stories, or how to figure out when and if your story will appear in the local paper or on television. Why not ask the reporter? Call or schedule an appointment when the reporter or correspondent isn't on deadline and has time to give you some thoughtful answers. Be sure to ask if it's a good time to talk and let him or her know why you're calling. Ask what kinds of stories the reporter wants to do and when would be the best time to call with your story idea.

Find out what he or she dislikes, what stories the newsroom will or won't do, and what kinds of stories the reporter's editor likes. Not every story a reporter does or wants to do gets into print or on the air. Who runs the assignment desk? What producer might be interested? What does the bureau chief want? How many stories does the reporter or correspondent do every day?

It's also important to learn about the demographics of the media outlet you're working with. Who are its readers or viewers? How much time do they spend reading the paper or magazine? Who listens or watches? How old are average readers, listeners, or viewers? How good are the ratings?

After getting some basic background information, delve deeper to find out what kinds of stories are given priority and how yours can get to the top of the list. What kinds of stories should you spend time pitching? Know exactly what the reporter does and does not cover, so you don't waste his or her time or yours. Sometimes the reporter may refer you to someone else on staff who covers your type of story.

What does the reporter want from you, stories or story ideas, and how would he or she like to receive them—by mail with a follow-up phone call? By fax? Phone? E-mail? On your Web site? What are the deadlines? When do television reporters broadcast live? What hours do the reporters work? What other agencies or beats does your reporter cover? How can you tie your story into a current hot topic? Whom do you call if you can't get to your reporter and you have an urgent story?

Once you know the answers to these questions, you'll be in a much better position to get your story idea covered. Be realistic when dealing with the media. Understand the reasons that an organization receives frequent publicity.

To present yourself as a good source of information, give the reporter a list of contact names at your organization, including phone, fax, and e-mail addresses. Staple your business card to the list. If there are areas your agency doesn't cover, let the reporter know where your agency ends and another one begins. Don't assume reporters know everything about your agency. Even if they did, they have forgotten; you need to refresh their memories. Even if you've already sent them copies of your contact list or phone numbers, give them another. In fact, give them two or three—one for their assignment desk, one for their boss, and one for their backup.

You'll build credibility with your reporter if you can suggest other expert sources of information. Give the media good reasons to cover your organization, agency, or municipality.

Here are some further suggestions for developing relations with the media:

- Develop a monthly one-page bulletin, or tip sheet, with news about your agency. This is a good way to keep in regular touch with your local media. You can send this tip sheet by fax or e-mail.
- For story ideas, provide detailed information, such as the people involved and affected, people who are willing to be interviewed, and residents who agree to provide an opinion.

## Guidelines for Working with the Media

Good media relations are built on communications, trust, and cooperation. Cultivate your relationships with the media—a newspaper reporter or television news director will be more likely to work with an organization or local government when they are familiar with the contact and know how easy it is to work with that person.

- *Most reporters prefer brief, concise faxes or e-mails over flashy press kits.* Send out a press kit mailing that has general information, a few story ideas, and a cover letter introducing yourself to newspapers and radio and television stations in your region. The press release should be one page or no more than two pages. If over two pages, that's a sign you should break your story into two separate pitches.
- *Once you've established a relationship and have a good contact in a newsroom, don't hesitate to turn to him or her for advice.* If you have a story idea and aren't sure whom to pitch it to, call your contact and ask if you can run it by him or her. Ask what they think of it, and who, if anyone, they would suggest you pitch it to. This approach works very well. If they're not on deadline, reporters love to be asked for their opinion.
- *Assume that anything you say to a reporter or a correspondent will end up in print, on the radio, or on television.* Nothing is *ever* off the record. If a story appears that isn't exactly what you expected, don't give up. Continue to communicate with editors and reporters. Reporters can make mistakes, so call the reporter directly and be polite but inform him or her of your displeasure about the specific information you felt was unfair or incorrect. Let the reporter know if you are planning to write a letter to the editor with your opinion about the story. If it's

not a major error and doesn't hurt the effectiveness of the article, you may decide to do nothing.

- *Check your sources.* Always talk to sources before you give their names and phone numbers to reporters. Look for interesting anecdotes that you can use to entice a reporter to interview your sources, and more important, find out what, if any, negative things your source might say. Caution your sources that their words can carry a lot of weight.
- *Consider doing some mock interviews.* Invite a reporter friend to the office to help you with this exercise. Videotape the interview so you can critique how well you did. Another option is to contract with outside sources, such as your local Cooperative Extension office, to provide this training.
- *Don't forget your local columnists.* You may be surprised. A columnist may pick up your story idea when the news and features desks won't. Familiarize yourself with their columns and know what they write about before you make the pitch.
- *Always offer visuals.* Visuals define a feature story and are essential to a television news package. Find out ahead of time what kinds of visuals you may have available (photos or videos, for example), and make sure you have plenty of stock photos on hand to provide to your media contact. Use words that create visual images when writing information for television. A visually interesting story can trump the “shake and grin” photo nearly all the time.
- *When you're creating press releases, write like a journalist.* Use headlines that attract attention. Put your news first, use quotes, and localize as much as possible. Develop creative leads. Readers want the most recent facts first, background later.

## When a Reporter Calls

Reputable reporters will always identify themselves as reporters. Find out what it is they're calling about. If you're not the right person, tell them who is, if you know. Do not be afraid to say you do not know. If you are unable to answer a reporter's question, refer him or her to someone who can, or offer to research the question and get back to him or her. If you take the second approach, be sure to follow up quickly. If you realize you stated an incorrect fact or misstated your thoughts, immediately let the reporter know. Know your message; it's where your expertise lies.

Inquire as to what kind of story reporters are doing, who they've talked to, what they're looking for, and what facts and figures they need. Try to be helpful. Take the time to get phone numbers and addresses right.

- *There are two basic rules for dealing with reporters:* Always return their phone calls promptly and always tell the truth.
- *Always respond to reporters—even if you're just calling to tell them you don't know the answers to their questions.* They never forget individuals who lie to them, don't return phone calls, or give them wrong information.

If you have initiated an interview with a member of the media, provide the interviewer with a fact sheet including information you would like to share and even suggestions for questions he or she could ask. The interviewer might not stick to what you have provided, but giving information in the beginning increases your chances of being able to cover the information you want to cover. Generally, the interviewer will appreciate the time you spent preparing for the interview.

Make sure you give media calls top priority. Media representatives are usually working on short deadlines. If you don't return their calls, you will give them a negative image of your group.

## Golden Rule

When dealing with journalists and bloggers, remember that what goes around comes around. Treat the journalists and bloggers as you wish to be treated. The terms “collecting gold coins” and “spending them wisely” relate to the need to be considerate of your news media contacts. Give them information in a timely fashion and do favors for them (“collect gold coins”). In return, there might be a time when you really need your media contact's help (“spend them wisely”). Perhaps you must get something out to the community in a hurry. Or perhaps you have been the subject of negative publicity and you need to get your response out. That is when you call your contact and say, “Hey, Joe, remember when I got that information for you about the number of Mennonite-operated dairy farms in Pennsylvania? Well, I could use your help in getting the word out about this program we have in the future.”

## Press Release Basics

A press release is a way to let print and broadcast media know your good news. Most often the news media will not care about what you are doing unless it is controversial. Even if they do care, it is unlikely they will assign a reporter to cover it since media outlets are doing more with less these days. Reporters need your help, if you want your news published.

A press release may announce a newly published report, an event, awards, recognition, or an opportunity for participation in your group, project, etc. It may also describe something that has already occurred. Provide enough information in your press

release that a paper may publish it as is, even though some reporters may do their own research and write their own article.

Is your story newsworthy? Can it compete with the other news of the day? Do people really want to read about it? These are tough questions for many groups, because to them, everything they do is newsworthy. Part of the purpose of submitting press releases to the media is to educate them about your work, but if you send too many press releases that have no news value, they will start to ignore you. You may want to run your idea or the release draft by a friend who is not as close to the story to see if he or she thinks it is newsworthy. Depending on your relationship with the reporter, you may want to run the idea by him or her and ask for professional assistance in finding the “newsworthy” idea in your event or activity.

### **What Makes Something Newsworthy?**

**Drama and emotion.** News is about people. Reporters like getting statistics, but they will always look for people who either exemplify the statistics or are affected by them. If you can provide a face to the stat, your chances of getting it picked up by the media increase. Find a person and tell his or her story.

**Odd or unusual.** If a dog bites a man, that is not news. However, if a man bites a dog, that is unusual and thus newsworthy. A plane that lands safely in an emergency on a highway is news.

**Local angle.** The media are mostly concerned with their own audience and the issues that affect the audience directly. This angle, combined with an issue that affects people in general, makes front-page news.

## **Questions to Consider When Writing a Press Release**

### **Who**

Who is making the announcement and who is your intended audience?

Who is the contact for more information?

Who is the subject matter expert (if applicable)?

Who is the “real person” (i.e., student, worker, etc.) that may be part of this story (if applicable)?

### **What**

What are you announcing?

What is the major issue involved?

What problem(s) are you helping to solve?

What trends, if any, are involved with this program or event?

What larger issues or audiences, if any, can this apply to?

What is the related Web site (if applicable)?

### **When**

When does your program or event occur?

### **Where**

Where does your program or event take place?

### **Why**

Why are you making this announcement now?

Why is this announcement important? (Why is the person reading, hearing, or viewing this message going to care?)

### **How**

How is your announcement going to help the community or audience you are trying to reach?

How is it different from other similar programs or events (if applicable)?

**Topical, timely.** When you're looking to get your story in the news, you must consider topicality and timeliness. Examples abound at every holiday season: Thanksgiving news comes complete with instructions on how to cook your turkey safely; Christmas comes with safety warnings regarding the dangers of Christmas tree fires.

**Celebrity or special event.** If a celebrity, even a local one, is involved people want to know. Keep in mind that your event must seem special to more than your group. It is true that "names (people or organizations) make the news."

**Conflict or injustice.** Disagreement is generally more newsworthy than agreement. This is why politics and sports make easy news; it is easy to find disagreement.

**Scientific breakthrough.** New information is newsworthy only if the readers care about the topic.

**Relevance to audience.** Although stories sometimes run because of their sheer oddity, more times than not they run because editors know what their audience is interested in. Being sensitive to the market they are trying to reach and demonstrating that your story idea is relevant to that audience will increase your chances of getting coverage.

**Universal appeal.** Stories that affect, or have the potential to affect, everyone are also newsworthy. A story about a child with a rare disease is interesting because it is unusual. But it is also effective because all parents worry about the health of their children and are interested in children's health generally.

## Tips on Writing a Press Release

Writing should be accurate, concise, complete, and interesting. Use short sentences and paragraphs.

Use a "hook" or compelling reason for reporting about your program or event. Ask a colleague, "What do you think the hook is in this story?" Ideas for a hook can be found in the newsworthy list above.

Put the most important information at the beginning of the release, assuming that at least the first paragraph will get in when edited. The reporter or editor may read only the first sentence or two to decide whether to read further. The first paragraph should carry the biggest punch, with lesser information further along in the release. It is also nice to add a quote within the second or third paragraph to break up the release a bit, but it's not essential.

At the end of the press release, include a general paragraph about your group or organization. You can use the same paragraph at the end of all of your press releases. Include your Web address if you have one.

Keep it to one page, two at the very most. Double space and print on one side only. If there must be a second page, write "more" at the bottom of page one and number page two.

Put the release on letterhead, and then e-mail and also fax or mail a copy about two weeks in advance of the event. When you e-mail the press release, copy the content of the release into the body of the e-mail and also attach the press release to the e-mail.

Include your title and contact information even if it is in the letterhead. Include your office and cell/home phone numbers. If you can't be reached, your release will probably be thrown away.

Follow up with a phone call later that day or the next day. Call the reporter or editor and ask if he or she received your release. Don't ask if the release will be published. If the reporter or editor asks you questions you cannot answer, simply say that you will get the answer for them and call them back. It is much better to say you don't know than to give out misinformation.

## Additional Things To Consider

E-mail the release (as part of the e-mail, not the attachment) to the news editor and relevant reporter for the paper. Depending on the story, it may be the business reporter, education reporter, family life reporter, etc. If you have a reporter "buddy," send it to him or her with a personal note.

The contact person named on the release should be your media relations person, who should be aware of the release's content and be prepared to answer questions. However, it is okay to refer the reporter to other staff once the reporter has made initial contact. It is helpful to appoint individuals in your organization to be the designated media relations people so that you are not scrambling when a reporter calls.

If an event location is unusual, give directions and parking instructions. Say that you will reserve tickets, a parking place, seats, etc. Make it easy for reporters to get their equipment to the event.

Attach additional information, such as a photograph or a news article. News articles show that others are interested in this story, too. Indicate that you have sent a photo, i.e. [PHOTO ATTACHED]. Be sure to use quality digital photos. If you are talking about a report, you may want to post the report on your Web site and include a hyperlink in your press release.

Templates are a great way to be sure accurate information is distributed when the release will be used by more than one person. A template is a press release with blanks where local information can be inserted before it is sent to the newspaper or station.

You may have news that you want to give to the press before it officially goes public so staff can prepare a story to run the day you make the information public. If so, instead of putting “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” on the top, write “EMBARGOED UNTIL [DATE AND TIME].” If you attach a report, also place the embargo message at the top.

Use a media advisory to invite the press to cover an upcoming event. Advisories are usually sent to the city and photo editors of newspapers and to the news assignment desks of radio and television stations a few weeks before the event. After listing the who, what, why, when, and where, include one or two paragraphs that concisely describe the event. Give suggestions for photos.

If you expect media representatives at an event, be prepared to greet them and direct them to the action. Remember, a television reporter is looking for the most visual idea, and as little audio as possible. Keep in mind that radio and newspapers can do interviews over the phone if they are not available at the time of the event. Offer this to them in the advisory as an option.

## News Media Management Plan

Organizations need to maintain a good reputation within the communities they serve. They are better able to do this if they have a solid track record of providing quality information and products. That is where a well-thought-out news media management plan (NNMP) fits in. A NNMP helps protect an organization’s reputation by allowing the organization to tell its story effectively.

The NMMP will contain a list of local media outlets with contact information. A list encompassing a larger area may be necessary, depending upon the organization’s needs. The list may also contain additional information about individual outlets.

While developing the plan it is helpful to imagine what emergency or crisis might occur. For some organizations it might be difficult to foresee a crisis, but any event that has the potential for a negative impact could be considered a crisis. An example is a camp sitting on high ground that is evacuated suddenly by county officials as a result of flooding. The person identified in the NMMP as the media contact has to make it clear that all campers are safe, that evacuating is a precautionary move since it is the access roads that are inaccessible due to flooding, not that the camp itself is affected. A NMMP will anticipate crisis and give structure to the response.

The NMMP gives guidance as to where to gather factual information. It saves valuable time by mapping out the steps needed to address situations as they arise. It provides structure for positive and negative situations so that additional work to follow up or attempt to undo poor results is not needed.

Two things to keep in mind while developing a NMMP are your organization’s goals and reputation. These two things are vital if you are to have an effective NMMP. A good NMMP should cover:

- Who in the office does what
- How to handle routine incoming media inquiries (“reporter on line one!”)
- How to manage routine outgoing information, i.e., news releases
- Who manages crisis situations and how to manage them
- Procedures and standards for writing news releases

Your organization’s contact person is a key part of a NMMP. He or she should be given as much time and information as possible. What is the nature of the call? Who, what, when, where, and how? Get detailed contact information. If you’re not the contact person for the inquiry, gathering information will help the contact person make a quick and accurate response.

The contact person needs to anticipate requests for information. He or she should know the interests of the media outlets in your area and recognize developing news stories. Is something unusual or different within your organization going to be of interest to the community? If so, gather information beforehand.

Another key individual is the news release coordinator. This person builds a relationship with all individuals who will be receiving news releases from your organization. He or she needs to ask for considerations that may make the process more effective for them. They also need to know what is of interest to the media outlet.

A crisis is an opportunity to demonstrate that your organization understands the situation, is taking appropriate action and is minimizing negative impact. To be ready for a crisis, identify potential emergencies and plan an appropriate response. Think about the media outlets that will be contacted or that will be contacting you. What form will be used to dispense information to the press? Have easily customized templates ready for press releases. Have a communication plan in place so information can be gathered quickly. Make the story, “Situation handled well by your organization.”

## **Electronic and Social Media**

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More and more organizations are including electronic and social media as part of their media plan. Social media include blogs, Twitter, and sites such as Facebook. Other electronic media include Web sites, webinars, and podcasts. Choose specific electronic media because they help to achieve contact with your audiences. You control the content and reach of your information instead of depending on the traditional media to get your message out in the best light possible. You also control how current the information is. With a Web site or Twitter or a blog, you can change or add information very quickly if you have someone in the organization who is willing and able to keep on top of updates.

## **Web Site**

Having a Web site says your organization is valid and is keeping up with the times. You control the content instead of depending on the traditional media outlets to deliver your story. You will get a lot of hits from people looking up information about your organization. Include money in your budget for Web design or find a talented volunteer who can design your site. How your site looks reflects on your organization and its values and goals. Be sure to change and update your Web site regularly. Stale Web sites may raise the question of your organization’s relevance. Include links so visitors can contact the group with questions or donate money to your cause. Other electronic media can help drive visitors to your Web site.

## **Blogs**

Get to know your local community bloggers in the same way you develop a relationship with staff in more traditional media. You can feed a blogger copies of your press releases, if he or she generally blogs about issues relevant to your objectives. A blogger, sometimes looking for material, can help get your information out to his or her readers. A member of your organization may choose to write a blog too. However, keep in mind that it is a major time commitment. Blogs should be updated regularly to keep readers interested.

## **Social Media**

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter are being used to drive visitors to organizations’ Web sites. Anyone with a Facebook account can create a page for an organization. You can also choose to buy advertising to drive visitors to your Web site. If you use a Facebook page, update it at least once a week. You may ask visitors to respond to a specific question or remind visitors of an upcoming event.

## **Webinars, Podcasts, and YouTube**

These tools are alternative ways to educate others about your objectives. Recording presentations in a webinar that may be viewed at a set time, or archived with a link on your Web site to be viewed at will, provide an educational opportunity. Podcasts can also be linked through your Web site and enjoyed at will by visitors who download them to their MP3 players. YouTube can be used in many ways. Video recordings of events, presentations, and tours of facilities, among other ideas, can also be linked through your Web site.

## **In Summary**

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The media, whether print, electronic, or social, can be a powerful tool for your group to use. The media have always tried to be the voice of the community. It’s a two-way street. Get to know your media contacts personally. Find out what they need from you to do their job; and help your media contacts by responding quickly and truthfully.

Social and electronic media have the advantage that your organization can control the information. But you have to drive traffic yourself so viewers see your information. More traditional media outlets—newspapers and television—drive readers and viewers to the stories because they put out a product the public wants to use.

Take time to develop and implement a news media management plan. It will help you focus on the message and not the means later on.

Media, no matter what kind you use, help you to communicate your organization’s concerns and achievements. Media can help increase your support base, including recruitment of volunteers. Partnering with the media can help your group achieve its goals.



One of the most critical needs in Pennsylvania is strong local leadership for the future well-being of communities. This includes leadership for civic and nonprofit organizations, youth, the business community, elected officials, and citizens.

The *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow* leadership curriculum was developed to help individuals develop and strengthen their personal leadership skills so they can play active and constructive leadership roles in their communities. The program focuses on developing and strengthening personal and interpersonal leadership skills, group and organizational leadership skills, and community leadership skills.

The curriculum is designed for use as a comprehensive, multiple-session leadership training program, taught by trained Penn State Cooperative Extension educators. Individual modules can also be used for stand-alone training within existing groups or organizations who want training on specific leadership or group process issues.

The entire *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow* curriculum includes:

#### Unit I: Personal Leadership Skills

- 1: The Leader within You
- 2: Values and Ethics
- 3: Understanding Your Leadership Style

#### Unit II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

- 1: Communications Basics
- 2: Facilitation
- 3: Managing Conflict
- 4: Valuing Diversity
- 5: Partnering with the Media

#### Unit III: Group/Organizational Leadership Skills

- 1: Productive Groups
- 2: Effective Meetings
- 3: Group Decisions

#### Unit IV: Community/Public Policy Leadership Skills

- 1: Dealing with Change
- 2: Public Issues
- 3: Understanding Pennsylvania Local Government
- 4: Active Leadership

For more information about the *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow* program, contact your local Penn State Cooperative Extension office, or visit [www.leadership.psu.edu](http://www.leadership.psu.edu).

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