

10 steps to working with regional media

We've asked Kate Wilcock, *Town and Country* Editor, Queensland Country Life for 10 steps to working effectively with your local media.



'Being put in charge of the media promotions can be a bit daunting, however following a few simple guidelines can make the whole process easier and beneficial for all parties.' Kate Wilcock

1. Do your research – Find out what media organisations are operating in your district and find contact numbers for the relevant people in each sector. Eg: lifestyle writers, social coordinators or general rounds journalists.
2. Make yourself a timeline – Work out the date of the events you will require publicity for over the whole year and work out timeliness accordingly. For example promoting an upcoming performance for a month in advance is usually best – any earlier people will let it slip from their minds and any later you may not have the time to get anything published.
3. Make friends with the media – Generally we are all approachable people and willing to help out a local event. Place a call to your local media (as found in your research) and ask them how they would like the information presented to them and what their deadlines are.
4. Know your subject – Have all the information in your event on hand when you're contacting the media, this will lessen the chance of errors occurring and streamline the communication process.
5. How to deliver the information – Email is the main source for communication for most journalists. Put your information into the body of the email or into a word document and attach it to the email. Give the email an appropriate subject that reflects the event.

6. What not to do - Posters and flyers aren't usually used as the information needs to be re-typed to be printed or broadcast. Try and write your promotion as you would talk about it to a friend. Don't get too worried about your writing style, just make sure it makes sense and follows a logical order with all the relevant facts included.
7. Include an image - Depending on your media outlet (newspapers, radio, tv) it's good to have good images on hand to supply with your story. The best images are of people 'doing things'. Eg: if it's an upcoming workshop that you're promoting try and get a picture of people preparing for it. Images need to be sent in high resolution (over 500kb) for them to be reproduced in a newspaper.
8. Accept that space is limited – Editorial space in newspapers and other publications are very tight and there are a lot of groups vying for a spot. Most of the time the journalists will do their best to get things run. However sometimes things do get cut, it's part of the business and it won't help if you complain to the journalist.
9. Offer attendance to the event (media pass) – You can always ask if the media if they would like to come along and cover the event themselves. As journalists are very busy it may not be possible for them to attend, but making the offer can promote good relations between the media and your group.
10. Follow up – Try and get a picture of people enjoying the event – you can send the image and a short story about how it went to your contact in the media. This will show the audience that the event occurred, it was enjoyed and there are more to come. Timing is everything – as noted in number two it's wise to be organised well ahead of an event, the same applies to follow up stories. Try and send the follow up piece to your contact within a week of the event being held.

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