

Preamble to media lists

Spend the research dollars and time to research your target audiences carefully. Know your audience is an age-old adage.

Mainstream news media such as daily newspapers and network television will often get to many of your target audiences. But don't overlook the many vertical, very targeted media outlets such as magazines, cable TV shows and e-mail newsletters that can reach your target audience(s) more directly.

Ensure your media messages are in multimedia format suitable for television, radio, print and on-line media outlets so your message gets to your target audiences in a variety of ways.

Often, an integrated campaign that provides messaging towards the editorial, news side, can be augmented later with advertising. Display advertising in smaller circulation media outlets need not be expensive. And this ensures not only the verticalized publication will financially survive to hit a target audience directly, it is another way to hit that target audience with your messaging.

How to build a media list

The first part of building a media list is strategic – determine whom you are targeting with your message. Often your desired target audiences are diverse so this should be clearly defined before beginning to build your media list.

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Ensure your media messages are in multimedia format suitable for television, radio, print and on-line media outlets so your message gets to your target audiences in a variety of ways. The old advertising adage that you must hit a target audience with a message up to seven times before it is fully “received” definitely still applies in our information-saturated world.

The next step is getting in touch with a variety of suppliers out there who sell media lists in hard copy or electronic form and can customize them to your needs. Product offerings include one-time list purchases, hard copy media listings booklets and subscribing to web-based list services that are constantly updated. These are not inexpensive, but invaluable to a successful media relations campaign.

It's always a good idea to purchase lists from a number of different sources, especially if you're starting out in a new client relationship in a new media niche. To ensure your

media list is as complete as possible, plan on calling and confirming information at key media outlets.

My tactical philosophy is to get the news out in a variety of ways. I recommend combining direct e-mail dissemination from your own service provider (with your name on the e-mail) with the use of paid wire services and snail mail services available from various suppliers to the PR industry. (Aim to hit the target media in at least three ways, via direct e-mail, via paid news wire and via snail mail (print media kits or CD-ROM's). This way you will definitely ensure the targeted news media have seen your message. When purchasing media lists, make sure they contain phone and fax numbers, e-mail (the best are those that go directly to the journalist and not to general in-boxes) and snail mail addresses.

Finally, you should update the list constantly. Utilize e-mail bounce backs as a warning you have wrong information. Keep up with the list services, and never underestimate the power of an old-fashioned phone call to the media outlet's reception desk.