



KCA TIPS ON EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

1. Create a Media Outlet Directory – A comprehensive list of appropriate contacts at TV stations, newspapers, journals, etc. Along with contact info, keep a “Notes” section to record key facts and attributes on the people and organizations who cover your news.
2. Put yourself in the place of the reader – What would be of interest to you and what would make you want to read this article?
3. Put yourself in the place of the Editor and Reporter – Why would they be interested in covering this story? Think of the 5 W’s as you pitch your story: Who; What; Where; When; Why.
4. What’s relevant about your news – Try and tie in a current situation to your story. Examples: workforce challenges exist and project toured high school students; reuse of a structure to benefit a community; etc.
5. Think visually – What photo opportunities are associated with your story?
6. Ask for help – To spread the word, others may be willing to help: your trade association; the project’s architect and other firms associated with the project; if an elected official is involved publicize it and ask their staff to contact media; etc.
7. For events, have press releases with great quotes on hand to give to the media.
8. Follow up with the media to see if additional information is needed for the story.
9. When responding to media inquiries, designate a spokesperson. Anticipate the questions, prepare your responses and concentrate on your message.
10. Don’t make up answers. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say that and tell the reporter you’ll get back to them. **MAKE SURE TO GET BACK TO THEM.**
11. Never use the phrase: “No comment.” Especially when it comes to media seeking a response to a crisis as that phrase could come across as negative. Be proactive in time of a crisis: “We are fully aware of the incident and we have commenced a thorough investigation. We will respond to all of questions after our investigation is complete.”
12. When it comes to a television interview, talk conversationally and look at the reporters, not the camera.
13. Never assume anything is off the record. If you don’t want it printed or broadcasted, don’t say it. However, if there is a level of trust with the reporter to go “off the record,” make sure the reporter acknowledges it as such before you say anything.
14. Be respectful of young, inexperienced reporters – remember, people mentored you when entering the industry; and besides, you never know where this young reporter will end up.
15. Set the record straight. Don’t be hesitant or afraid to call back to correct a misstatement of yours or theirs.