



## Tips to Getting News Coverage and How to Write a News Release

*Compiled by Catherine Beedell DipM MCIM – ViSTA's Workforce Services Development Manager and former Marketing Manager for Somerset College and Freelance Marketing and PR Consultant*

If you write interesting, well-timed news releases and cultivate strong media contacts, you stand a much better chance of getting your stories covered.

### What are the media channels you could use?

- **Printed publications** – newspapers, specialist publications, parish newsletters etc
- **Web based** – your website news feed, other people's websites and don't forget Social Media like Twitter, Facebook and Blogs
- **Broadcast** - TV and Radio

### Contacts:

Invest time to build up e-lists for distribution of your stories and get to know individual journalists, editors, web managers and find out what they want from you. Most prefer email but some will want it posted. When emailing – make sure you put the headline into the subject box of the email – **don't just put 'News Release'**. Also send photo and news releases as attachments, make sure they are in a format that can be easily accessed.

### How to Write a News Release

Remember that the media want a story. Ideally it needs to be:

- Catchy and interesting – human interest stuff is always popular
- Local, if for local media
- Full of relevant information – journalists haven't got time to chase you for more info
- Try to send a photo or create a photo opportunity

**Timing** – don't send too far in advance of an event promotion, but far enough to allow for photographers to book photo opps in their diaries. If you are sending a story after something has happened send it quickly while it is still news. It won't get covered if you leave it too long.

If you are hoping for a journalist to cover an event and take photos – **don't rely on this** – they don't always turn up – so make sure you are there with a camera just in case.

Don't forget to credit funders and partners and you can add additional information that isn't quite so relevant to the main story in your **'notes to editors'** at the end.



Somerset Fundraisers Group  
c/o ViSTA, The Town Hall, Bow Street, Langport TA10 9PR  
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**Suggested News Release Format – preferably 1.5 line spacing to allow for editor's notes and no more than two sides of A4.**

**NEWS RELEASE Date of issue: 15/10/2010**

**For further information contact: Joanne Blogs, email and tel no**

**Local Charity Scoops National Award for Innovation  
(catchy headline)**

**First sentence should get straight to the point. You need to convince the reader that this is an exciting news story in the first paragraph.**

Local charity **x** has been awarded a top national prize for innovation. The annual cash prize of £1000 is awarded by **y** who established this award to encourage creativity and innovation within the Charities sector in Britain. There were over 1000 applicants, which makes this an even greater achievement for **x**.

**Second paragraph** - this should contain 'need to know' facts, who, what, where, when and how.

The award went to **X** because they had achieved success through a project which employed experienced film-makers to work with a wide range of people living in communities in 'areas of deprivation' to make their own short films over a period of one month. The films were then shown and distributed to politicians and other decision makers to give them a true picture of what it is like for people living in these communities and to celebrate their strengths as well as highlight their needs. The panel making the award said that it had been given to **x**, because they had come up with a truly innovative solution to engaging with local communities, that was quite unique and had a measurably positive impact on the people they work with.

**Second/Third paragraph** – 'nice to know' a bit more explanation and background if necessary

The project took place in three housing estates in **z**, and was helped along by three 'community organisers' who live on these estates. These organisers are well known in their communities



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and so were in a strong position to motivate some of the most isolated and disengaged people living on these estates to get involved in this project.

### Last paragraph – quotes and conclusion.

Project Manager Mrs Y said:

*'We are overwhelmed and delighted to have achieved this award. This was one of the most exciting projects we have ever worked on and it has already brought about greater investment in these communities as the films had a powerful impact on local councillors and decision makers. The award has really boosted our staff team and we will use the prize money to invest in another similar project.'*

A young mother who was involved in making one of the films said :

*' Being involved in making a film has really built my confidence and because of this I am now going to go on a college course to improve my qualifications'*

X hopes to continue with this work in these communities by offering other opportunities such as evening classes and a local festival. They are also planning another arts project, this time using storytelling as a medium for community regeneration. So watch this space!

### ENDS

**Insert photo opportunity details, including time, directions and theme of the photo opportunity, or include photo caption if you are sending a photo with the story.**

**The photograph shows** from left to right, project staff, lead film makers and some of the participants collecting their award from ??? at a special dinner in London.

### Notes to Editors:

This can contain additional supporting information about your organisation, other organisation's involved and anything else you think relevant.



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