Spreading the Word
PR Tips and Tools
Dear Club Member:

Thank you for requesting “Spreading the Word: PR Tips and Tools.” This brochure and accompanying documents have been provided to help educate you about public relations and offer the information you need to successfully promote your club’s activities and the sport of purebred dogs.

As you know, the American Kennel Club®’s Communications Department is responsible for creating initiatives that will help further our collective goals including promoting purebred dogs, responsible dog ownership and participation in AKC® events. However, YOU, our clubs, are also crucial in fostering a positive view of our sport. We can be most successful by working together to proactively communicate our messages in a unified voice.

Our department aims to be a resource that helps you achieve your club’s goals while also influencing the overall image of the sport and the fancy. We encourage you to contact us with questions, and hopefully, to report the positive results you have received as a result of your local public relations efforts.

Regards,

Lisa Peterson  
Director of Communications

Stephanie Smith  
Club Communications Manager

Email us at Communications@akc.org or call 212-696-8228.
What is Public Relations?
“Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.”
– Public Relations Society of America

Because public relations (PR) encompasses many different tasks, its definition can vary widely depending on whom you ask. The field can involve everything from lobbying efforts and coalition building to charity campaigns and marketing research, but most often it’s associated with “media relations” or “publicity.” Now more than ever, the media is the fastest and most cost-effective way to get the word out about a cause, product, service or event. This brochure focuses on how to work with various media outlets* and how to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with them. For more information about PR visit www.prsa.org.

*Industry jargon is bold and underlined on first reference throughout this text. Definitions are in the PR Terms Glossary on the back cover.

What is Advertising?
Advertising is defined as “a paid form of communication,” and therefore differs greatly from PR. When you pay to have your message presented—you control the look, tone and content completely. On the other hand, when working with the editorial side of a media outlet you have less control over the message, but gain more credibility with the consumer, via the implied support of the reporter. If your organization has a healthy budget and is interested in advertising, see page 8.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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How Can PR Help Your Club?
Looking to increase/decrease interest in a breed or communicate some of its unique attributes? Trying to prevent restrictive dog legislation from affecting your breed/town? Want to publicize a new class being offered or new community program? Hoping to gain new club members or an audience at an event?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, then you should be working with your local media. The media is a great vehicle for reaching out to the public with your messages. A strong relationship with them will help ensure that your club has the opportunity to play a leadership role in securing the continued approval of dog-related activities and the rights of dog owners.

Getting Started
Before you begin, establish a goal and if you are working on behalf of a club or group, make sure everyone agrees on that goal. Decide what the best way to accomplish the goal is and determine who’s doing what. Who has the time, the desire and the skills best suited for various tasks, such
Getting the Word Out: Media Relations

Your first communication with the media is often through “press materials” – press releases, media alerts and/or pitch letters. Even if you first speak with them on the phone, reporters are likely to ask you to mail, fax or email more information. Your goal in preparing press materials is to provide that information in a timely manner and in an easily understandable format. Highlight an angle that makes your story unique or relevant and choose the best vehicle for your message.

PRESS RELEASE: For an announcement requiring detail and background on a potential story, a press release is usually the best format. It should provide the most important information that a reporter would want to know and should be limited to two pages. The key to a successful press release is presenting the information objectively, highlighting only what’s relevant, and keeping the most important facts up top. The lead paragraph should contain only the “who, what, when, where and why” of the story. If the headline and first few paragraphs don’t grab the reporter, he/she won’t keep reading.

MEDIA ALERT: To seek media coverage and attendance for dog show or field trial/test or stand-alone event that requires a brief announcement of event, date, and location – use a media alert. Media alerts work well for events that are virtually self-explanatory and offer good visuals that will appeal to photographers and TV camera crews. Don’t forget to include a contact number, including a “day-of” event number, such as cell phone. Send the alert a day or two before the event to get short-lead media (TV, wire services and daily newspapers) to put it on their assignment schedule. You can also send a media alert weeks in advance to submit a “calendar listing” about your event. These entertainment or weekend calendar sections are often compiled much earlier than the rest of the newspaper and include a listing of upcoming events.

PITCH LETTER: If you have a pitch – an idea about a specific topic you want the media to cover – use a pitch letter. This one-page letter outlines a story idea and why it’s relevant to the media outlet’s audience. It’s a less formal way to seek coverage and is an ideal alternative to a press release for ongoing topics not tied into specific events (such as therapy dogs, how puppy buyers can find a responsible breeder, etc.). It is particularly appropriate for long-lead media.
In addition, a well-written letter to the editor can generate media exposure. It differs from the aforementioned documents in that your goal is to have it published verbatim, attributed to you rather than a reporter.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:** Writing a letter to the editor of your local paper is a quick and easy way to give your club some visibility. You can write in response to any article you see in the paper (whether you agree or disagree) or just to express a viewpoint on a public issue, such as how people should find a responsible breeder (suggest going to your club’s upcoming dog show). Always sign your name with your club affiliation, especially if you are an officer, and note if you are an AKC Canine Ambassador or Public Education Coordinator. The length requirements and how to submit letters are usually outlined on the “letters” page or on the paper’s web site.

**Who’s Who: Media Lists**

You’ve got to do your homework and send press materials to the correct person. Many media outlets are listed in the telephone book or you can find them online. Since you live in the area, you know what the major outlets are already. Most often there is one major daily, numerous regional or weekly newspapers, three to five TV stations or “affiliates” (smaller stations affiliated with national networks like ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, etc.) and several radio stations. Don’t forget local cable stations (they’ll be especially interested in community events) and web sites (there are many online guides that specialize in things to do with families or kids). Other tips for identifying reporters or assignment editors:

- Reference past coverage – search for your breed or club’s name on Google.com’s news search feature.
- Use yellow pages online or resource sites such as www.newspapers.com and www.radio-locator.com.
- Call the main number and ask who would be the most appropriate contact for the information you have (identify specific names, titles and contact information).
- You may need multiple contacts at one outlet depending on the angle of the story (Lifestyle, Calendar/Events, Pets, Education, Business editors, etc.).
- Once you have developed your “media list” save it and periodically update it as reporters change jobs or “beats” often.
- If you can’t find the information you need, AKC’s Communications Department can help. Please email (communications@akc.org) or call (212-696-8343) with your request and allow at least one week for us to create a list.

**Once You Get Their Attention: Talking Points**

Below, you will find some sample talking points. We encourage you to tailor these to relate specifically to your club and/or event.

**YOUR CLUB**

- Your event or program builds greater public awareness about ________ (i.e. training, breeding, responsible dog ownership, etc.)
- Your kennel club has been part of the community for ___ years, has over ____ members (name any prominent community members such as politicians, clergy, etc.) and hosts ___ events annually.
- The annual event provides a fun, safe community activity for local families and is good for the local economy. Based on 1999 data, two days of shows with 2,000 participants generates nearly $300,000.
- Dogs provide many services to the community including therapy and assistance programs.
- Your kennel club is a member of (or licensed by) the AKC.

**AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB**

Following are some general messages and talking points about the AKC and the sport. We encourage you to use these as well as reference the AKC web site for statements about controversial issues such as commercial breeding or dog bites.

http://www.akc.org/press_center/facts_stats.cfm

You can also contact us for a detailed “AKC Talking Points Fact Sheet” (included in the Spread the Word: PR Tips and Tools binder) to take with you to media interviews.

- The AKC is an organization for people who love dogs. The AKC is a not-for-profit organization.
established in 1884, and is the principal registry for purebred dogs in the U.S., registering approximately one million dogs annually.

- The AKC encourages the enhanced enjoyment of your dog through activities that you can both participate in, sanctioning more than 18,000 events annually, including conformation, agility, obedience, tracking, herding, lure coursing, hunt test, and field and earthdog trials.
- All the dogs at AKC events are AKC registered. As a pet owner, even if you don’t plan to show your dog, AKC registration is important as it allows you to mark your dog’s place in the history of its breed and opens the door to various AKC services that enhance your relationship with your dog.
- AKC registration fees help support numerous programs and services that benefit all dog owners. The AKC is a “club of clubs” not a club of individuals. The AKC and its nearly 5,000 affiliated clubs educate the general public and support canine causes through programs such as encouraging basic training for all dogs, promoting the proper care of your dog and supporting health research that benefits all dogs.
- The AKC web site – www.akc.org – features everything you want to know about dogs, including breed profiles, training tips, how to pick the right dog for you, breeder referral and much more.

Tips for Working with the Media

PRESS MATERIALS
- Always put press materials on club letterhead or create your own by using the “Header” function of MS Word.
- Keep it simple, no more than two pages. Use a consistent format from one release to the next.
- Make sure to include contact information. The voicemail and email you provide should be checked at least twice a day. Cell phone numbers are ideal as they allow a reporter direct and instant access to your club’s spokesperson or event organizer, increasing the likelihood of coverage.

PRESS RELATIONSHIPS
- Introduce the media to the people who make good stories. Don’t say “our club is great,” but rather “we have a club member who used Agility to overcome his battle with shyness” or “we have raised $5,000 for K-9 bulletproof vests,” etc.
- Send a variety of news items throughout the year, not just a big splashy release about your dog event. A small calendar listing about your regular training classes, your annual awards dinner (you can invite the local pet columnist to your dinner meetings, especially one with a speaker).
- Set a specific time and place to meet the reporter at your show and be prepared to make introductions and answer questions, yet be as flexible and understanding as you can when their schedule changes. Provide them with a copy of the event catalog, fact sheets about your club, or any other AKC material you deem appropriate.

TIMING
- The key to establishing good media relationships is your availability and responsiveness. Reporters may have tight deadlines, be reacting to breaking news, or be creating a story on a slow news day. The sooner you return their calls the higher the likelihood of your quote getting into a story or your event getting coverage.
- Once you build a reputation as a reliable source that can get them information quickly, they will call you more often. If you are not able to help the media person, please refer them to the AKC.
- For events, you should contact newspapers for “calendar listings” at least one month prior to the event by sending a media alert to the events or calendar editor. Consider including a photo from a past event.
- Even if you have previously pitched the story, a few days prior to the event send the media alert to assignment (TV) and city desk (newspapers and wire) editors. Keep in mind that even if you are expecting a reporter or news crew to show up, soft news like a dog event is always low priority. If a breaking news event such as a fire or robbery occurs, the coverage of your event may be canceled or postponed.
- Understand the varying needs of media. Television news broadcasts often air multiple times a day and work on a very short lead-time. Wire services and online outlets are constantly being updated. Daily newspapers have their front page stories being prepared right up until they go to print, while features (i.e., the home or lifestyle section) may be prepared well in advance.

FOLLOW-UP
- Often, in order for a press release to get from the editor’s desk into print or on-air, you have to call the editor to sell your story – this is called “follow-up.”
- Before going into detail about why you are calling, make sure you are speaking to the right person – someone who covers the area you live in and the topic you are pitching. If not, they can often refer you to whoever covers pets, events, lifestyles, sports, issues, etc.
• It's worth the extra work to try to find the right contact. The media get many emails and faxes every day so you need to research specific names and make sure you’re targeting the appropriate person. Address the alert to a specific reporter you have already made contact with or are expecting to attend your event. Call the publication if necessary to get the correct name (and spelling) of the editor, reporter, or producer.

• Once you have the right person on the phone, have a list of talking points in front of you, to help you highlight all the important facts. Be brief and to the point. Explain why the story should be of interest – “localize and humanize.” Follow-up is crucial to getting coverage, but there is a fine line between follow-up and being annoying. Be persuasive but not pushy. It may take several conversations with an outlet before they agree to send a reporter to cover your story.

• Don’t be afraid to call back after regular business hours – many daily TV and newspapers have 24-hour staff and are often less harried in the early evening hours. A great way to introduce yourself is to read/watch/listen to what a reporter covers and reference it. “Hi, this is Jane from the Canine Kennel Club – I just saw the story you did on the local shelter and thought since you are interested in pet or animal-related topics, I’d call you about this idea I have…”

• Remember that you can’t expect a reporter to always cover your story, and you may hear “not interested” a number of times until you get some publicity. However, each time you contact them, it reminds the reporter/assignment editor about all the positive activities your club is providing to the community. Don’t be discouraged!

• It’s best to select one or two people within your club to continually make contact with the media. Over time, they will begin to recognize you and eventually see you as a resource and spokesperson. They will think to call you whenever a dog-related story comes up.

• When seeking coverage for a dog show or other event, let them know that your club’s experts are available to speak with them about any dog-related subject. Send the reporter a “dog-related experience” biography on each of your club’s experts for future use. Reporters keep files about specific topics, which they refer to when they have a breaking story. Even though they may not want to cover the story you are pitching now, you may be called upon in the future.

AND finally, remember that reporters are people too! Don’t be intimidated or afraid to work with them. If you are honest with them and respect the fact that they are trying to do their job, you have a good chance of being treated fairly in return.

Creating a Dog Show Special Attraction or Stand-Alone Event

To generate as much media interest as possible for your dog show, add a media-worthy special attraction, such as an action-packed demonstration or unique presentation. Increase press coverage throughout the year by creating stand-alone special events to raise awareness of your club. Below are some ideas:

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS AT A DOG SHOW
• Try inviting local radio or television personalities (such as weathermen) to broadcast live from your show site.
• If your mayor or councilman owns a purebred dog, name him “Honorary Chairperson” of your event and invite him to present the Best of Breed trophy for his breed.
• Have a petition drive for signatures in support of/or against any legislation your club might be working on. If your dog club is a member of the state federation of dog clubs, invite federation representatives to the show and promote their appearance to the media.
• Invite local chapters of search and rescue and guide dog organizations. Ask them to put on a demonstration during the lunch break or before
Best in Show, or give them a donation and schedule a check presentation between the groups.

- Mark milestone anniversaries with commemorative trophies, posters or logos by local artists. Invite them to the show for signings and presentations.
- If celebrities do attend, see if they will agree to be quoted in your press materials. For instance, Jim Jones, WXYZ news anchor, said, “I am highly supportive of the (name of event). It benefits all dogs and makes our town a better place to live.”
- The media love pictures of kids and dogs so be sure to invite local Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and/or 4-H clubs to attend as special guests. You can also ask them to serve as assistants.
- Look to holidays and special months to tie into dog shows. For example, February is Pet Dental Health Month sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Invite a local vet to have a booth at your show.
- Also, use non-pet holidays. For example, October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Invite a local American Cancer Society chapter, donate vendor space for its booth, invite top people and have them put out a press release touting the community outreach at your show.
- If you offer puppy or bred-by exhibitors groups at your show, pitch it to the media as a special competition such as the “puppy extravaganza” or “breeders showcase” for photo opportunities.
- Sponsor a fun class for entrants, like Halloween costumes, or best-dressed Santa dog.
- Offer show tours, AKC Canine Good Citizen® tests, or Meet the Breeds events.

**STAND-ALONE EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

Having events or continuing activities outside the club’s annual dog show demonstrates your club’s value to the community. Distribute plenty of flyers in local stores to publicize the events as well as sending press releases and media alerts to the media. Below are some ideas:

- Create a “K-9 Law Day” and donate a bulletproof vest to an area K-9 police officer.
- Schedule canine demonstrations, such as agility, obedience or field, at local fairs or parades and/or set up tables and offer information to potential dog buyers.
- Contact town officials and ask if your club and dogs can participate in local parades such as Labor Day, Christmas, etc.
- Create a “Bring Your Dog to Lunch Day” at your workplace.
- Host a “Photo with Santa Day” for pets in your local area.
- Utilize a public park or library front lawn for an AKC CGC test or Meet the Breeds.
- Plan therapy dog visits to local hospitals, veteran homes, and elderly housing.
- Send a representative to teach kids (schools, camps, and clubs) about becoming involved in...
the sport.
- Raise money and donate trash cans, benches, pooper-scooper dispensers, etc. for a local dog run (have your club’s name and web site printed on the items).
- Ask your local city official to issue a proclamation recognizing your program and ask him to declare the day of your event “Responsible Dog Ownership Day” or “Canine Good Citizen Day.”

Beyond the Shows – A Story for Any Season

The best way to make friends in the media is to offer them a unique story idea, related to reporter’s beat, with a strong local tie. Below are some topics that might spur ideas about what to pitch.

VARIOUS IDEAS
- Is your club involved in rescue? Does it have a separate non-profit foundation for fundraising to highlight? How many dogs has your club placed or saved?
- Has a rescued or adopted shelter dog gone on to win obedience, agility or field titles?
- Do you have any outstanding junior handlers in your club?
- Does your club provide opportunities for community involvement such as obedience training classes, visiting hospitals and/or senior citizens with therapy dogs, or hold match shows or field trials?
- Has a local dog done something heroic? Can you honor that dog, or nominate it for an AKC Award for Canine Excellence (ACE)? For an ACE application visit: http://www.akc.org/pdfs/ace_2005.pdf
- What are your Public Education Coordinators doing? Hosting an assembly or running an art poster contest at a school?
- Has a member of your club been awarded a Community Achievement Award? If not, nominate them at: http://www.akc.org/pdfs/CAANominationForm.pdf
- Has your club donated gifts or time to local community groups, such as the public library?

AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day

The AKC celebrates Responsible Dog Ownership Day each year on September 17.

- Anytime during the month of September, clubs and organizations are encouraged to hold local events to emphasize the importance of responsible dog ownership.
- AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day offers clubs the opportunity to gain publicity, legislative visibility, and community contacts by holding events, which may include CGC tests, obedience/agility demonstrations, rescue booths, Meet the Breeds, etc.
- To join the growing number of clubs participating in this fun and educational event, go to: http://www.akc.org/clubs/rdod/index.cfm

PARTICIPANTS ENJOY AKC RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP DAY AT THE NEW YORK CITY EVENT.

PITCHING CLUB’S RESPONSE TO A NATURAL DISASTER

Writing letters to local media and holding a fundraiser for donations to the AKC/CAR Canine Support and Relief Fund are great ways to alert your community about the importance of helping the canine victims of natural disasters.

What You Can Do:

- Write a pitch letter about the importance of including the family pet in disaster planning and why an evacuation kit just for your pet is important.
- Offer a club spokesperson and press kits to the media. Press kits should include: fact sheets about AKC, your club’s history, AKC/CAR, event press releases, disaster planning check list and your spokesperson’s biography.
- Templates for press releases, media alerts, letters and evacuation checklists are available for club use at http://www.akc.org/clubs/samples
Handling Sticky Subjects

We are lucky to be able to deal with a topic like dogs – a subject most people love and can relate to. However, there are times when even fun topics can get touchy, especially with issues such as local legislation or dog bites. It’s important that you not avoid the media contacts you have made in the past when they call you to discuss such a topic, but, before you talk to them make sure you have all the facts. Turn a negative into a positive and use this as an opportunity to get updated on what’s going on with the issue by visiting www.akc.org or calling us. Then take the opportunity to present our viewpoint and demonstrate that the AKC and its clubs are leading the way when it comes to addressing the problem. For instance, dog bite stories offer a segue for you to discuss what your club has been doing in the community – have you offered AKC Canine Good Citizen® or other obedience classes? Presented the AKC Safety Program for children in the community?

Beyond Media Relations

PSA – Another way to get coverage for a cause or event in the media is through the use of a public service announcement (PSA). The PSA is similar to an advertisement in a newspaper or TV commercial only it features a cause or community event sponsored by a non-profit organization and is published or aired free of charge.

TV: We also have TV PSAs. If you have contacts at your local stations and they agree to air them, you can request copies from us. If you prefer to create your own PSA, check with your local cable or public access station to see if they can help you produce a video for a nominal cost. In most cases, it’s expensive to create a TV spot so it may be more cost-effective to see if you can get an agreement for airtime and use one of AKC’s PSAs customized with your club’s name. You can view our print and TV PSAs at:
http://www.akc.org/press_center/advertising.cfm

PRINT: The AKC has numerous PSAs on various topics available for your use. Or, you can create your own by first contacting your local paper’s Advertising Director and determining how they would like to receive it (size, format, etc.) and finding someone with design experience to help you create it.

EDITORIAL BOARD MEETING – Some daily and weekly newspapers hold editorial board meetings. As a non-profit organization, your club can pitch “an opinion” to the editorial editor or staff. If your presentation interests them in your cause, the paper may write an editorial in support. Responsible dog ownership is a promising angle to pitch, especially if there has been recent news in the community about breed-specific legislation, dog bites or cases of animal cruelty.

ADVERTISING - Unlike publicity, advertising is a paid form of communicating a message. It appears in the same forms of media, but paying for it gives you complete control over the content and when it appears. It is meant to be persuasive, informative, and designed to influence purchasing behavior or thought patterns. Television and radio ads are typically run during breaks in regular programming. Print advertising falls into two main categories:

CLASSIFIED: This type of advertising is found in the paid classified section of the newspaper. Many clubs utilize this section to list information on their breeder referral program within

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRINT PSA.

AKC’S TV PSA “PROMISE” PRODUCED IN 2005 FOCUSES ON TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO BE SAFE AROUND DOGS.
the area where pets are advertised for sale. Simply buying enough space to include a simple message such as “Contact a responsible breeder” and your club’s website or show date and location can be effective. It is also a good place to advertise your obedience and training classes.

- **DISPLAY**: An advertisement that runs alongside editorial content in a newspaper or magazine. This space usually contains photographs and/or graphics and is purchased as one-eighth to one-half to a full-page ad. It can be designed professionally in a camera-ready format ready to submit to the newspaper.

While expensive, advertising can be very effective if you have a targeted goal and message. You can try to minimize costs based on your non-profit status and/or in exchange for services. Can you make the newspaper and official sponsor of your event, give them a booth space, hand out hundreds of copies of the paper, provide a list of your vendors or exhibitors who might want to place ads? Consider how you can help them and see what they are willing to give in return.

**ONLINE RESOURCES PAGE**

From the AKC web site **Club Communications** pages:

  
  To order this binder or read it online.

- [http://www.akc.org/clubs/communications.cfm](http://www.akc.org/clubs/communications.cfm)
  
  To sign up for AKCommunicates! the e-newsletter for the latest in public relations tips and news from the AKC Communications Department.

- [http://www.akc.org/clubs/rdod/index.cfm](http://www.akc.org/clubs/rdod/index.cfm)
  
  For more information on AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day – September 17.

  
  For sample AKC TV and print advertisements and PSAs.

From the [Press Center](http://www.akc.org/press_center/index.cfm) for media inquires:

  
  A place to send the media (or educate yourself further) go here where you can access “facts and stats” pages, AKC news, archived press releases and spokesperson biographies.

- [http://www.akc.org/press_center/communications_dept.cfm](http://www.akc.org/press_center/communications_dept.cfm)
  
  To contact the AKC Communications Department Staff either with questions, needing help getting started or where to send journalists for further quotes.

For other **Story Ideas** for clubs to pitch or for journalists:

- [http://www.akc.org/canine_legislation/index.cfm](http://www.akc.org/canine_legislation/index.cfm)
  
  For more information on Canine Legislation.

  
  For legislative alerts by state.

  
  For information on Public Education Coordinators, Canine Ambassadors, Community Achievement Awards and other education resources.
Angle: Also known as slant, peg or hook. It relates to the point of view from which a release or news story is written, to interest a particular audience.

Assignment Editor: Person who routes information and assigns the appropriate editor or reporter who to cover the story. This title is most often used in television media.

Beat: A particular topic or area of expertise covered by a reporter in the media.

Editorial: The news, feature or informational content of a publication or broadcast decided on by editors (versus paid advertising content that anyone can buy).

Exclusive: A piece of news sent to a newspaper or other media, along with the privilege of using it first.

Hard News: Term used to describe a news story that is heavy in subject matter, such as "breaking news" when a dangerous criminal escapes from prison.

Long-Lead: Refers to media outlets with long-lead deadlines to prepare content – often monthly magazines, such as Redbook or Parenting, which work on stories up to six months in advance.

Media Alert: A brief one-page summary of your event, serving as a reminder to reporters and assignment editors. Send a media alert if you want newspapers or TV stations to come to your event and/or to include the information in a calendar listing.

Media Outlet: Any organization that disseminates news and other information to the public such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations, wire services and web sites. The various outlets are often just referred to as the media.

Pitch: An oral or written solicitation by a public relations person on behalf of a story idea, event, or organization.

Pitch Letter: A one-page letter that outlines a story idea and why it's relevant to the media outlet's audience. This less formal way to seek coverage is ideal for timeless topics such as a feature or soft-news story.

Press Release: An explanation of your event or announcement, no more than two pages in length. It provides a reporter with important facts and contact information. This is the most common form of communication to the media.

Public Service Announcement (PSA): Short broadcast message or display ad offering a distinct public service to consumers. PSA are sent to television stations and newspapers and used, when time permits, at no charge to the organization providing the spots or ads.

Short-Lead: Refers to media with a quick turn around time from learning of a story to reporting on it such as television news programs and daily newspapers. Add the news Internet sites, and lead-time becomes increasingly shorter or even non-existent.

Soft News: A story that is lighter in subject matter such as a human interest story about a lost dog being reunited with its owner.

Talking Points: Facts or short sentences that sum up an organization's position. Used often by a spokesperson in accenting a mission statement or highlighting an issue.

Wire Service: A news and information gathering media outlet that sells stories to other media outlets for publication, such as newspapers or web sites. The Associated Press is the largest and most well known wire service.