



You can get your campaign message across to a lot of people through publicity in the media.

How to Start

Use the media to make everyone aware of your campaign issues and the problems you want to fix.

You can also use it as a way of getting people interested in your cause and to put pressure on the people who make important decisions for the government.

Remember, by targeting your own community, the media can highlight your issues to the very people who might then become your supporters and members.

On a national scale, a media appearance can give your campaign extra credibility and bring your concerns to the attention of people with similar campaigns in other parts of the country.

Remember, all journalists work to deadlines and these vary according to the media type, so if you want to get coverage in a particular place, make sure you know about their publication and its rules for submission.

WHICH MEDIA?

There are many different types of media which you need to know about if you want to succeed.

This is because your particular message might come across better on different types of media, like newspaper or radio.

Learn to use them all to get the best results:

Newspapers

- These range from local editions with just a few hundred readers to the national dailies which are read by millions
- Make sure the paper is aimed at the people you want to target
- Check to see how previous stories similar to yours were treated – this will tell you if you need to be cautious about what you say

Television

- News and current affairs programmes on television can attract audiences of millions
- Local news programmes also have a lot of viewers
- Television news is particularly attracted to visual stories. Don't be afraid to organise events which are interesting to look at because there'll be more chance that your story will be run

Magazines

- Many specialist and trade magazines might have small circulations but their readers will be more passionate about specific issues
- They are usually able to print larger feature stories about particular issues

Online

- Many news organisations have their own websites
- The bigger sites can have up to a million readers every day, and often reach an international audience
- Dedicated journalists work for this medium in much the same way as on newspapers – find out who they are and use them

Radio

- There is a huge range of news coverage on local and national radio
- If you have a good speaker working on your campaign with a knack for catchy phrases then get them to talk for you
- Radio debates are also a great way to get exposure



KNOW YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

Make sure to build a strong relationship with the media in your area if you want to get your voice heard by the right people.

Make a list of every newspaper, magazine, local radio and TV programme in your area.

Then do a bit of research to find out how interested they might be in your particular issues.

It's best to keep all this information together in a folder marked "media profiles" which will also need to cover:

- Name of publication or programme
- Name of news editor
- Deadline for news stories
- How they treated previous issues similar to yours
- Names of reporters or producers who might be interested in your campaign

Once you've found out the best reporters, producers or editors, try meeting up with them to explain what your group is about.

Make sure to bring along details of any events you've planned which they might be interested in covering.

This is also a great chance to see what they're interested in so you can tailor your campaign to get you more media coverage.

You might even be able to convince your local newspaper or radio station to adopt your campaign.

If they do this then you could see regular news stories run on your campaign.

Remember, use the system and don't be afraid to speak up for what you believe in.



THE NATIONAL MEDIA

Sometimes, just having your campaign featured in the local press is enough to create national interest.

However, you need to be very careful about approaching the national media to make sure your issues remain the central basis of the news story.

National stories tend to be more sensational and it might be difficult to control the direction of the story.

You need to make sure that press releases leave no room for interpretation and if your story is featured that the issue you are campaigning for remains the point of focus and not you.

That said, a national campaign will almost certainly make the government look at your issues in a different light.

GETTING THE MEDIA INTERESTED

To get the right people interested, make sure you go to them with an interesting idea that they can use – this is known as the “angle”.

It is difficult to define a good news story but the best are usually new, unusual or topical.

Remember, the national media will usually only pick up a local story if they can see that it might be interesting to a national audience.

Figure out what you want to tell people, make it interesting, and if you're doing something of great importance then you've got the makings of a great story.

Here's some ways to get a news angle on your story:

- Publish a report
- Publicity stunt
- Hand over a petition
- Have a demonstration
- Hold a press conference
- Pass a milestone
- Get a celebrity interested



GETTING CELEBRITIES INTERESTED

The backing of a high profile celebrity can rapidly increase media interest in your campaign

Remember, somebody on your side or part of your group (if you're in one), might even know a contact number for a celebrity's agent.

Try and use whatever contacts you have to get talking to the people you want.



TALKING TO THE MEDIA

When you've decided which media you want to focus on and how to attract them, it's important that the whole group always gives the same message.

Here are some tips to follow:

- Keep your statements clear and concise
- Be calm and thoughtful – you don't want to come across in the wrong way
- Always have the relevant facts at hand when talking to a journalist
- Don't say anything that you'll be embarrassed about later
- Follow up faxes and e-mails with phone calls to make sure your information has landed on the right desk

If you are doing a television interview then don't panic:

- Find out if the interview is to be broadcast live or pre-recorded
- Try to get an idea in advance of the questions
- Find out if there will be any other guests
- Work out precisely what message you want to get across
- Think about how to communicate your message in the clearest and most interesting way
- Make sure you dress appropriately and wear neat clothes –TV can

often make casual clothes look crumpled and sloppy!

- Stay calm and speak clearly
- Prepare your interview at home to give you more confidence
- Don't be afraid to disagree but never lose your temper
- If you are unsure of an answer, pause and don't be afraid to seek clarification, or say if you are not in a position to answer a question.
- Try to have a glass of water nearby, or at least have a sip before you start the interview – it works wonders

ADVERTISING IN THE MEDIA

Careful consideration needs to be given to any advertising you choose to print in the Media.

Although this is a highly effective way of informing a large number of people about your cause, some campaigns will simply not be able to afford the high costs of advertising on mediums such as television or radio.

Using billboard is also a very good, cost effective way of getting your message out to people – this will require the use of a graphic artist to give your campaign a more professional look.

As a member of a local community group, you will find that flyers distributed around a local community are an excellent way of getting support. Flyers can also be created on most desktop computers – all it takes is someone who is familiar with computers and a bit of creative thought to get people interested.

