

Public Relations 101

Public relations is a strategy used to communicate with stakeholders through media, events, and other types of engagement. The work your team is doing in the community may be of interest to your local media as it relates to positive impacts and improvements.

Before you Contact the Media

- Contact your school's public affairs or communications team. Let them know you have a story you'd like to share. They can advise you and may even help with the outreach.
- Notify your Program Manager. They can share your story with the Marketing and Communications team, who can support you on any interview requests and align any activity they may be doing.

What makes a Good Story?

A good news story or media pitch is:

- **Time and relevance:** Make sure your news is current and timely. Is there a day of significance that you can tie your project to? For e.g. Win at Regionals and representing your school at Nationals. Or a UN Day of Significance that aligns with your project.
- **Local interest:** What is the impact to the community and surrounding area? Is the story unique, are there individuals who would speak about the project that have experienced positive results.
- **Human interest:** Appeal to an emotion, stories with good news, aligned with the news cycle, how the project is doing good in the community.
- **Prioritize the story, not the brand:** Try to keep to the facts, the story, the problem you are solving, before the brand or affiliation, for e.g. Enactus, partners etc. Feed those into your
- **Visuals:** Ensure there is a visual element to your story, media love a visual story to tell, especially for TV and print.

Develop a Media List

A media list is a list of journalists, writers, editors, or producers you plan to reach out to with your story or event invitation. A good local media list would have a mix of:

- Producer of local morning TV talk show or radio show
- Drive home radio show
- News editor at the local paper
- Photography editor at the local paper
- Your University or College radio or newspaper

If you are looking for the right contact, pick up the phone! Call the radio or TV station and ask who the best person is to contact about your project.

Reminder: Reach out to your school's communications team to let them know you are doing media outreach. They appreciate the heads-up, as they may be handling sensitive issues with media, and they may also have the bandwidth to help you out.

Media Outreach

Your first step in outreach is to share your news via email; this is called a media pitch. You don't need anything formal like a press release, just a simple introduction by email, and tell them why you are reaching out—the Who, What, When, Where, Why.

Tips on connecting with media:

- Make it easy for them. Journalists are busy. Have an interview subject and visual content lined up. Working with your school's Public Affairs or Communications team can help here.
- Do your research. Has the journalist you are contacting written an article or conducted an interview that is aligned with your project? Mention that in your media pitch, e.g., "I recently read your article about the circular economy and wanted to share a project that I'm working on ..."
- Lead with facts, not a brand name. Try to keep the branding less of a priority, lead with the facts, and follow up with the affiliation.
- Localize the story. Show alignment with the community. For example: "With the employment rate for newcomers being low in the region, our project is helping to support entry into the job market through..."
- End with a clear call to action. Always end your pitch with an action—for example, invite them to see your project in action, an interview, or set-up a call.
- Tell them you will follow-up in a few days.

Timing is Everything

Most media typically work on tight deadlines. If you are inviting media to an event, it's best to give at least three to four weeks notice. They are constantly juggling deadlines and the news cycle so, giving them advance notice is a great way to build relationships.

If you are sending a media pitch or following up, typically the morning is the best time to reach media. A TV morning show producer will be in story meetings following the show usually around 10 am – so 8:45 – 9:30 am would be a good time to call.

Communications Materials

- **Key messages:** The main messages about your project serve as talking points. You should have three to five key messages. You will find the Enactus Canada key messages tagged in the folder.
- **Boilerplate:** This is a standard 'About' your team; it should be 3-5 sentences. This is included at the end of a Media Advisory or Press release.
- **Project backgrounder:** This is typically a one-page document about your project and impact, e.g., an Impact Challenge report. Should have a bit about the team and Enactus.
- **Media advisory:** A formal invite to an event, never more than one page. This is formatted with a short intro and the 5Ws (Who, What, When, Where, and Why). You should list if there are special guests or speakers, if you have interviews lined up, and what there will be visually for cameras (TV/photographers). This must include contact information – Name, email, and phone number.
- **Press Release:** Some media may ask for this, but it is a lesser-used communications document, as most media like to interview individuals as opposed to using a quote. Only create a press release if you have bigger news to share; this should be led by the school's communications team. A press release consists of:
 - An intro—this is the so what? What problem are you solving? What is the point?
 - Quote from someone aligned with the project or story; could be a Faculty Advisor or community partner.
 - A paragraph that goes into greater detail about your topic
 - Potentially another quote
 - Boilerplate
 - Contact info