



Communications Capacity-Building Program



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Making News Between the Headlines: How to **Get Press When** There's No Breaking Story

April 2025 | Jennifer Joyner Senior PR Account Executive, mhp.si



What We'll Cover Today

Finding Your Narrative

The Art of the Pitch

Editorial Calendar Strategies

Thought Leadership & Positioning

Creating Publicity-Worthy Moments



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Jennifer Joyner is a senior public relations account executive with mhp.si. She has worked on national award-winning PR projects and specializes in assisting clients across diverse industries to reach their communication objectives and elevate their public image. Prior to agency work, Jennifer honed her skills in nonprofit event management and journalism, including at the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal. She earned her bachelor's degree in print journalism and French from the University of Arkansas.



Why Earned Media Still Matters





Credibility: Third-party validation builds public trust and adds weight to your message



Visibility: Helps inform and engage donors, volunteers, and community stakeholders



Cost-effective: Earned media is free and has a longer shelf life than ads



Engagement: Stories told by others are more likely to be shared and remembered

You may not have a headline every day, but your work still matters — and often, it's newsworthy.



Press Releases Are Still Key Tools



Milestones like donations, leadership changes, or new programs are great—but don't stop there.

Keep the momentum going with smaller wins and community impact stories.

Press releases are still a valuable tool when paired with strategy and timing.

Pro Tip: To succeed, think like a journalist: What would make **their** audience care?

Story Mining: Finding Your Narrative



Story Mining: Finding Your Narrative

Impact Story: A client or community member whose life changed through your work—before/after narratives work well here

Leadership Journey: Why your executive director or founder got into this work, and what keeps them going

Volunteer Spotlight: Highlight long-time volunteers or new voices who represent your mission in action





Story Mining: Finding Your Narrative

Challenge + Response: Show how your team tackled a barrier—pivoted, innovated, or stretched resources in a crisis

Everyday Wins: Celebrate staff promotions, board member additions, or a "by-the-numbers" impact milestone

Pro Tip: Commissioning a small study or survey can generate original data that supports a story—and journalists love data-backed pitches. It doesn't have to be expensive, and it positions you as a thought leader.



Community Engagement & Publicity-Worthy Moments

Sometimes the best media moments are the ones you create. Plan with intention and give outlets a reason to show up.



Ideas to engage your community and attract coverage:

- Partner with schools, faith communities, or local businesses on collaborative events
- Host or co-host: roundtables, volunteer drives, donation campaigns, or awareness walks
- Build in visuals: large checks, ribbon cuttings, murals, or moments of impact that make for great photos or b-roll

PR Outreach:
Engaging
Journalists &
Influencers

Strong press relationships aren't built overnight—but they start with thoughtful, consistent engagement.



PR Outreach: Build Relationships



- Identify journalists who cover nonprofit, community, or human interest beats
- Follow and engage with their work: comment, share, or thank them when relevant
- Stay helpful, not pushy—poor timing or overly aggressive follow-ups can damage credibility



The Art of the Pitch

- Tie your story to a community need, innovation, or individual impact
- Personalize your outreach: reference recent coverage or topics of interest
- Include the essentials: quote, visual, and a clear angle
- Ask yourself: "Would their audience care?"
- Reference editorial calendars from local media to pitch timely, relevant stories

Earned media is powerful-but a **small**, smart investment in paid media can help reinforce your message or fill gaps in coverage.



Targeted Paid Segments



Focus on **sponsored content or advertorials**—paid articles or segments that tell your story in an editorial-style format

Explore **TV** or radio community features with nonprofit rates or bundled promotion opportunities

Prioritize placements where the **audience overlaps** with your goals—potential donors, volunteers, or policymakers



Cost Guidelines:

Local newspaper or digital advertorials: ~\$300-\$1,500

Community radio/TV segments: ~\$500-\$2,000 (often includes production)

Social media boosts: scalable—start with \$100-\$250/test

Pro Tip: Always ask about nonprofit discounts or added-value opportunities, and make sure any spend aligns with your broader PR strategy.

Strategizing & Positioning



Editorial Calendar Strategies



Stay ahead of the news cycle by aligning your outreach with what the media is already planning to cover.

- Identify seasonal hooks, awareness months, and relevant community events
 - (e.g. Back to School, Mental Health Month, Giving Tuesday)
- Offer timely insights, commentary, or success stories that tie into those larger moments
- Pitch 4–6 weeks in advance—especially for print outlets and long-lead magazines
- Build a shared editorial calendar across your team to track opportunities, deadlines, and story alignment



Thought Leadership & Positioning



- Pitch op-eds or guest columns tied to timely issues or trends
- Monitor the news cycle and look for opportunities to offer timely insight on stories already in the headlines
- Offer expert commentary to local outlets or niche publications



Thought Leadership & Positioning



- Elevate your EDs, board members, and program leads as go-to voices in your space
- Use platforms like LinkedIn to share perspectives and build thought leadership
- Say yes to panels, Q&As, or media interviews— even for smaller audiences, it adds up

Best Practices



Crafting Press Releases & Media Pitches

- Send releases at least 2 weeks ahead of events or major announcements
- Keep them clear and concise: Who, What, When, Where, Why
- Include a strong quote from leadership, a partner, or someone directly impacted
- Highlight a hook that makes your story newsworthy:
 - A unique or first-time partnership
 - A solution to a pressing local issue
 - A major milestone or impact update
- Include supporting materials: photos, bios, fact sheets, or a short video when relevant



Building & Managing Media Lists

- Identify reporters who regularly cover nonprofit issues, education, health, or human interest stories
- Track outreach and follow-ups in a spreadsheet or media database
- Keep notes on preferences, deadlines, & beats to tailor your outreach
- Follow up no more than 1-2x—respect for their time goes a long way
- Offer relevant support: data, visuals, or timely access to spokespeople



Don't Forget to Share!



- Post across your owned channels: website, blog, email, and social media
 - Celebrate coverage by tagging outlets and reporters—it shows appreciation and extends reach
- Repurpose content: summarize or link to coverage in a blog post or newsletter (drives traffic and avoids copyright issues)

Pro Tip: Use high-quality visuals when sharing copy-heavy press coverage, images of your people and programs create stronger engagement and are more likely to be shared

Recap



Stay in the Conversation

You don't need a major announcement to stay relevant in the media. By **showing up consistently** with **strong, timely stories** and a **clear sense of purpose**, you can **build lasting visibility.**



Key takeaways

- Craft smart, timely pitches
- Use editorial calendars to guide your outreach
- Position your team as subject matter experts
- Create moments the media wants to cover
- Maintain communication with journalists
- Build respectful relationships with journalists



Key NWA Media Contacts

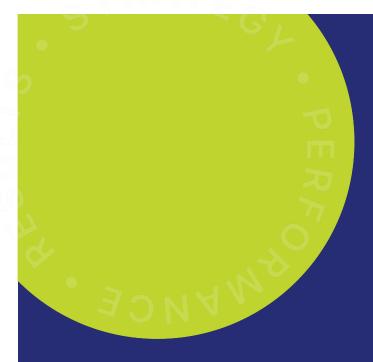
- Broadcast (TV & Radio)
 - KNWA News/Fox 24 <u>news@knwa.com</u>
 - 4029 News/KHBS <u>news@4029tv.com</u>
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- Online
 - Axios NW Arkansas <u>news@axios.com</u>
 - Fayetteville Flyer <u>contact@fayettevilleflyer.com</u>
 - NWA Daily <u>crew@northwestarkansasdaily.com</u>



Free Tools

- [FREE DOWNLOAD] Nonprofit Earned
 Media Plan Template
- <u>Free Press Release Templates and Examples PR Newswire</u>
- Media Monitoring:
 - Google Alerts
 - <u>F5Bot</u> Monitor reddit to follow issues the community is talking bout.
 - <u>Talkwalker Alerts</u> Strictly X.
- Nonprofit Earned and Paid Media Impressions Tracking Templates

Q&A



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