



LETTING THE MEDIA KNOW YOUR GOOD NEWS

Sending press releases to your local newspaper and radio stations is a good way to raise the visibility and public awareness of your club and its activities.

But how can you guarantee that what you send will end up in the press or on TV or radio?

Well nothing's ever certain but you can definitely employ a few tricks of the trade to make your release more likely to catch the editor's eye.

Top 10 Tips

- 1) **Do your homework** – is there a particular writer on the paper who has in the past been sympathetic to sailing or has the sportsdesk got a designated sailing/watersports writer? Get their name and email address and send all correspondence to them directly.

- 2) **Make sure your press release focuses on the most newsworthy bit** – make the journalist's job as easy as you can for them by outlining the most newsworthy element in the opening paragraph.
 - If it's a club event report, what will people be talking about in the clubhouse afterwards? Not the controversial, negative stuff!
 - Has the youngest / oldest person in the fleet won?
 - Is there a first time winner?
 - Are there any family combinations that have done especially well?
 - Is it the first time the event was run or a big anniversary?
 - Was there a record entry?
 - If it's a good news story about something happening at your club, think about the 'human' angle of the story.
 - Who and how many people will be affected positively by what's happening?
 - What further opportunities does that create to people within the local community to get involved in sailing/watersports
 - Make sure you have ticked off the 'who, what, where, why, how and when' in your release.
 - Include a quote from someone involved in the story to bring it to life.

- 3) **Try not to let your press release exceed 500 words** – it's not always easy especially if it's what you're shouting about feels like a really big deal.
 - BUT remember it's always better to have *some* coverage than none at all because the release was too long, the journalist couldn't be bothered to wade through it and so just discarded it. If they want more details they can always get back to you.



- 4) **Always include a way that people can find out more** – got a website? Make sure you put the address in the release. No website? Include a phone number so that people can find out more about the club if they want to.
 - It's one thing crowing about your good news but always try to use that opportunity of publicity to also tell people how they can get involved at your club.

- 5) **Avoid jargon** – the uninitiated public think sailing is complicated enough as it is so using expressions like, gybe, luff and jib is only going to turn them off further. Make the human achievement/involvement the story, not the technical boat stuff. Keep it simple!

- 6) **Brand your club logo at the top of any press release** – making your release look more official gives it enhanced credibility while the journalists becomes more familiar with the club as they see the logo repeatedly appearing in their inbox.

- 7) **Attach good quality photographs with the release** – don't send anything less than a 500kb or more than 1mb sized photograph unless specifically requested.
 - **BUT if you are sending photographs of children (under 18s), ALWAYS make sure you have the written parental consent to distribute the photo to the media of every child featured in the photo.**
 - Some event entry forms feature a disclaimer that by entering the event you are granting permission for use of images to be used for publicity purposes but ALWAYS check the fine print if in doubt
 - Do not include any information about Under 18s other name, club, home town and/or age.
 - Make sure you name all people in the photo and their job titles where relevant

- 8) **Always follow up with a phone call** – a polite courtesy call just to check the journalist has received your email ok a couple of days after sending is never going to do any harm. Not only may it draw their attention to the release but you also have the opportunity to use that call to build a relationship with the journalist.

- 9) **Don't send press releases out about everything** – overkill can be almost as ineffective as not sending anything.
 - You don't want to become an annoyance so make sure when you do send something you've really got something that might genuinely be of interest to the general public and save the rest for your club newsletter.

- 10) **Remember when you are speaking to the media nothing is ever 'OFF THE RECORD'** - always work on the premise that anything you say to journalist may appear in print and if you don't want something printed tell them that bit was off the record.

A full official RYA PR Toolkit, outlining everything you could need about the best ways to maximise positive publicity for your club / centre /organisation can be obtained from Emma Slater in the RYA Communications team at emma.slater@rya.org.uk