

Getting the word out

Press releases

Press conferences

- **Why they are important**
- **How to do them—professionally**



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Getting the word out

Relating to the media to move the union message

Why is media outreach important?

Who is it we are trying to reach—and what message are we trying to communicate?

1. taxpayers / consumers
2. community as a whole
3. management
4. union members
5. politicians and elected officials
6. support organizations

What to communicate:

Who's who in your media market? Who do you know??

- Press
- Radio
- TV

How to do it:

- Designate someone to be in charge
 - someone who is an avid follower of local news
 - reads newspapers
 - not hesitant to call and visit reporters and editors
 - someone who will return calls, maintain credibility
 - be ready to have your union spokesperson available and prepared
 - this is an important role!
- You have to be the moving party—make things happen!
- What is "news"?
- Know the deadlines!
- Be visual in your event
- Press releases – always!

For the record...keep a record

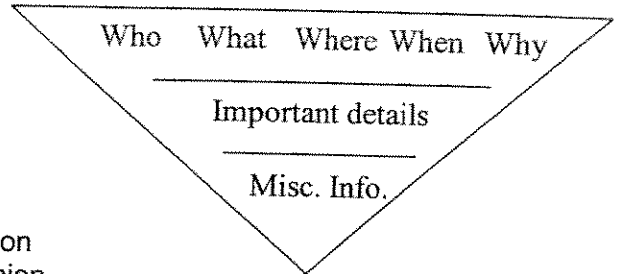
- Think of the history you are making. Do you have a clipping file?

Press releases—

- key part of any action step to move the message
- make it simple; follow the rules
- hand deliver it to all media within reach
- telephone and mail or e-mail to those you can't reach in person

Guidelines

1. Put release on your letterhead with "release date" at top.
2. Include name and telephone number of contact person (top or bottom)
3. Use a headline 10 words or less (not all caps)
4. Most important material in first paragraph (the "lead")
 - should answer the "five W's"
 - Who the person and organization
 - Where—the place
 - Why—the reason
 - What—the action or statement
 - When—the time
 - How—the manner
5. In third paragraph, use direct quote from union spokesperson. Quotations can express opinion.
6. Fourth or fifth paragraph, properly identify the labor organization
7. Close with the characters -30- or ### which are style conventions that let the reporter know they have reached the end of the story.



■ E-mail press releases

are usually shorter in length than their print counterparts. The majority of electronic news releases sent are 500 words of text organized into five, short two to three sentence paragraphs.

■ Daily Newspapers

Business and general assignment reporters working for newspapers and online dailies turn around stories within 24 and 48 hours. However, feature writers are working on stories weeks in advance of publication date. Press Releases about special events or with holiday tie-ins should be sent a minimum of three weeks in advance so the reporter has ample time to research and write the story.

Get out to every media outlet in your area—telephone—hand deliver—email. Remember that hand-delivery can show how important you think the story is and can help media gain acquaintance with a face behind the releases.

For Immediate Release
Contact:

Union Members and Community Service

[Speaker's Name and died on the job in 200]

[XX #] workers killed

Local factory workers, firefighters
[Second Speaker's Name and Title]
fight for safer jobs in [Community]

The event was part of Workers Fighting." Hundreds of events

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2001
re: Farmworkers and students to protest a Taco Bell
Contact: Lucas Benitez, Romeo Ramirez, Coalition of Immokalee Workers (941) 657-8311 Brian Payne, Student/Farmworker Alliance (941) 867-9127

FARMWORKERS, STUDENTS TAKE CAMPAIGN FOR LIVING WAGE TO TACO BELL; CALL FOR AN END TO "SWEATSHOPS IN THE FIELDS"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: [PROVIDE NAME AND ALL #S]
[City name here] Workers, Community and Elected Leaders to Spotlight [Local Employer's] Violation of U.N. Declaration on Workers' Rights
[City; date]—[Local employer] is violating its employees' basic rights as spelled out in a United Nations declaration, say workers, community and elected leaders and union activists in [city here]. The U.N.'s International Labor Organization (ILO) Declaration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New AFL-CIO Website, www.laidoffworkers.org, Provides Resources for Workers Victimized by Corrupt Corporate Practices

July 11, 2002

Corporate greed has left thousands of workers across the country without jobs, retirement security and health care. While corporate executives cook books and receive obscene salaries and perks, workers are getting pink slips and losing health insurance and retirement savings.

To help meet the needs of laid-off workers, the AFL-CIO today launched www.laidoffworkers.org —a new website that provides resources for surviving unemployment, meeting working family challenges, learning what went wrong and protecting retirement security.

At least 17,000 WorldCom workers have joined the ranks of other corporate workers struggling to find new jobs and benefits following the collapse of their companies as a result of corporate greed.

Workers can visit www.laidoffworkers.org and learn how to develop a financial action plan, access information about unemployment insurance and benefits and learn about their rights under federal law. The website also provides information on coping with working family challenges such as college costs, caring for elders, buying health insurance and saving for retirement.

"Workers should not have to suffer because of unchecked greed in corporate America," said John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO. "This new website will give workers the information they need to survive sudden layoffs in this emerging cycle of corporate mismanagement."

The website, www.laidoffworkers.org, provides workers with the tools they will need to get active in the push to demand corporate accountability. Workers can also become active participants in lobbying members of Congress to support meaningful pension reform legislation and other measures that address the needs of working families.

The website includes a link to a 10-step plan from the AFL-CIO for employers facing structural change as they initiate mass layoffs. The guidelines are intended to help laid-off workers gain fair treatment, severance payments and basic rights.

The AFL-CIO, which represents 13 million working men and women in the United States, successfully spearheaded a campaign in the federal bankruptcy court that resulted in additional severance payments of more than \$30 million to former Enron workers.

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Contact: Suzanne Folkes 202-637-5279

News conferences—

HOW TO STAGE A PRESS CONFERENCE: 10 BASIC STEPS¹

1. Compile a list of all the media contacts you can find. Types of media to cover: Newspapers, radio, television.
2. Fax out invitations and follow these up with personal calls.
3. Ask the media personnel you invite what location works best for them.
4. Ask them which is the best press day, and what is the best time of day for getting a good turnout at your press conference. They will help you succeed.
5. Select one or more spokespersons to speak at the conference. Finding experienced people will pay off.
6. Prepare a text for a speaker or speakers to present to the media.
7. Give Copies of the same text to each media person who attends. Always have extras.
8. During the presentation, seek the media's attention with a clever appeal to their news instincts.
9. Have your spokesperson(s) ready to speak to media personnel after the press conference. Media personnel will always want personal interviews on camera or on tape after the main presentation, so do not rush off: take advantage of the opportunities while they are there.
9. Do not let yourself feel intimidated about talking to the media. Your message is important.
10. Make allies. Talk to media personnel and determine if any are basically sympathetic to your cause. Exchange business cards. Some will be more willing to help than others.

1. On the day(s) before the event:²

Check to be sure there is no debilitating competition on the same date; if there is, you may want to.

Make follow-up calls and visits. Keep notes. Don't be afraid to send faxes a second time.

- When calling Television stations: ask for the Assignment Editor.
- When calling Radio stations: Ask for the Newsroom.
- Ask if they received the press release announcing the event? • If no, what is their fax number? Fax it, Attn: (the person you spoke to).
- When phoning, have a 20-second summary of the event prepared to read.
- When making personal visits, make it fun, don't be intimidated, relax, be yourself.
- Bring a press packet with you.

¹ <http://www.endthewar.org/pressconf.htm>

² <http://www.endthewar.org/Downloads/Media%20Checklist.pdf>

2. Press Packet Contents:

Press Release: Note: You *must* be sure someone will answer the phone you give as your contact phone number for the day of the event, *before, during* and *after* the event. (Reporters may call for directions/details at the last minute. Calls after the event will be important if a reporter needs anything clarified for their story.)

☉If you don't have a cell phone, can you borrow one?

Bios: Give names, affiliations and a brief background statement on each speaker.

Transcripts: Request from each speaker a transcript of their testimony, or a brief synopsis.

Fact Sheet: Be sure the points on the fact sheet will support the statements of your speakers.

Sponsoring Organization Background Info:

☉For single sponsor events, provide a copy of your brochure.

☉For coalition sponsored events, list each coalition and provide contact info. If possible, add a brief statement explaining the work each group does.

Photos: If possible, include 1-3 enlarged (8" x 10" photos).

3. Volunteer Personnel Needed at Day of Event:

_____ Set up and Clean up Crew: responsible for sound, lighting, tables & chairs, clean-up.

_____ Moderator: to introduce the event, the speaker(s), monitor the time and field questions.

_____ Speakers' Assistant: to help speaker(s) with last minute details, and to know

_____ Media "Welcomer": To greet media who attend and:

☉hand out press packets.

☉gather contact information of media personnel, for future use.

☉Introduce media personnel to the speakers, before and after the event, or in a designated, quiet place.

Camera Crew: To take photos and video for media who don't attend.

Refreshments volunteers: Responsible for arranging for and serving refreshments.

☉If you are serving refreshments, mention it on your press release. This may encourage reporters to attend your event over another event.

4. Follow-up:

Write-up: Write a short article or a synopsis of the event in press release form. Give an overview of the main points raised at your press conference or event. Include photos.

Call Reporters who did not attend: Offer to provide a copy of your write-up, either the same day or the next day. Weekly papers are more likely to include such articles, if pertinent to their readers.

☉Offer to hand-deliver your article with photos.

Monitor Media Coverage: Ask volunteers who watch/listen to TV/radio stations to see if the event was covered on the day of, or in the days that follow. Ask for taped copies, if possible, for use at your next meeting to evaluate the coverage you received.