



Publicity Tools

presented by Brenda Rooney

This list is NOT exhaustive. Each of the following tools has strengths and weaknesses when applied to different scenarios. Some tools are more useful in small communities, schools or other organizations and others will reach across the country.

New and innovative partnerships can be created if you look at your community and the resources it has. Working with partners and sponsors helps to save money and can extend your outreach, especially when email lists and other resources are brought to the table. For example a TV broadcaster or newspaper as a media sponsor can offer valuable advertising. Other organizations may provide access to thousands of members through piggybacking on existing distribution methods.

Posters – Announcing events, posters can be printed, emailed, large and small. They carry what, when, where, and how much. Somewhere they did a study and found that you have 2 seconds to capture the viewers' attention.

Flyers – Small versions of posters, they can also be inserted in carrybags, in displays and on counters where they may be picked up. They can carry more information than posters. You can print them four to a page and save on the costs.

Internet – you can use networking groups or access other groups through their email list; many communities now have Email lists for community events; individuals also have large lists and can use them to do outreach with flyers, letters and other information. This is a very effective medium.

Websites – Websites can be effective tools for the exchange of ideas, for marketing, for outreach. They require regular up-keep. Links can be emailed, imbedded in the prose or offered in other website listings. Check out www.thegrannies.org as an example.

Community Calendar Announcement - A brief description (who, what, when, where, and perhaps why) of a community need or activity, included in a radio or television "community calendar". Before sending it to the radio station make sure you read it out loud and time it. It should not be more than 60 seconds long and should be easy to read as most announcers will not have the opportunity to practice.

Event Listing - A brief description (who, what, when, where, and perhaps why) of a community event, need, etc., listed free in a special section of the newspaper and magazines. There are often deadlines you must meet to be included.

Donated Ad - Advertising time or space donated by the medium or someone else, including a regular advertiser in that medium, a corporate sponsor, or community business. A donated ad, paid for by several sponsors, may include a box at the bottom identifying the business donors.



Feature - A story that gives detailed information on an issue, a trend, a situation, an industry, a company or organization, or a person. A feature often focuses on the human element. It is designed to enlighten, entertain, and/or educate readers. Ideas for features can be pitched to various media.

Guest Editorial - An analysis of or commentary on news events or public concerns, written by someone whose credibility is based on his/her knowledge of a particular subject and/or position in an organization.

Letter to the Editor - A letter written for and sent to a newspaper or magazine to present an organization's position, make a correction or respond to another story or letter.

Press Release - A press release can be distributed on paper, on disk, by email, by a PR newswire or posted on a website. A Press release has a flag with the word(s) For Immediate Release in large type near the top of the "page." The Press Release announces information about an event you hope the media will cover. It should be concise. May contain quotes from those involved.

Promotional "prop" or symbol - Inexpensive but interesting and relevant items sent with "soft" publicity materials to attract media attention and, perhaps, serve as a props for the visual media, particularly television.

Publicity Photographs - Photographs taken for publicity purposes and submitted, with a cutline, to the print media. Photos may be accompanied by a news release, fact sheet or other publicity material.

Public Service Announcement (PSA) - A broadcast announcement, for which no charge is made, that promotes the programs, activities or services of a federal, provincial, or municipal governments, non-profit organizations, or another groups serving community interests. Information for PSAs can be prepared in point form, as a script, or pre-recorded on tape. All are submitted to the PSA director. Some broadcasters will also accept PSAs in video form.

Signage - Large signs which draw the attention of passersby, sandwich boards and displays are very useful for building a presence in a community or environment. They are re-usable. Can be made by painting on fabric.