



NINA MASON PULLIAM
CHARITABLE TRUST

Building a Legacy of Community
Grantmaking since 1998

Media Panel

The Power of Storytelling
Nov. 13, 2019

Panelists



Kathy Tulumello
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Publisher
Frontdoors Media



Al Macias
News Director
KJZZ/KBACH



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Political Editor
KNXV-TV ABC 15



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Executive Producer
KPNX-TV 12 News



Kim Covington
Senior Director
Arizona Community Foundation

Panelist's insight

- We look for stories that identify with the audience and/or make a difference in their lives.
- People crave a wealth of different types of information. They want the latest sports scores, information on the newest craft breweries, a quick heartwarming story, an update on crime in their area, a deep look at important issues like water or child welfare or charter schools.
- Major news outlets provide stories at the top of the news funnel, but draw people into deeper reporting. It's all about striking a balance so that the audience comes back for more.
- All media solicit feedback from listeners/readers/viewers/users and use it to create better content and understand what information their audience desires.

Media Tips



Six ways to make a story powerful

1. **Simplicity**

- Don't try to convey too many messages at once.

2. **Emotion**

- Good stories will evoke emotion: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness or surprise.

3. **Humanity**

- Show vulnerability; what makes us human?

4. **Passion**

- Don't be afraid to convey the passion that drives you as the storyteller or your story subjects.

5. **Truth**

- Seek the truth; spread the truth.

6. **Relevance**

- Identify the universal truth; what one thing will everyone relate to in the story?

Media tips

- **TARGETED**

- Research who the best reporter/editor/producer is for the story you want to tell. Email that person directly versus sending the same pitch to numerous people within an organization or to the general assignment desk.
- Email is the most efficient and effective way to reach out initially.
- Direct your email to the right person (make sure you get the name and organization correct). Establish a relationship with those contacts. Call them, take them to coffee. Help them put a face to your email address. Find out their needs so you can also be a resource for them.

Media tips

- **TARGETED (cont.)**

- Most media do not have reporters who focus solely on the nonprofit sector so think broadly when you pitch a story. Is there an angle that makes sense for the:
 - business reporter
 - entertainment team
 - dining critic
 - community sections
- Know the scope of the media you are pitching. If you're doing a puppy adoption event, pitch it to the morning TV shows since it's very visual. Not a good fit for radio.
- Exclusivity to one media outlet can be more effective than blanketing everyone, especially if you have a relationship with a certain individual.

Media tips

- **PRESS CONFERENCES**

- With very few exceptions, press conferences are less effective than personal stories. However, if you need to address a crisis, hold a press conference so all receive a consistent message.

- **FOLLOW UP**

- Be sure to follow a pitch with a phone call to ensure receipt and reinforce the news value of your pitch.

- **RESTRAINT**

- On the flip side, don't follow up too aggressively. If you've made your pitch and placed a follow-up call, then your message has likely been received. Media receive hordes of pitches daily; it's sometimes impossible to reply to every declined story idea. If they're interested in the story, they'll get back with you. Be patient.

Media tips

- **TIMING**

- In general, the more lead time, the better. Editors and producers can include your event in their planning calendars, then you can follow up as it draws near. Note: Long-lead publications, such as print magazines, should be pitched four to six months in advance.
- Be aware of what's going on that day/week. For example: If there is a huge news story happening, the chance of your press release being seen is not good.
- Holidays are slow news days. If you've got a good story, pitch it ahead of time to get coverage on the holiday. Keep in mind it doesn't have to be holiday related.

Media tips

- **RESPONSIVE**

- “I’ll get back to you by the end of the day” is no longer a suitable response to a media inquiry. Stories go live online within minutes or hours of breaking news. Be prepared to respond not just promptly, but immediately to a media call.

- **PEOPLE**

- The media wants to report on people, not programs. Help reporters tell the story of the people who will be helped; the program details will follow.

Media tips

- **VISUAL**

- Identify strong images to help tell your story. Let television producers know the visuals and action they can capture; choose interview locations with visuals in mind. Find out whether the news outlet you're working with accepts provided photos and video or prefers to shoot its own.
 - **Frontdoors Media:** It makes things much easier for us if you send a few photos. We encourage nonprofits to hire photographers for events. Make sure your photographer's contract indicates that your organization owns the image.
 - **KJZZ:** Even though we're radio, we're multimedia, so photos are helpful. Be sure to include the source (i.e.,: Courtesy of St. Joseph the Worker).
 - **TV:** We often want to control the message and don't want spin. We may accept agency videos, but we need permission. We don't like it to look like it's staged.

Media tips

- **EMOTION**

- “Just the facts” press releases are a thing of the past. Yes, press releases should still be fact-driven and free of hyperbole, but they should be infused with the emotional component of the story you’re telling.

- **PARTNERSHIPS**

- Think about partnering with other nonprofits, it increases the newsworthiness.

Media tips

- **NEWSPAPER SPECIFIC**

- As an alternative to press releases consider submitting “My Turn” columns. These first-person accounts submitted by readers are moving and topical. They are published in the editorial section and are approximately 600 words.
- If an article about your agency is behind a pay wall, editors at The Republic can provide PDFs of print and digital articles that are published for subscribers only and can grant permission for nonprofits to share them, so don't hesitate to ask. The reporter can connect you to an editor for help.