

PR & Media Relations Essentials: *Quick Reference Guide*

Public Relations vs. Media Relations

Public Relations (PR) builds and manages relationships and reputation with all stakeholders. This includes employees, the community, your customers, and your donors, to name a few.

Media Relations is a subset of Public Relations focused on working with journalists and media outlets to gain coverage.

Key Difference: Public Relations shapes your reputation; Media Relations shares your story.

The Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a short, persuasive summary of who you are, what your organization does, and why it matters — delivered naturally in 30–60 seconds.

Tips for a strong elevator speech:

- Concise – clear and jargon-free.
- Compelling – focus on impact and value.
- Conversational – sounds natural, not rehearsed.

Practice: Write or share your current elevator speech — what's memorable about it?

The Press Release

A press release is a structured, credible way to share organizational news. It builds trust with the media and ensures accurate coverage.

Elements of a Strong Release:

- Headline – clear, active, and newsworthy.
- Lead Paragraph – who, what, when, where, why.
- Quote or Detail – adds authenticity and emotion.
- Boilerplate – short paragraph about your organization.
- Media Contact – name, title, phone, and email.

Practice: Draft a brief headline and lead paragraph for a recent or upcoming event.



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Dealing with Negative PR

Even strong organizations face criticism or crises. How you respond shapes public trust more than what happened.

Guidelines:

- Respond quickly, but thoughtfully.
- Acknowledge concerns and show empathy.
- Be transparent and share steps to resolve issues.
- Keep messaging consistent across the team.
- Use the moment to highlight your values and credibility.

Scenario Example: A social media post criticizes your event as exclusionary. How do you respond in 24 hours? What message do you share publicly and internally?

How A.I. Can Help Small Organizations with PR & Media Relations

A.I. tools can serve as a communications assistant — helping small teams manage PR tasks faster and smarter.

Ways A.I. Can Help:

- Content creation – draft press releases and pitches in minutes.
- Media monitoring – track online mentions and sentiment.
- Audience insights – identify what messages resonate most.
- Pitch personalization – tailor outreach to journalists efficiently.

Note: A.I. cannot and should not replace your organization's voice, but it can amplify it. Use it for efficiency but remember to keep human judgment and empathy at the core of your messaging.

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