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Planning for a Press Event

When I began working in advertising, I was somewhat lost as to how to plan for a press event. Sometimes, I had to learn the hard way just exactly what to expect and how to properly prepare. There's a lot that goes into the whole process and planning is just a small portion of it. However, the more detailed and precise you are in your planning, the smoother things will go.

One great source for finding detailed information on planning for press events is through PICA (Publications in Construction and Agriculture), which is a bureau of AEM (Association of Equipment Manufacturers). I would like to share some of the tips they offer in regards to planning for a press event...

Notification. Editors expect to know about a press event at least one month in advance. For events that are not related to trade shows, 4-6 weeks is an acceptable amount of time.

While editors do their best to cover events that have short notice, the number who can participate will always be greater with more advance notice.

Warning. For the most part, editors want as much information as possible from you about the press event. One piece of information that is particularly valued is that of attire or dress code. Editors value specific information on what the dress code is. Is it business casual? If so, how casual? Will there be a black tie event of any kind? They need to know this information.

Other things editors value are detailed schedules, hotel information, and a brief synopsis of the event.

Press Kits. The majority of editors coming to the press conference prefer to receive the press kit as soon as they arrive at the hotel or event. Others prefer to receive it just before the opening business session or before leaving the event.



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Harold Wallace

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When & Where. If held in conjunction with a trade show, most editors prefer to attend a press conference in a room near the trade show's press room. They also prefer holding the press conference before show hours.

Holding a press conference during show hours has been known to cause problems such as noise and distractions from the show traffic. Also, holding press conferences in another city the night before a trade show opens is not the best idea.

The best days to schedule trade show press conferences are during the first few days of the actual trade show. This way, editors don't have to stay for the entire run.

Value. Editors value press representatives who respond to their requests for information and deliver what they say they'll deliver.

Follow-Up. Some PR agencies follow up the mailing of subsequent news releases to the press with phone calls to the editors asking if they received the release and when it might run. Most editors do not favor this practice. This mainly creates tension and forces the editor to invest time in messages and callbacks, or to be unaccommodating.

However, follow-up emails are a good way to make sure the information was delivered to interested magazines. The follow-up e-mail can simply ask editors to use their reply button and indicate "yes" or "no" as to whether or not they received the e-mailing--it's much less intrusive than a phone call and protects both parties from a missed communication.

**If you have any questions or need advice, feel free to send us your questions.
Comments are also welcome!**

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