

Tips for Dealing with the Media for National Massage Therapy Awareness Week



AMT's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week

September 8-15, 2014

Getting press coverage is a great way to raise the profile of your event. In the lead up to AMT's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week (Sep 8-15), we encourage our regional branches to get in contact with their local media to help spread the word. Here are some practical tips to keep in mind when dealing with the media:

1. Is my story newsworthy?

For your story to be newsworthy, it must be of interest to the audience so you'll need to know who your audience are. Journalists want something that will catch the attention of their readers. The better you understand how the journalist thinks, the more likely you will deliver the copy that they are looking for.

Keep this in mind when designing your NMTAW event. Try to find an angle that could create good publicity – Is there a human or local interest angle? Is there a personal story that might be of interest? Will your event affect specific groups of people or professions? Will it affect a large group of people?

The media love true stories that have a bit of a dramatic edge - overcoming adversity or battling the odds.

The media also love statistics - so try to find a few good (true) statistics that they can use in their report to grab attention.

2. Designate a media liaison person

If possible avoid using more than one or two media spokespeople - it lessens the chance of contradictions or an ambiguous message.

3. The 'angle' of the story

Have a clear idea of what message you wish to convey. Journalists are under pressure to deliver a lot of material quickly. They get frustrated by people who go into endless irrelevant detail rather than getting on with it. Give them the bottom line point as soon as possible. When talking to media about your event, it is a good idea to have no more than three points and stick with them. Otherwise they may just lose interest and go elsewhere.

4. The press release

- Send only one page with nothing on the rear.
- Put the words 'media release' at the top of the page in bold letters.
- Make sure that your release addresses the basic questions - What? Who? When? Where? How? Why? Include the answers to three of these questions in your first paragraph.
- Use the inverted pyramid approach - put the most interesting information first.
- Include a number of short simple quotes with the spokesperson and title stated (for example, 'Ms Jane Smith, Director of the ACE Community Centre, said that...').



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- Keep the paragraphs short - one or two sentences at most and have a line space between each.
- If announcing an event ensure the location is clearly stated, as well as the time and date.
- Think images, images, images! Attach a photo or describe a great photo opportunity.
- If there are any special parking arrangements or details such as media passes required, state this.
- Clearly state contact details, including the association's name, address, email address, fax and phone numbers.
- Ensure the contact details include after hours numbers and if possible a mobile - make sure that your contact person knows that they are the contact and check that they will be available to take media calls.
- If you don't want the details of the press release to be published until a certain date, you can include 'Embargoed until xx/xx/xx' at the top of the page. Journalists will almost always respect this, as long as the embargo is reasonable.

Alternatively, if you don't want to write your own press release, you can use our AMT NMTAW sample press release: <http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/NMTAW2014/NMTAW-Sample-Press-Release.pdf>

5. Initial contact

Once you are confident that your press release is ready:

- Find out the names of the media organisation's Chief of Staff, reporters who would cover the issue and also the producers and presenters of any programs which may be interested in the topic.
- Get their phone and fax numbers, and/or email addresses.
- Send out the release and follow up with phone calls to ensure the release arrived and gauge what interest there is in the story.

6. The interview

The bottom line is to be prepared! Problems most often occur when people just respond to the journalist's questions, rather than thinking clearly about what they want to get across. So, if you are approached by a journalist, always find out what they are looking for, and say you're busy at the moment but will call back shortly. Use the time to really think about what you want to get across and what would be of interest to their particular readership or audience.

When talking to reporters from all mediums remember that only a fraction of what you say will be used, so:

- Have the main points clear in your mind and speak in short sentences. Capture the essence of what you want to say in the first one or two sentences of your response and add details later.
- Go armed with a number of short anecdotes, which the listener can readily identify with - use concrete examples.
- Be prepared for journalists to contact you outside hours. Reporters' deadlines do not necessarily fit in with 'normal' work hours.
- Keep it simple. Most journalists are looking for clear, simple quotes that can be understood by a wide audience. Use the vernacular, not technical language — in other words, think about how you would explain it to a friend or family member.

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- Be ready to explain the issue carefully and patiently. While reporters, particularly specialist reporters, may have a good knowledge of the background, do not assume this. Respect the fact that they know a good story and are interested in what you do. If you can, offer to send the information to them.
- Make sure you know what question you are answering. Sometimes the question itself can suggest appropriate ways to focus or phrase an answer.

7. Media consent

Make sure you have the consent of your clients before involving the media. Download a copy of our media consent form here: <http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/NMTAW2014/NMTAW-Photo-And-Media-Consent-Form.pdf>

8. Where to go for more help

We are here to help. For more advice/information, contact Kat Boehringer at journal@amt.org.au