

Media Advocacy

for Alcohol Policy Change

Conference Call Mini-Training
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- **MEDIA ADVOCACY:**

Strategic use of the media to advance a social or public policy change.

– From *News for a Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working With the Media*, Wallack et al, Sage Publications, 1999



**“Raising awareness is not enough.
...What do you want them to do
about it?”**

From News for A Change



Target Audiences:

1st--Media outlets: reporters, news editors,
editorial board members

2nd--Decision-makers: talk to them indirectly via
media channels

3rd--The general public

**Handout: Is media advocacy is the right strategy for
meeting your goals?**

http://www.marininstitute.org/action_packs/media_advocacy_q.htm



Media Advocacy

How does it fit?

- **Think long-term:**
Ongoing campaign, not one-shot events.
- **Be strategic:**
Not media for its own sake--they won't cover it.



Media Advocacy

Framing your call to action:

- Individual → • Environmental
- Personal Change → • Societal Change
- Private responsibility → • Public responsibility
- Education → • Policy
& Programs



Media Advocacy

Look for opportunity:

- Be a news consumer.
- Keep track of your issue.
- Who is saying what?
- Who is covering your issue?
- How can we piggyback on what is already being covered?



Media Advocacy

Become a resource, not a pest

- 1x1 relationships are key
- Offer yourself as an expert resource
- Give them news they can use
- Take their call, follow-up, call back, be timely
- Give feedback. Praise in public, critique in private.

Before you know it, when news happens, you will be the one they call for comment!



Media Advocacy

Prepare, prepare, prepare:

1. Rehearse your sound bites!

Handout: Common Traps to Avoid

2. Don't fall prey to traps.

Handout: Interview Tips

3. Prepare your spokespeople.



Media Advocacy

Become known:

- **Attend Editorial Board meetings.** Open to the public, because they want to hear from you.
- **Bring handouts** and your biz card when you meet with editors or reporters.
- **Develop relationships**, face-to-face, with editors and reporters.
- **Take advantage of low-news seasons**, e.g. summer to build relationships.



Media Advocacy

Tools:

- **Opinion Pages:** This is what they read first!
 - Letters to the Editor: 250 words
 - Op-Eds: ~700 words
 - Editorials: Get the publication to take a position on your issue.
 - Syndicated Columns: Columnists can be powerful advocates for your issue!
 - On-line postings: Make sure your key points are included in this virtual public debate.

Handouts: Samples



Media Advocacy

Tricks:

- **Make your own news.**
Host a press conference, vigil, summit, or walk.
[Handout: Sample Media Advisory](#)
- **Youth & public figures attract cameras.**
- **Prepare your spokespeople.**
They're the ones that will end up in the 15-second sound bite, not you!



Media Advocacy

Become the go-to:

- **Use any opportunity to educate the media.**

Even if you don't end up on TV or quoted in the article, reporters need to understand the issue in order to frame it properly.

- **Provide packets**

Fact sheets, data, past news, etc. are great a reporter's future reference file!



Media Advocacy

Beyond top stories and headlines:

- **Radio:** Get on morning commute shows.
- **Public access:** Be a guest star on talk shows;
Tape your public forums for re-broadcast;
Create your own show.
- **Internet:** Make a website dedicated to the policy initiative.



Media Advocacy

Free How-to Guides:

Marin Institute Action Pack:

http://www.marininstitute.org/action_packs/media_advocacy.htm

<http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/EnvironStrat/mediaadvocacyprimer.pdf>

IPS Guide:

http://www.publicstrategies.org/pdfs/step_series_access.pdf

APHA Guide:

http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/A5A9C4ED-1C0C-4D0C-A56C-C33DEC7F5A49/0/Media_Advocacy_Manual.pdf

