

# 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:

1<sup>st</sup>--Media outlets: reporters, news editors,  
editorial board members

2<sup>nd</sup>--Decision-makers: talk to them indirectly via  
media channels

3<sup>rd</sup>--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](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.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](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](http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/A5A9C4ED-1C0C-4D0C-A56C-C33DEC7F5A49/0/Media_Advocacy_Manual.pdf)

