

ActionAid Press Guide: How to get great publicity

Taking on a challenge but not sure how to shout about it? Get in touch with the media. It may sound daunting, but it's actually one of the easiest and cheapest ways to let people know what you're up to in aid of ActionAid. Local and regional media are always interested in following up stories about local people – especially when they're taking part in an event for a good cause. This coverage generates good publicity for your fundraising activity and helps raise awareness of ActionAid's work.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

Grab the attention of editors by making your news-story engaging. Make sure your story is:

- **CURRENT:** Is your activity taking place right now?
- **RELEVANT:** Talk to your LOCAL paper to keep it relevant. Can you link it to events that are currently in the news or media?
- **STRONG HUMAN INTEREST ANGLE:** Make the story unique or unusual or include emotion.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PRESS AND MEDIA

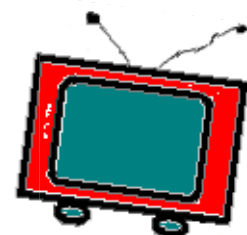
Most local newspapers and magazines print their contact details; otherwise, Google the name of your local papers/magazines. Local papers also have reporters – try and get in touch with them directly and then send them a PRESS RELEASE.

PRINT

Phone up your local paper or radio station and ask to speak to the newsdesk. Explain who you are, what you are doing and why. They are likely to want to see something in writing so you'll need to write a press release (download our template online). The quirkier and more unusual your fundraising event the more likely you are to receive coverage. Don't forget the date, contact and event details, and include a photo! In a couple of days phone them again. Local papers get hundreds of stories a day and need to be chased! Do persevere – if they are not interested they will say, so keep asking until you get a definite no!

RADIO/TV

Approaching these types of media can be very difficult, so get in touch with our media team for some tips and advice on representing ActionAid.



WEBSITES

Most media outlets also have their own websites so it's worth asking whether you can also get some coverage on their website when you originally pitch your story. Don't forget that there are plenty of websites covering news that are independent from print publications, which are keen for stories too!

TOP TIP: It's always best to email copy and pictures. Local weekly papers need the release two weeks before your event while daily regional papers and radio stations need a maximum of one week's notice.

CONTACT YOUR WORK, ORGANISATION, CLUB OR GROUP

Most professional organisations are keen to feature something different showing what their members are doing. So, if for example, you work in the health or education service there are plenty of different publications that could feature your fundraising activity. Or, tell colleagues about what you're doing and encourage them to donate. Clubs and organisations usually produce a newsletter. A story about one of its members raising money for a charity makes for an interesting story.

TOP TIPS!



- Place your press release in the body of the email and not as an attachment. This way the journalist can quickly read through the release. In the subject line write Press release: *followed by the headline*.
 - Make sure that you get a second pair of eyes to look over the draft. This is more effective if it is someone not closely involved in the issue.
 - Local papers, whether print or online version, like to run a picture with the story. Make sure to attach a picture of yourself; preferably an action picture of you getting stuck in and creative.
- Write clearly so that everyone can understand you. Be brief and concise - don't use 10 words when five will suffice.
- Use simple, straightforward language, not jargon or 'development speak.'
- Choose the active voice and use descriptive, muscular verbs. Avoid 'is', 'was', 'has', 'be'.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation and avoid abbreviations and slang.

TOP TIP: If you don't get any pre-event coverage then it's worth taking a picture at the event and sending it in to your local media outlets afterwards too. Having an image makes it far more likely that your event will be featured, and will serve as a great way of saying thank you to everyone involved too!

Tell us about it!!

Please let the ActionAid media office know who you contact.
For any further help or advice please feel free to get in touch with our media team on:
020 3122 0572 or at therese.bjorn@actionaid.org.

Thank you for your support!