

MEDIA MANIA I - Getting the Word Out Through the Press

There is probably no other communication medium more anxious to help us spread the word than the press.

Newspapers all have allotted time space/time slots dedicated to worthy public service causes, and quitting smoking is one of the best causes around. They will welcome your material and I can assure you, they will run it! Below are some suggestions to help you get started Let's get the word out!

Newspapers keep a "Community Calendar" running all the time. Be SURE to put meeting information in all your local papers.

Contacting the Press

- Your local newspapers will be listed in your telephone directory. Many newspapers also have a public affairs editor. You can always contact the editor and they will direct you to the public affairs editor. They will accept your material either by fax, e-mail, mail, or over the telephone. Something in writing is best in order to ensure there will be no errors regarding meeting time, location, etc.
- Some larger newspapers have a Features department. From time to time they might want to do a story about your group, which is great, as long as full names or full-face photos are not used. Stories like this are very good around the Great American Smoke-Out time and generate a lot of interest. The editor or reporter will contact you and you can set up a mutually agreeable time to meet. They might even ask to come to a meeting to observe. If your group conscience agrees, it is a great way to introduce them to the program. I have even known press members who have quit smoking from coming to meetings in order to learn about us while writing an article!

Press Release

- The official Nicotine Anonymous Press Release, from which you can quote, is available right on the Nicotine Anonymous Web site under Outreach. It is awesome! Be sure to use Conference-approved literature or this official release when writing your material to be sure we comply with the Traditions. And remember to include your name and telephone number in case the editor wants to contact you with questions or to do follow-up.

Deadlines

- Always ask about deadlines when submitting material to the newspapers. Some weekly publications may have a deadline of ten days prior to publication. Daily newspapers may only require a couple of days. Be sure to time any submittal you do according to the paper's deadlines, especially when doing stories for events like the Great American Smoke-Out or large local gatherings where the public is invited. You will find, in general, that newspapers tend to print all of this material very close to the event. You might have to work with the editor to encourage him/her to move your story up in order to give people enough time to plan their attendance.

Recap

So, to recap, here's a step-by-step process you can follow to make sure your group will end up in print!

- Find your local newspaper(s) in the telephone directory
- Place a call to the paper and personally contact the editor. If possible contact the public affairs editor as well.
- Ask about printing deadlines to assure your material gets there in time to go to press.
- Fax, mail, or e-mail the material to the paper. Be sure to include your name and phone number.
- Follow up with a phone call to be sure it got there and to be available for any questions.
- Invite a callback from them should they have questions or want to do any follow-up.
- Watch your meeting attendance grow!

Good Luck!

Get your feet wet and GO FOR IT! Share your experience, strength and hope! If you have any further questions or need some help email me at: Outreach-MassMedia@nicotine-anonymous.org

In love and service, Jan S.,
Mass Media Outreach Project Leader

MEDIA MANIA II - Getting the Word Out Through Radio and TV

Just as the press is anxious to help us spread the word about our fellowship so are your local radio and TV stations.

This is the second in our series of “how toe’s” to help you contact the media. Radio and television stations will be oh, so happy to hear from you! Here are the steps you can take to make sure news about your group goes out over the airwaves and lands on the local TV screens:

- Local radio and television stations are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact each one for the name of the Program Director. Larger stations also have a Public Affairs Director. All stations have Public Affairs air time that they are anxious to give to worthy causes at no charge!
- The Program director or Public Affairs Director will tell you if there are any guidelines you should follow.
- Radio commercials are generally 10 seconds, 30 seconds, or 60 seconds long. They are referred to as “spots.” Below are two public service spots from the New York Nicotine Anonymous Web site that can be used. We are also producing 30 and 60 second commercial spots on CD that can be sent to your local stations. We will let you know when they are finished, or as they say in radio talk, “pressed.”
- If you write your own spot, be certain to lift words from our already Conference Approved Literature.

30-Second Public Service Announcement (00:30)

Nicotine anonymous, a twelve-step fellowship of men and women helping each other to live free of nicotine, meets regularly in *[location of meeting]*. There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for Nicotine Anonymous membership is the desire to be free of nicotine. For further information about the program and meetings near you, please call *[phone number]*.

60-Second Public Service Announcement (00:60)

Nicotine Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery from nicotine addiction based on the same principles and traditions as Alcoholics Anonymous. The only requirement for Nicotine Anonymous membership is the desire to be free of this powerful drug. There are no dues or fees for membership as the program is self-supporting through member contributions. Meetings are held *[time and location]*. For further information, please call *[phone number]*. You can learn more by visiting the Nicotine Anonymous Web site at www.nicotine-anonymous.org.

- Contact the Program Director of television stations for guidelines. For instance, many Cable TV stations will do a running spot along the bottom of the screen and might limit you to the amount of words and even letters you can use. They will let you know.
- Most TV stations want camera-ready artwork or graphics if you want a visual spot with more than just printed words on the screen. Our Nicotine Anonymous logo is a great place to start. Be creative here: use both visual graphics and words. Go for it!

- If you decide to produce a videotaped spot, remember the anonymity guidelines and do not show full face shots. The New York Intergroup produced a video and it was super.
- Just as newspapers have deadlines, so do radio and TV stations. The Program/Public Affairs Director will let you know how far in advance you need to send in your material before it will be aired. Most stations act very quickly to get things on the air, especially when the material is camera-ready or pre-recorded.
- When you send in material to the station, be sure to follow up with a call to see that it has been received and if there is anything else you can provide.
- You need to know how LONG the station will run your spot. Most stations will tell you this up front when you inquire about placing a spot; some run the spots for a month, some longer. Should any of your material change, follow the same deadline time frame as you did for the original submission. With e-mails and faxes it is much, much easier to get the information out to the stations in a timely fashion.

Smile!

Hey—Smile! Now that you're in the newspapers and on radio and TV, you can really watch your meetings grow! If you have any further questions or need some help, just e-mail me at Outreach-MediaMania@nicotine-anonymous.org

In love and service, Jan S.,

Mass Media Outreach Project Leader