

Road Safety Advocacy Toolkit

DEVELOPING A MEDIA CONTACTS REGISTRY



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Acknowledgement

↘ DEVELOPING A MEDIA CONTACTS REGISTRY was developed in partnership with the Global Health Advocacy Incubator at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

GRSP acknowledges the financial contributions from Bloomberg Philanthropies and for making the preparation and publication of this manual possible.





Developing a Media Contacts Registry

Why is it important?

A well constructed list of media contacts is one of your most important tools in gaining media coverage. Even if you have a great story, without a registry of journalists interested in telling it, that story won't reach your target audience.

An up-to-date media contacts registry takes some resources to assemble, but it will save you time in the long run by ensuring that when you are ready to engage with the media you'll know which journalists to contact and how to interest them in your issue. Putting the work in early to create this list will allow you to know immediately where to pitch your story when you're ready to engage the media in your campaign.

For groups working in a partnership or coalition, maintaining a media contact registry is especially useful because it provides access to the range of media relationships held by all the organizations involved. The media contact registry will identify which organization is the primary contact for each journalist, editor or media outlet. This can help the organizations present a united message to the media and ensure consistency in the 'pitch' to journalists. It also provides opportunities for each of those organizations to continue to foster strong relationships with the media and know that other coalition groups will not endanger these relationships.

Finally, having a well maintained media contacts registry at your fingertips can help you save time in the midst of a busy campaign. It also helps you create an institutional memory that is less affected by staff turnover, so if a media staff leaves your organization they do not take those contacts with them; they are kept within the organization. As a result, when new staff members come on board, they will immediately know who to contact and what their interest is in the issue.

What needs to be done?

Developing your media contacts registry isn't difficult or expensive, but it does require some planning. Ideally, your list should be based on the media mapping exercise you've already completed. If you've completed this mapping, you'll already have a comprehensive list of media channels, based on the newspapers, radio and television stations, and online publications that your target audiences access most

often. If you have limited resources then knowing which specific journalists to reach out to will ensure you maximize your media advocacy impact.

Once you have compiled a list of channels, you can begin to identify the individuals who might be interested in your issue. It's helpful to identify both journalists and editors, as editors will often decide that a story is a priority and then assign a particular journalist to cover it. You can identify journalists a number of ways. These include:

- Monitoring the media to identify which journalists are covering stories and issues similar to yours
- Observing which journalists attend press conferences and events on similar issues. If you see journalists at an event, introducing yourself to them is a great way to create a personal connection and gather contact information for your registry
- Contact the media outlet directly and ask which editor and journalists cover your issue. An area of coverage - like sports, health or traffic - is often called a "beat." However, journalists often branch out into other areas as well

If you're working with a coalition, you'll want to identify whether any of the organizations involved already has an existing relationship with a journalist or editor. That information should be included in the registry so that organization makes the "pitch" when you're ready to seek coverage for your story.

HELPFUL HINTS: Knowing a journalist or editor's level of interest and awareness about your issue - whether positive or negative - can help you gain coverage. For instance, if a journalist has previously covered road safety stories that affect children, then you should indicate this in the registry. Similarly if a journalist or newspaper has taken a strong negative position on the new road safety law you are supporting, then you need to consider whether it is worth taking the time to engage them. Knowing a reporter's interests can also help you find the right "angle" for your story. For example, if a reporter is interested in economic issues, your pitch might focus on the effect of road crashes on GDP. Similarly, if your registry tells you that a journalist is interested in human interest - or personal - stories, you can lead with the story of an individual impacted by a road crash.



Tool 2

STEPS TO CREATING YOUR MEDIA CONTACTS REGISTRY

Once you've identified the right individuals, you'll want to compile your registry. Use an Excel spreadsheet or a database format that allows you to sort columns and create multiple fields for data and notes. The format shown below is one example of how to construct your media contact registry. Please see P5 for full template to use in your media advocacy work.

Media House	Journalist	Title	Contact Details	Digital Handles	Perferred Method of Contact	Preferred time of contact	Notes (stance on issue)	Key contact person

Be sure to correctly spell the name of the journalist. If you are striving to gain earned media coverage, don't give the journalist an excuse to not cover your story!

Email and phone number

Description still needed

Include notes on their previous coverage of your issue, and any important links to past stories (for those that can be found online).

This field is most critical for advocacy partnerships and notes any organization in the existing relationship to the journalist.

Include information on the individual's Twitter and Facebook handles, as well as the handles or account names of their publication

Note whether the individual is a journalist, editor, or other role

Include information on times journalists are required to file stories

Include the name of the publication, media channel or media house

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