

# Why is the Media Important?

## ***It gets your message across to a wider audience***

The various forms of media – primarily television, newspapers and radio – spread and disseminate information. Getting your information into the media will spread your group's story further than it could be spread without media coverage.

## ***It can help you target your message to the people you want to hear it***

The media is so varied that a community group or organization can closely target almost any sector – and through them, almost any section of the public - by looking closely at where it is directing its media focus.

For example – a small, locally-based community group would probably look at concentrating on its efforts in local newspapers, radio and (if applicable) television. A bigger event or bigger community organization could look further afield – to major daily newspapers and commercial radio and television. Don't forget about the internet- especially social media- which is another avenue for an organization to explore.

## ***It provides free publicity and exposure for not only your news, announcement, event or request – but for your group or organization as well***

A big benefit when it comes to news media coverage is that it is free – a factor of major importance when it comes to community groups or organizations with tight budgets! Not only does your event or news receive free publicity or new coverage, your group is bound to receive a boost through this coverage as well. It is important to remember that while your group won't have to pay for this coverage, it will have to work for it in other ways – building relationships with the media, preparing information and releases for them, being willing to speak to them or be interviewed by them, etc. Without putting in this type of work, your group will not reap the benefits of "free" media coverage.

## ***It can help establish your group as "legitimate" and its activities as important or notable***

Gaining coverage in the media is a great way of providing your group and its activities with greater credibility and that has a lot to do with the thought processes of the public which monitor and "consume" the media each day. Readers, listeners and viewers who find out about something or read/hear/see something in the media automatically place a greater level of credibility to it than if they saw it in a paid ad. The attitude of most media consumers is: if the story is gets into the pages of the newspaper, on the air or on TV, then it is "important" and worth taking notice of. So, if your story is among those that make the grade, then it is "important" enough to be on the news and therefore worth taking notice of.

## ***It can increase your profile among the general public***

Media coverage can build your profile in the community, which means may be able to attract more members, donors, fundraisers, supporters, helpers, etc. Not only this, but a raised profile through media exposure will also shore-up and strengthen the support you already have among existing members, donors, supporters, helpers, etc. It also builds brand definition for you – setting your group apart from other groups operating in the same space.

## ***It increases your profile among decision makers and VIPs***

Having a media profile not only gets you noticed by the general public, but also among decision makers, VIPs and government. Those decision makers and VIPs can be peak bodies in your area of interest, grant makers and philanthropic organizations and others with influence or power. Those in government that could notice you can be at a local, State or Federal level – or a combination of all three. Because of this, those decision makers or levels of government could become more likely to ask for your group's input or opinion on matters relevant to you.

## ***It can sway opinions***

One of the most significant powers the media has is that of being able to shape opinions. For your community group or organization, this presents great opportunities to get more people thinking positively about you after hearing positive news coverage of your group and what it is doing. Because of this, your group should actively seek out positive publicity through positive media coverage. However, your group should also remember that any positive opinions generated from positive media coverage can be blunted or reversed by negative opinions generated through negative media coverage.