

## Media Communications Guidelines

Before you approach the local media, you should develop a media kit. Ideas to do this are outlined below:

### Developing a Media Kit

Your law firm is never too small to have a media kit. This handy kit contains everything a reporter or a representative of the local media needs to write a bang-up story about you and the services you provide. A Media Kit will not cost a fortune if you put it together yourself. Don't forget, you must get information into the media's hands in a proper format.

### Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Choose a pocket folder to hold all your information. If you have a folder already, you're in luck. If not, you can purchase pocket folders of almost any color at any office supply store. You should also consider developing a firm brochure. In this brochure, outline your experience and the experience of your support staff that may become involved with clients. Also, explain the area(s) of law in which you specialize. And finally, ensure that clear contact information is prominently displayed in the brochure.
- **STEP 2:** Write short, one-page bios of each of your employees and professionals, and print them on a laser or inkjet printer on firm letterhead. Be sure to include the employee's title, history with the firm, quotable statements, basic personal information, theories or ideas about your firm and a picture, if possible.
- **STEP 3:** Include your firm's newsletter, if you have one. If you don't have one, consider creating one. They can be done inexpensively on a laser printer. Just include some basic clip art and photos, articles and other points of interest of importance to your clients and potential clients (e.g., home buyers).
- **STEP 4:** Assemble all of the media kit information in a logical order. Typically, start with the bios on top, followed by your company information sheets, newsletter, and any press releases or recent clippings near the back of the packet.
- **STEP 5:** Top it all off with an informative letter that briefly explains what's inside and offers to provide additional information. If there are business card slits in your pocket folder, include your card there. If not, paper clip your business card to your letter.

- **STEP 6:** Find some way to identify your media kit. If you're using your firm brochure, your company name and logo will already appear on it. Otherwise, choose a pocket folder with a window in the front panel so that your firm letterhead will be immediately visible.

## Tips

- Include small promotional items, such as a personalized paper clip, a pen or a magnet, if you have them. These items often make it to the reporter's desk, and therefore, they keep your firm name right in front of them.
- Include only the most interesting details in your bios. For example, if you or your senior partner is the fourth generation to run the firm or if the grandfather of your senior partner manager was a member of parliament, this is noteworthy information.
- Keep your press kits on hand at the office, at community events you may attend, or at new home buyer events you may hold. Make sure your information is readily available to every news outlet you encounter.
- Don't cheap out. If the linen pocket folder looks the best, but costs a dollar more than the obviously cheaper version, go for it anyway. Remember, first impressions are important.
- Always be friendly and courteous when dealing with members of the media. You want them to like you and appreciate how good or important your information is. Otherwise they won't publish it.
- Don't go into too much detail, as you will lose the reader/audience. You are trying to promote yourself and your services. Let the pre-established releases and literature you wish to publish speak for themselves.

## Get to Know the Media

Now that you have a media kit, approach the local media to get your information published. There aren't any secrets to this:

1. Decide on the media you want to use. To do so, try to determine which media outlets reach your target audiences and which editors or reporters would be interested in your news and/or information. If your chosen media is the newspaper, look in the paper as the contact information is usually on page 2 of the first section near the bottom. Make a phone call and speak to the editor or a consumer affairs writer.
2. Once you have made contact, have a general conversation and try to determine what seems to be newsworthy at the time (e.g., fraud, keeping a lawyer involved, etc.) and whether the contact person would like to look at your media kit to see if you can bring some points of interest to their target audience (e.g., readers or viewers).

The steps to follow are the same for each type of media. Radio and local television provide excellent opportunities to bring attention to you and your practice. You could be interviewed on a public service program, for example, and while you may not be able to plug your services very extensively, your name will be referred to many times during the course of the interview.