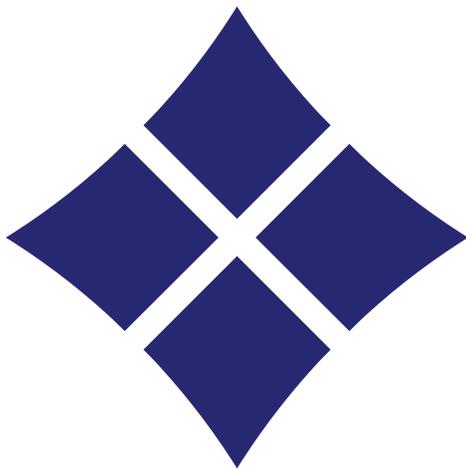




# Ministry Media Companion

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# 10 Steps for Beginning a Media Outreach Campaign

## 1 Form a Marketing/Media committee

Try to get anyone in your congregation with marketing, media, graphics, or public relations experience on the committee. Their knowledge and skills can be very helpful in planning your campaign. A campaign is launched each time you send out information about your church to the media and/or the public.

## 2 Determine your budget for each campaign

Do you plan to buy advertising time (broadcast) or space (print), or will your only expenses be copying and mailing?

## 3 Do your homework

Have committee members call radio and television stations asking them to provide demographic information (who listens to/watches their station?). Ask about their policies regarding Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Do they broadcast a “community calendar”? These are both generally free. What are their rates for paid advertising? Ask for the names of news director/reporters to send press releases to.

Have committee members call newspapers and ask them about “community events” listings. What are their rates for paid advertising? Ask for the names of editors/reporters to send press releases to...religion editor, feature editor, etc.

## 4 Develop a plan

Choose your purpose (message) of the campaign.

Who are you trying to reach (target audience)?

Select your strategy. Will you use radio, newspaper, mailings, bulletin inserts, etc.? If possible, use a combination of methods for disseminating the information, i.e. radio, newspapers, flyers, etc.

## 5 Break it into small pieces

Decide which committee members will do what, remembering that all pieces of the campaign should be consistent in their look and message.

If you plan to use radio, decide which radio stations you will send information to. Who will write, mail, (record?) the message? Are you sending a press release? Who will be the “contact” person listed who can provide additional information if necessary?

If you plan to use newspapers, decide which newspapers you will send information to. Who will write and mail the copy or design the ad? Are you sending a press release? Who will be the “contact” person listed who can provide additional information if necessary?

If you are doing a mailing...who will design and mail the piece? Determine who you are sending the mailing to.

If you are doing bulletin inserts...who will design, write and place the insert in the bulletins?

## 6 Ask your congregation for help

Once the campaign plan has been determined, have the committee make a presentation to the congregation. Tell the congregation what the campaign's purpose is and which media will be used. Ask the congregation to watch their newspapers and television stations and listen to radio station for "mentions". Ask them to report anything in the media they see or hear about the campaign to committee members.

It might be helpful to provide a simple reporting form for congregants to record this information.

## 7 Evaluate results

Determine if the media campaign had positive results.

If your objective was to get people to attend an event...how many attended?

If your objective was to make money...did it?

If your objective was to get new people in the door for church services...how many new people attended?

If your objective was to publicize your church in the community...how many stories or "mentions" did you receive from various media?

## 8 Debrief

Following the evaluation process, have the committee meet to discuss what was successful and what was not as successful.

We cannot measure things of Spirit. We can, however, review on a consistent basis how we are using the media and decide where and how to make changes the next time.

## 9 Be creative

Don't hesitate to use uncommon ways to publicize your church and its activities. Some of these might include a website, posters, handouts and flyers, billboards, movie theatre slides, signs on buses, cabs or on bus stop benches. Then there are the tried and true methods...a message on the sign outside your church and announcements in church.

## 10 Start all over again

Follow the same steps with each campaign.

## Choosing Among Media



Here are some strengths and drawbacks of each category of media:

### **Newspapers**

- Relatively short lead time needed for ad placement or notice of change or cancellation
- Short “life” - lasts a day or a weekend
- Production simplicity - simple ads look best with ample “white space, avoid complicated graphics
- Good coverage - broad distribution within an area

### **Television**

- High sensory appeal - nothing shows an action or demonstration as well
- Broad coverage of the market
- Professional production can be very expensive. However if you buy air time, the station will usually help you produce spots
- Cost of TV spots can be expensive

### **Radio**

- Target marketing - the audience can be very specifically targeted, which is helpful when you have a closely defined market (i.e. “hard rock” for teens, “soft rock” for those over 30)
- Relatively short lead time for placement or notice of change
- Frequency - can run several times per day
- If you buy air time, station will help you produce spots
- Cost - this medium has a low cost per thousand people reached (abbreviated, “CPM”)

### **Direct Mail**

- The ultimate in target marketing
- Private and confidential, which fits with religious organizations, whose messages are perceived as personal
- Cost can be low, per contact per response (as a rule of thumb, major mailing companies expect a 1-2 % response from mass mailings)
- Results can often be measured
- Small-scale testing is feasible - you can vary your mailing to test how each different approach works for you

## Choosing Among Media cont.

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### Telemarketing

- This is being used successfully to start new congregations, classes, invite people to existing programs, etc.
- Offers a sense of gratification to volunteers, who see response to their effort
- When used in combination with mailing of invitations, can be effective
- Can be helpful in developing a mailing list

### Public Access Television

If your community has a public access television station, check it out. This is a “community” station and is not affiliated with a network like commercial (NBC, ABC, CBS, etc.) or public television (PBS) stations. They will air your program for free, will provide equipment and often help with the production work.

## Media Information File



To develop relationships with your local media, ask them these questions and keep this information on file in your office.

**Name, Address, Phone number** and name of **Contact person(s)** of each newspaper/publication/TV or radio station

### Common Questions for Publications:

- Deadline(s) for advertising or press releases prior to desired publish date?
- Are there any special issues of the paper (i.e. regional, holiday, etc.)?
- What are your rates for display advertising? A “display” ad is an ad in a box that can be placed in a specific section of the paper. (The church pages are not always the best place to advertise). Display ads are more costly than classified but are more noticeable. They will probably assign you an account executive/contact person who will handle further questions and help you place your ad.
- Will you help me design my ad and provide photography, if needed?
- Who do I talk to about sending press releases for coverage by your publication? (This is a contact person - note: this could be several different people depending upon the content of the press release, for example the religion editor, travel editor, city editor, etc.)
- Who do I talk to regarding a community calendar event? This is a contact person.

### Common Broadcast Questions:

- Will you create and produce my commercial from concept to finish? If I have ready-for-air spots, will you assist me in adding a tag with my own church information? (The term “spot” refers to your commercial or the amount of time your commercial takes up. Generally, there are 10-second, 30-second and 60-second spots.)
- What are the rates? Do you have special rates for non-profit organizations? What kind of special “packages” do you offer? When will my spot air?
- What is your format? (Format refers to what kind of music they play or whether they are a news/talk station.)
- What are your demographics? (Demographics refers to the composition of their listening/viewing audience...male/female, age, etc.)
- Who do I talk to about sending press releases? How about PSAs (public service announcements)?
- Who do I talk to regarding a community calendar event? (These will usually be aired in the form of live “filler” talk from the announcer or as part of a community events calendar.)

## “Free” Advertising



### **Word of Mouth**

- 80 % of people who attend church first went because someone they knew invited them
- This form of “advertising” has the highest level of credibility
- You must encourage congregants to talk to their friends
- Teach them what information to convey, and how to best convey it. For instance, ask people to create a 20-30 second “commercial” on what they like about your church, or rehearse a verbal invitation. You can build a campaign around this, for example:
  - Friendship Sunday - where each congregant invites friends to attend
  - Neighborhood Cleanup Day - a church takes the initiative to walk the streets of the area to pick up garbage, and invites friends and neighbors to help out
  - Walk/run for a charity - congregants ask friends to sponsor them in a run to raise money for some needy group in the community
  - You get the idea! Any event in which your congregants invite friends or neighbors to get involved in some way

### **Signs, Flyers, Posters and Handbills** - Placed in strategic locations

- Bulletin boards in public libraries, schools, shopping mall kiosks
- Local bookstores, coffee houses, delis and other shops and restaurants (it is a good idea to ask permission before you leave or post printed materials)
- To stuff in shopping bags at local shops

### **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

Radio and television stations will often allow public service announcements when they have unsold slots. Check with individual stations about their policies and requirements.

### **Publicity**

- Getting your event or story reported by any local media, print or broadcast
- You have less control over the message, but it is highly credible to your audience
- Local media are looking for human interest stories, stories about events or people helping people - any time you do something that affects your community, you can consider it an opportunity for a press release. Do a press release if the event is unique or unusual, involves a large number of people or is a good photo opportunity. The terms news release and press release are interchangeable, “press” usually referring to print. The thing to keep in mind is, just as the name suggests, it should be “news”. Do not confuse this with community calendar items. Don’t expect media to do the same story over and over again every year, for example the church’s tenth anniversary may be worth a story, but not the eleventh.

## Examples of when to do a press release



- Introduce a new minister or service
- Your church does something special or unusual
- Anniversary or milestone
- Expanded physical facilities
- Receive or present an award
- Sponsor a community event
- Special guests, celebrities or public figures
- Anything that impacts the community around you

Press releases should be written as an inverted triangle (most important information down to least important). The editor edits from the bottom up. Always include the “5 Ws” - who, what, when, where and why (all this should be in the first few paragraphs). Media like stories with a “local” angle.

See example of a press release included in this packet. Almost always, write **For Immediate Release** in the upper left hand corner. (Move 3-5 spaces down if you are using letterhead). Under Immediate Release, place the name and phone number of a contact person who is knowledgeable about the story. If that person is difficult to reach, use someone else. An editor may only make one attempt to call and you want someone to be available. Also include your church name, address and telephone number.

The press release should be one side, one page if possible, with wide margins and double spaced with a font no smaller than 12. Use standard symbols... **-more-** at bottom of first page and **-30-** or **###** at end of the press release. Use quotes from people whenever possible. Check your facts...for example if your date and the day of the week given for an event don't match, the editor may just toss it out rather than trying to track down the correct information. Make sure there are no mistakes in spelling or grammar.

If you are having an event with a nationally-known guest speaker, include a 5x7" black-and-white photo with your news release. Photos are very important because in a page of print, our eyes move to the photos first.

Give the job of writing the press release to somebody who can write. A freelance writer or someone with a background in journalism is a good candidate. If your press release can be “popped into” the newspaper's regular article system, you've got a greater chance of seeing it in print. If it's difficult to rewrite, it'll most likely be discarded for something easier to use.

## Sample News (Press) Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **For More Information Contact:**

David Brandt, Minister  
Christ Unity Church  
1221 Esplanade  
Riverton, MO 64063  
(913) 524-3550

### **Ring in the New, Release the Old with Unity**

(Riverton, MO, December 15, 2003) When you think of celebrating New Year's Eve, what comes to mind? Going to church? Well, maybe not, but you may want to think about it this year. Christ Unity Church of Riverton will host a special ceremony on December 31st at 6 pm at 1221 Esplanade. Open to all ages, it's a way to kick off any other New Year's Eve celebration you may have planned, by taking some time to "celebrate" your spirituality.

The ceremony features a "burning bowl," where participants write down qualities, events, or emotions they wish to eliminate in the coming year. As the slips of paper are burned in a special bowl, people experience a symbolic release, and many sense a powerful liberation from old habits and thoughts.

Minister David Brandt says, "There is a real sense of beginning the new year with a fresh start. In our busy world, people are often moved by the chance to spend a few quiet moments of reflection in the midst of the celebration. They reconnect with the meaning of their lives and find a new vigor for living in the way they intend."

-more-

## Sample News (Press) Release cont.

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The service will last about an hour, giving participants the opportunity to include other celebrations in their New Year's Eve plans.

All are invited to attend. Child care is available. For more information contact Christ Unity Church of Riverton at (913) 524-3550 or visit the website at [www.unityofriverton.org](http://www.unityofriverton.org).

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