



BUSINESS  
EXCELLENCE

# TOURISM EXCELLENCE

## Working with the Media

### Fact Sheet – Hints and Tips

Prepared by **VECCI** for **Tourism Victoria**



TOURISM  
EXCELLENCE





### Key Point

## THE POWER OF PUBLICITY

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### Key points:

- Effectively working with the media to generate publicity for your business can help to ensure understanding and advocacy, while enhancing and protecting your brand
  - Media exposure can be a low-cost way to communicate with your target market
  - Editorial publicity is acknowledged as more valuable than paid-for advertising, because it influences consumer perceptions of credibility
  - Publicity may also provide more detailed information and enticing visuals than an advertisement
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### Media Mediums

The media is made up of a variety of different mediums, including television, radio, Internet, newspapers and magazines.

Each medium presents information in different ways and through a variety of programs or sections

### Key points:

- Television heavily relies on good visuals to tell a story. Generally, if you don't have a good visual angle to your story, television programs won't be interested
  - On radio, information is presented in segments as short as 15 seconds or segments lasting five to ten minutes. It relies on brevity and people who are articulate
  - Newspapers rely on both words and pictures to tell a story and feature articles can be from one paragraph long to a page or two long
  - Newspapers provide a number of possibilities for publicity ranging from Letters to the Editor and Coming Events columns to news stories, supplements and feature articles
  - Magazines are usually weekly, monthly, bimonthly and quarterly. They rely more heavily than newspapers on good pictures and will also devote several pages to particular stories if they are strong enough
  - Media websites are another medium for media organisations to convey their stories to a wider audience. It is also used as means of building a loyalty base with TV programs like *Getaway* or *Postcards* offering fact-sheets, tips, giveaways or further information. The advantage of media websites is that information can be stored for longer periods of time, providing users with the ability to see or draw on stories that were published months ago
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Key Point

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## THE POWER OF PUBLICITY (continued)

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### Key points:

- It is important to familiarise yourself with these mediums and the different titles or programs within them - look at what information they present; how they present the information; and determine who are their audience/readers/listeners
- When deciding what media to target, be realistic. It's a waste of time sending information on a regional event to *Getaway* when the program doesn't feature events, or information about your B&B to a magazine like *New Idea*, which predominantly features news and gossip about celebrities. You would be more successful sending event information to regional press and radio and information about your B&B to the travel editors of metropolitan newspapers
- Generally, the larger the media outlet's audience is, the more difficult it will be to get your information featured because of the increased number of people and organisations trying to use that medium

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## PLANNING AHEAD

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Key Point

### Audience Demographics

The first thing you need to be clear about before you plan any communications – whether it be a media release, brochure, advertising or special event – is to decide who are the most important people for you to speak to and how best to communicate with them.

### Key points:

- Word of mouth provided by a 'happy customer' (the personal recommendation from a trusted friend) is still the most influential form of public relations you can achieve
- The first thing to establish is who your target market is and what they are likely to read, watch or listen to – and to think about appropriate media relevant to your consumer target market
- Your 'public' may include the following:
  - The most obvious are your customers – people who purchase or use your product or service
  - Other stakeholders – these are the people who for some reason have a direct interest in the success or otherwise of your business. They can include local/regional government/authorities, staff and/or family, local business associations, special interest groups
  - The media – work out what it is you want to publicise, how you want to publicise it and where you want to publicise it

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## PLANNING AHEAD (continued)

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### Hot Tip

**Source:** *'Working with the Media: A Practical Media Guide', Tourism Victoria*

### Planning Media Coverage

When planning ahead, mapping out key messages, objectives, creating the appropriate materials and having realistic expectations will greatly contribute to your campaign's success.

#### Hot tips:

- Draw up a list of the media organisations and their relevant contact people that you want to target
    - For news items, you will be targeting the chief-of-staff of each media organisation.
    - For television programs, like *Getaway*, it will be the researchers or producers
    - For feature stories in newspapers and magazines, it will be specialist editors or writers (ie, travel, food and wine, tourism, lifestyle)
  - When selecting the medium you want to use, consider:
    - Local newspapers – eg *Bendigo Advertiser*
    - Regional newspapers – eg *Geelong Advertiser, Weekly Times*
    - Metro newspapers – *The Age, Herald Sun, Sunday papers, Melbourne Weekly*
    - Radio programs – Regional or Metropolitan?
    - Magazines – Victoria, South Australia or National
    - TV programs – *Postcards, Coxy's Big Break, Great Outdoors & Getaway*
  - Seek help if you need it. You can pay for assistance from a journalist or public relations consultant (check out the Yellow Pages) or you can seek advice from your regional tourism association or Tourism Victoria's Media Unit
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Key Point

## SPARKING THE MEDIA'S INTEREST

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### What is Newsworthy?

Attracting publicity in Tourism is highly competitive – particularly for those businesses seeking media coverage from larger national outlets.

The media is under consistent pressure to maintain the interest of current audiences and to attract new markets and advertisers.

### Key points:

- To spark the media's interest, think about the following:
  - Stories – interesting, informative, new, relatable, descriptive
  - Properties, events, products or services
  - Categories - accommodation, tours, events and road trips
  - 'Experiences' – driven by traveller interests - food & wine, photography, bushwalking, spa & wellness, adventure, environment, sailing/boating, romance
  - Specials, Giveaways, Special Events
- Examples of tourism news items include: new visitation figures, the opening of a new tourism facility or information about a major event
- While not always the case, tourism news can also involve controversy: for example, arguments over the location of a large new tourism development
- News that is of interest in one particular community, such as Ballarat, may not be of interest to another regional community like Shepparton or metropolitan Melbourne

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### Points of Difference

The challenge for you when seeking publicity is to clearly articulate your story's point of difference to spark the media and audience's interest.

### Key points:

- The type of publicity you will generally achieve is a feature story/article on your service, product or event, which in most cases appears in the travel sections of newspapers
- Although not impossible, feature stories in magazines like *Vogue Entertaining & Travel* or on travel programs like *The Great Outdoors* are also achievable
- Whether you have news for the media or want a feature story written, you have to make your information relevant to the audience of each media organisation you are targeting and, if possible, put an interesting angle on the story

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## SPARKING THE MEDIA'S INTEREST (continued)

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Key Point

### Developing a Story Angle

When developing a specific story angle, it can be helpful to think about focusing on the fundamentals:

- What happened?
  - Where did/will it take place?
  - Why?
  - How?
  - When and to whom?
  - If you're talking about a product or service:
    - How much is it?
    - How do you get to it?
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Key Point

### Key points:

- The types of questions to ask yourself when developing a story angle:
  - Is your product/service the first of its kind?
  - Is it the newest, biggest or most unusual?
    - Or the highest like the new Eureka Skydeck in Melbourne?
  - Does it go beyond the ordinary? Is it an angle that includes other current issues – for example the environment?
  - Is someone famous involved – is it owned by a celebrity?
    - Olivia Newton-John's B&B in Qld received much coverage when it opened
  - Is it something that is being developed that is interesting or different?
  - Do you fit in within a specific category?
    - Family, romance, wilderness, environment, adventure, historical, food & wine
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### Key Point

*Source: 'Working with the Media: A Practical Media Guide', Tourism Victoria*

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA

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### Types of Communication

- Media Releases
- Media Kits
- Media Bulletins/Alerts
- Email
- E-newsletters
- Phone
- Invitation to an event
- Visuals

### Key Points:

#### Media Release

- A media release conveys the most important details of your news/story to the media and is designed to entice them to cover the news/story
- The two most critical parts of your media release are the headline (to attract attention) and the first two leading paragraphs (which must convey key information)
- Headlines should be no more than one line
- Write them to catch attention - study headlines in newspapers and magazines to see how they catch attention

#### Media Kits

- One-page media releases are ideal for faxing to media organisations to alert them of news items or possible feature stories
- When you want to profile your property, service or event in more detail to feature editors, like travel editors, media kits are ideal
- Media kits consist of media releases that detail different aspects of your business (for example, its history and profile of the owner), brochures, and any relevant transparencies or digital images
- Be imaginative in the way you present your product, (for example, enclosing samples of your product)
- Although it is possible to be innovative with media kits to attract attention, ultimately media will only run a story on the merits of your content and not the packaging
- Media kits are also useful to have on hand to give to journalists who visit your property, use your service or attend your event. It gives them important background information. They are effective tools to take to trade shows where media could be present

#### Visuals

- Newspapers and magazines appreciate excellent quality visuals
- Visuals often have greater impact than words and by 'selling the story'
- It is worth the investment in having a professional photographer take the shots- a photographer understands lighting, colours, depth of field and angles that will best promote your product

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## COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA (continued)

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### Hot Tip

*Source: 'Working with the Media: A Practical Media Guide', Tourism Victoria*

### Creating a Media Release

A media release is the key tool you will use to communicate something new to the media and your customer audiences.

#### Hot Tips:

- Develop a "hook" and keep it simple
- Ensure the hook is relevant to the publications to which you send the release
- Remember the 5Ws & H rule – who, what, when, where, why and how in the first 2 paragraphs
- Keep the release to one page maximum
- Include a quote from the company spokesperson if appropriate - it provides personality, colour & weight to the piece
- Talk about your product/service in one or two plain English sentences
- Grab the readers attention with a provocative headline:
  - 'Where the bloody hell are you?'
- Use active verbs:
  - Toyota today launches...
- Avoid excessive adjectives, adverbs and fancy language
- Release the news before it happens
- Always have contact details that are correct and make sure you are available

#### Traps:

- Don't get facts wrong
  - Don't use clichés, unexplained acronyms or jargon
  - Don't exaggerate or make wild unsubstantiated claims
  - Don't put too many ideas into one sentence
  - Don't waffle
  - Don't forget to supply contact details
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## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

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### Key Point

### Timing Your Story

Media are under a lot of pressure to generate good quality stories for their outlet

- Journalists work to incredibly tight deadlines, have minimal staff and work under less than favourable working conditions
- It is important to be aware of media's deadlines:
  - Glossy national magazine deadlines are usually 3 months ahead; Travel Supplements are usually 2 weeks ahead
  - Ensure you provide reliable, accurate information, quotes and high-quality images on time
- Doing so will help you to build credibility and good working relationships with the media

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### Developing Relationships

Building relationships with the media takes time and consistency – the media you deal with have to get to know and trust you and your product.

They need to have faith in your product so when they go out on a limb and feature you in their pages or program – lending their name as an endorsement – they know that you won't let them down, and lose the interest of their audiences.

Tips:

- Media appreciate **professionalism**, honesty & people who are trustworthy
- Know what their column, supplement, magazine or TV program is about – they hate people wasting their time without putting in the homework
- Know who writes what column, who is the producer of a radio or TV program
- Make the effort to get to know your local media for they are often hungry for local news stories
- Small gestures mean a lot, like spelling their names correctly
- Invite them to your property or event when appropriate and when you're ready for scrutiny
- Don't offer media a product or service standard that is far above what you would offer your customer
- Make contact on a regular basis once you have established the relationship, but only when you have something new that will appeal to the journalist



### Hot Tip

*Source: Tourism  
Victoria, Public  
Relations  
Department*

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## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA (continued)

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### Hot Tip

*Source: Tourism Victoria, Public Relations Department*

### Traps:

- Don't hassle journalists with multiple phone calls or emails
  - Call the journalist yourself – don't ask someone to make the call who has no idea how to pitch your business or story idea
  - When leaving a message, indicate what the call is about
  - Meet the promised deadline
  - Large unsolicited email messages – use the blind cc (bcc) function – don't let the journalist know who else the release is going to
  - Make them feel special – tailor your story for different media - some media want exclusives – *Travel + Leisure, Getaway & Great Outdoors* don't cover what the others have reviewed even years later
  - Don't ask for multiple copies of the story – organise through a newsagency
  - Don't hassle continuously about when the article will be published
  - Don't ask to see the story before it goes to print
  - Complaints about cutting or editing a story
  - Images that are poor quality, must be high resolution
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### Key Point

*Source: 'Working with the Media: A Practical Media Guide', Tourism Victoria*

### Familiarisation Programs

Another key way of working with the media to gain publicity is to offer journalists familiarization, or 'famils' trips (free of charge to the journalist) to sample your property, product, service or event.

- Tourism Victoria runs two famils programs, one for Australian media and the other for international media
  - Tourism Victoria's public relations unit organises famils for Australian media, primarily from its key markets - New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Melbourne
  - Famils can be designed to highlight one particular accommodation property, a touring route, a campaign, tours, a key destination or product strengths like food and wine or adventure activities
  - The public relations team is constantly seeking new quality material to promote and be included in its famils program, so it welcomes constant updates on the latest product and developments from operators
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## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA (continued)

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### Key Point

*Source: 'Tweet deals up for grabs',  
The Age,  
September 30,  
2009*



### Hot Tip

### Changing Media Landscape

An emerging way for you to be proactive about creating publicity for your business is to spend some time thinking about how you can create a simple-to-manage social media presence.

Popular examples you could become involved with include Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.

#### Key points:

- Twitter could be a really excellent vehicle to talk to people directly about your business but with interesting, informative snippets about what you offer, what is happening in your region or if there is a particular trend occurring with food, wine or specific 'experiences'
- If you find Facebook or Youtube a bit daunting to play with, Twitter is only 140 characters, so it is short and sweet to use!
- The Australian travel industry has taken a while to fully embrace Twitter as a marketing tool but it is now making up for lost time, using it to release exclusive sales and deals to interested followers
- Jetstar recently used Twitter to launch a "free seats" sale offering 10,000 free seats on its new Sydney-Melbourne services, while Virgin Blue ran a Twitter sale to celebrate its ninth birthday
- The airline offered 1000 "tweet seats" at \$9 each; and these fares were only available through Twitter
- Virgin Blue, which has more than 9000 Twitter followers, says the sale was the first of a series of "tweet seats" deals on domestic fares
- Hotels and hotel booking sites have also become very active on Twitter
- Leading booking engine Wotif.com tweets deals and news on a daily basis and gives its Twitter followers advance notice of big sales
- Visitors can also follow destinations, with many proactive tourist boards now tweeting a variety of news and events

#### Note:

- If you have never used Twitter before, it is easy to get started
  - See [twitter.com](http://twitter.com), click on "get started" and choose a user name
  - If you have a website, consider adding a "follow us on Twitter" link or the Twitter logo
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