



## Media Outreach Tips for TXCPA Chapters

Effective media relations activities are a great way to enhance the image of CPAs in the mind of the public. Media outreach can help clients, employers, business leaders and the general public recognize CPAs as highly skilled, innovative and ethical accounting/finance professionals.

Below are a few tips you can utilize to reach the media and conduct public outreach campaigns for your chapter.

### THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST

As you develop your news and feature story ideas to “pitch” to the media, look for stories that are timely, unique, unexpected, interesting, heartwarming, inspirational and/or sensational.

Story ideas to pitch/promote to media include:

- A chapter event or newsworthy announcement
- TXCPA member achievements (awards, promotions, etc.)
- Tax season advice for the public
- The availability of TXCPA members to offer insight into relevant and timely news topics
- An upcoming community service event or activity within your chapter

### IDENTIFY YOUR MESSAGE AND TARGET AUDIENCE

Before starting your media outreach, you’ll need to decide what message(s) you want to deliver to which audiences. Key messages are the main points of information you want your audience to hear, understand and remember. They should be concise, relevant, compelling and memorable.

Next, you’ll need to identify your audience. Who are you trying to target with your messages and who will care about what you have to say? Your target audience might be broad (i.e. the general public) or very specific (i.e. members of the Texas Legislature).

### CREATE A MEDIA LIST

A media list documents the key media contacts who would be interested in stories about your organization, business or area of expertise. These media contacts may include journalists, reporters, bloggers, producers, freelance writers and editors across print, online, blogs, radio and television.

The first thing to decide when creating a media list is how to best reach your target audience. What are they interested in and how do they prefer to consume information?

Now you can start developing a list of media contacts! Google can be a great resource, but please contact [Kari Owen](#) if you need assistance pulling a media list. TXCPA has a paid subscription to a media monitoring database and we’re happy to generate a list of media contacts for you!



## PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE A PRESS RELEASE

A press release must clearly convey who, what, where, when, why and how. You can find hundreds of press release templates online, but remember to follow these guidelines:

- Use an attention-grabbing headline
- Get right to the point in the first paragraph
- Include quotes from a relevant spokesperson whenever possible
- Include your chapter logo and contact information
- Be concise – the ideal length of a press release is one page

## APPROACHING THE MEDIA: MAKING A STRONG PITCH

The most common way to approach media people is to send them your news release or invitation to a special event. Many reporters prefer to receive information via e-mail, but phone calls are still an effective communication tool.

Whether you reach out to media by phone or email, always make sure to be brief, organized and to the point. Ask if they have any additional questions or if there's any specific information they need.

## GETTING INTO PRINT

For publicity at the local level, newspapers are your best bet. While more and more people look to TV, internet and social media for hard news, they continue to rely on newspapers for local news and information about people and events in their community.

Remember that the range of local print media extends beyond daily, weekly and neighborhood newspapers. Many communities have a variety of additional papers including, community magazines and newspapers, college and university newspapers, and newsletters circulated by municipal government or local politicians.

## GETTING ON THE AIR

If you're considering radio or television as a medium for your message, it's important to keep your material immediate. A good test of immediacy is whether you can work the words *yesterday*, *today* or *tomorrow* into your material. Your best contact will be the news director or an assignment editor at the station.

A very effective and achievable opportunity for TV news coverage lies in the "soft" news features on early morning, noon or 5 p.m. programs. It's usually more difficult to secure coverage on the "hard" news programming at 6 and 10 p.m.