

Working with Reporters



When working with local or school reporters, it's important to focus on building relationships with them. Building relationships is one of the most important aspects of the media process, as it can lead to consistent coverage as well as make things easier on your chapter. The next time you want to get press, all you have to do is call or e-mail your contact; you won't have to follow the extensive process!

Reporters can seem intimidating at times, so here are some tips to use to form relationships with them:

1. **Be as informative as possible.** Students often say that they feel that reporters are against them, but they're not. They just want to get as much information as possible. When you give them as much information as they want, you're making their jobs much easier. They'll appreciate that!

2. **Be responsive.** Reporters work under deadlines, and responding too late can mean missing an article. If a reporter contacts you, reply as quickly as you can!

3. **Don't make things up.** If a reporter asks you something you're unsure of, don't guess! Just say you have to check on it and get back to them (they're used to this).

4. **Be persistent.** It's hard to annoy reporters; your persistence makes their job easier. They have a lot on their plates, so the more you contact them, the more likely you are to get a response. Consistently sending releases and alerts, whether or not they seem to go ignored, can go a long way to building your credibility with a certain reporter. So always follow-up, and it never hurts to send something twice.

5. **E-mail works.** If you're too intimidated to call a reporter, send an e-mail with the same information. Reporters are on their e-mail all the time, and there's a good chance they will respond. Don't be afraid to send follow up e-mails.

6. **It's okay to be informal.** Sometimes a little informality helps. When you e-mail a press release, write a more personal e-mail at the top. Ex. "Hi Mr. Bagwell- Check out the release below; it should be a great event. Please contact me if you have any questions! We look forward to seeing you."

7. **Play up the student angle.** All STAND students are impressive, and reporters will think so, too. Never forget to mention your year in school, and the fact that the event is completely student-led.

8. **Ask STAND for help.** The STAND Communications Team loves everything about reporters, so be sure to e-mail media@standnow.org and ask for help!

9. **Keep in touch.** After a reporter covers an event, make sure to follow up and invite them to all subsequent events. They will remember you and make efforts to help you get press coverage!

If you follow these steps, you will be sure to cultivate great, lasting relationships with reporters that help your chapter consistently get press at all of your events!