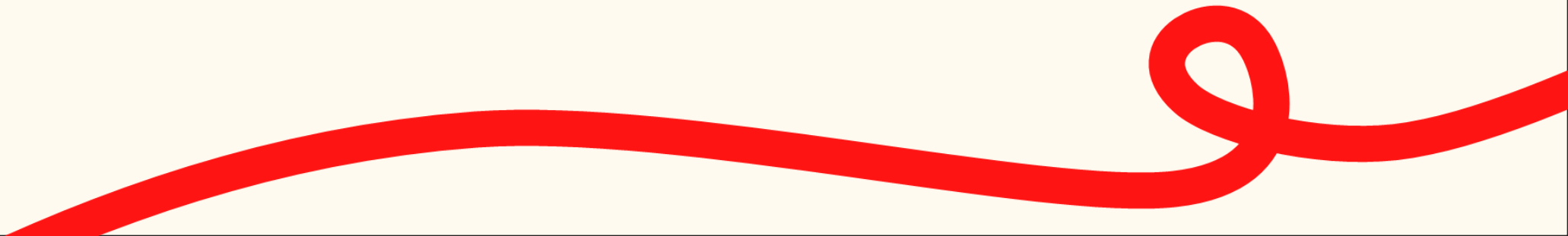




MARS PETCARE EPH

PR TOOLKIT



Introduction

PR training series

Public Relations, or 'PR', is all about the way you communicate with the public, promote yourself, and build a positive reputation and public image.

The way you represent your shelter(s) in the media and to your various stakeholders will have a huge impact on how people perceive it.

In this PR training series, you will learn about the components required to build an effective communications strategy, including:

Strategic
communications
overview

Building your news
story armoury

How to deal with
media enquiries

Downloadable PR
templates

Strategic communications

Walk the talk

It is essential to influence and control the image of your shelter with consistent and impactful strategic communications as the media is saturated with multiple voices and news sources.

The key steps for executing an effective communications strategy are:

- ☐ Benchmark – know the context and your local landscape
- ☐ Align your strategy to your shelter's vision, mission and values
- ☐ Define SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)
- ☐ Develop clear messages
- ☐ Define appropriate media activities and tools
- ☐ Measure the outcome of your communications strategy

Internal Communications

- ✓ Address staff/volunteer concerns
- ✓ Establish a dialogue, not a one-way process
- ✓ Reach everyone and ensure everyone can understand

Crisis Communications

- ✓ Identify your team
- ✓ Identify and train spokespeople
- ✓ Establish communication protocols
- ✓ Identify and understand stakeholders
- ✓ Research and prepare strategies
- ✓ Draft crisis materials

Social Communications

- ✓ Maximise visibility – identify channels frequented by stakeholders
- ✓ Monitor – check the impact of campaign and react
- ✓ Enforce policy – clear guidelines for social media usage

Your news story armoury

Internal assets

Key Messages

Once key messages are established and agreed, it is important to optimise them for your social channels. In addition, a current FAQ document, ensures clarity in positioning and minimises drop off in the process.

Q&As

Understanding platform functionality, demographics, and user behaviour is paramount for gaining the most traction possible on all content.

External assets

Press releases

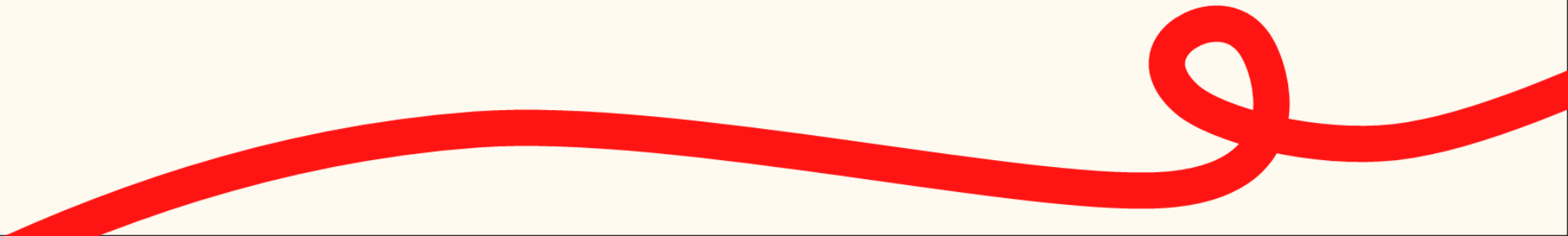
Strategic support on social media via paid is necessary for amplification and targeting purposes while actively supporting SEO will ensure you appear in relevant searches and give your animals the best chance of being seen.

Imagery

Once you understand the platforms and their distinct purpose, ensuring content is created to be optimised for each is the next step in taking a social first approach to digital outreach.

Spokesperson

Active and engaged community management is a big factor in social success and must be active across all platforms where your brand appears.



Key messages

The foundation of consistent communication

Key messages provide an invaluable metric when it comes to tracking and measuring the success of your news stories.

Earned media coverage cannot always be 100% controlled, however your key messages can be – they can help a team stay focused when speaking to media and key stakeholders.

What makes a good key message?

- ✓ Simplicity – make sure they are concise, bite size and avoid jargon
- ✓ Relevancy – what do you need to communicate and how is it relevant to your audience?
- ✓ Memorable – can they easily be remembered/recalled?
- ✓ Tailor key messages for your target audience
- ✓ Include distinctive and fundamental facts

Adapting key messages for social

Making your point land

A Q&A is one of the simplest methods to ensure that key spokespeople and stakeholders involved in a campaign are ready and responsive and can answer queries with consistent messaging across your shelter. A Q&A should include all questions and eventualities that could potentially result from your news/campaign – this should include any expected, challenging questions.

Who is a Q&A for?

- ✓ Comms team for media responses
- ✓ Sales team for customer communications
- ✓ Digital teams for community management
- ✓ Consumer relations team
- ✓ Senior stakeholders for interviews/meetings

How can you use a Q&A

- ✓ A consumer asking via social media for more information on the story
- ✓ A journalist asking when the activity is rolling out or for further information/insight around the story e.g. when is the event taking place? How will the money raised be used to help shelters?
- ✓ To prep spokespeople before media interviews

1. The details

What is your campaign? Include the press release or bullet points of the news

2. Key messages

If your spokesperson can only get one piece of information across, what should that be?

3. Wider questions

These should include questions about the wider business as well as the campaign to ensure you are prepared for any questions

4. Previous campaigns

Include top-line detail on previous campaigns, particularly for stakeholders that may not have been heavily involved

Press releases

Influencing opinion in a credible way

A press release is designed to inform journalists about important “news” concerning your company and encourage them to use the information to shape the story they issue and influence audience perception.

The press release remains one of the most effective ways of communicating with media, and increasingly is used as a direct communication technique (published on corporate websites, emailed to stakeholders or promoted on social media) or as a “blueprint” for all other communications activities.

Press releases are able to drive your Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) when using specific key words that will help potential adopters to search for your shelter when coverage appears online.

Top Tip: By including links in your press release, you are encouraging journalists/media to include them within online news pieces, influencing the reader to click-through, driving traffic to your website and increasing your SEO.

Benefits of a press release

- ✓ Target a high number of journalists with a consistent message
- ✓ Drive SEO and reduce costs in paid search
- ✓ Open additional opportunities for further earned coverage e.g. interviews/profile opportunities
- ✓ Can be repurposed to help spread the message in other channels e.g. social media or shelter website

Press releases

Story checklist

When it comes to press release writing the key is ensuring that your content is relevant to the journalist, concise and clear.

Given the fast-paced nature of news, it is imperative that the story is timely. Depending on the nature of the story, it should be something that has either just happened, is happening immediately or that is taking place soon e.g. a fundraising event.

A good press release should tick some of the below boxes to generate good media pick-up:

- 1 Location** - Regional media will only cover stories within the location they cover as it will resonate with their audience better. Other media types including national and business media will look for stories with a national hook.
- 2 Originality** - Journalists and their readers are more likely to find stories interesting if they are original. Ask yourself what makes your story unique?
- 3 Involvement of prominent individuals** - Is there someone attached to your story or event that the larger community might know of? If an official, celebrity, or other known personality is involved, news outlets are more likely to give your story airtime.
- 4 Human/animal interest** - People like to hear compelling stories and media are always looking for feel-good animal stories or stories that will tug on the heartstrings of their readers.
- 5 Importance to others** - A compelling press release should always be relevant, interesting, or actionable to those outside of your shelter. How is the larger community impacted, benefitting, or educated by your story or event? If it's not perceived to be important to the reader or intended audience in any way, a journalist is less likely to find it compelling enough to share.
- 6 Milestones** - Did your shelter accomplish a huge goal? Did you greet your 15,000th visitor? Rescue a certain amount of animals? Donate a certain amount of pet food to food banks? These timely milestones can be compelling to newscasters.

Press releases

Writing quotes & interviews

Adding in a quote from a key spokesperson to your press release can add credibility and make it sound more personable.

When picking a spokesperson, think about who is the most interesting and relevant person to quote in the story.

A good quote should tick the below boxes to be included by a journalist:

- ☐ **Job title** – the spokesperson's job title should be short
- ☐ **Natural** – do not force the shelter name within the quote
- ☐ **No repetition** – do not re-include details that are already in the release. The quote should add context and new key facts
- ☐ **Real:** read it out loud to make sure it sounds human, believable, interesting and engaging. Ask yourself if this is something that the spokesperson would say in a face to face conversation?

When your spokesperson is being interviewed, the key to success is preparation. The spokesperson should be supplied with an interview briefing form before hand

Media Do's

- ✓ Be aware if the interview is live, recorded or will be written
- ✓ Repeat key messages
- ✓ Keep answers simple and concise
- ✓ Lead with the positive – say what you're for, not what you're against
- ✓ Relax and take your time
- ✓ Be energised
- ✓ Most importantly, be yourself!

Media Don'ts

- X Avoid using jargon
- X Don't lose your temper
- X Don't say 'no comment' or 'off the record'
- X Don't answer questions that are leading, hypothetical, speculative or based on faulty premise
- X Body language is important – don't look defensive
- X Don't distract your audience

Press releases

Imagery

Imagery should be supplied to journalists alongside your press release and be used to support your story, convey a particular message or even tell your story.

Imagery should add interest to your story - good imagery can be a deciding factor when people are choosing whether or not to share your news.

Picture stories are more and more prevalent in news. If you have a strong image for your campaign, lead with this and provide a relevant caption.

Tagging images by naming them appropriately before distributing to your audience is imperative. This allows search engines like Google to recognise the photo without actually looking at it – include a key phrase. For example, dog adoption.jpg.



Is your imagery suitable for the media?

- ✓ Is it high-res? 300dpi or above?
- ✓ Check with the media outlet what format they would like the image in
- ✓ Send a selection of shots
- ✓ Make sure they are engaging, warm, un-posed

Common image file types

.JPEG

Larger photos and illustrations. The colour clarity is great with a relatively small file size. Standard requirement for media

.PNG

Only use this format when you want to preserve a transparent background

.WebP

High-quality results with smaller file size

Infographics

Peaking interest

Sending out an infographic alongside a press release can help dissect a complex subject and sustain the attention of the reader.

Using visual cues helps increase memorability of the information.

Infographics can also be used widely:

- Issued to media
- Posted on your own website
- Posted on your own social media channels

To make an effective infographic, you need the relevant and ground-breaking figures and key stats. They allow you to engage with your audience by feeding them information that's easy-to-digest in an enjoyable way.

Using infographics to increase SEO

- ✓ Driving traffic to your site organically
- ✓ They are easily shareable
- ✓ They are easily linkable
- ✓ Uses keywords helping the information to stay afloat on search pages

THE ADOPTION
MISSION



Media requests

How to deal with enquiries

When you receive a media call or e-mail enquiry, it is important to handle it quickly.

You'll need to clarify the nature of their request, check the deadline, and gather information that will be helpful in responding to them in a timely manner.

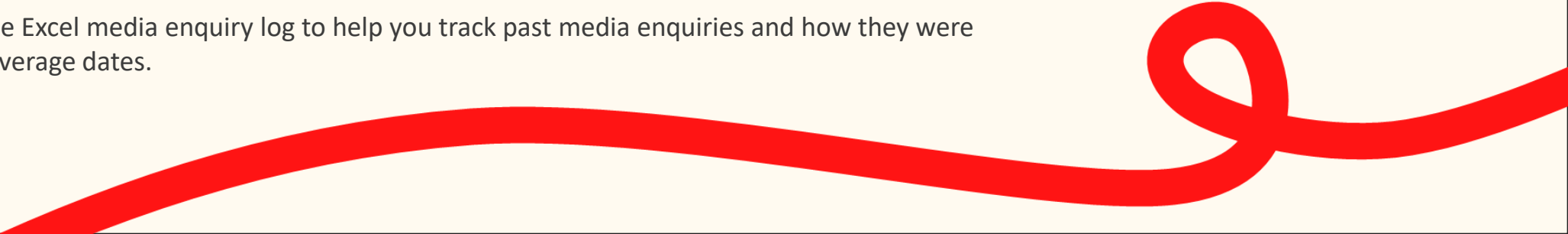
At the beginning of a phone conversation, you can set out your role in the process and steer the conversation:

"I am not able to respond to your request directly but I would like to put you in touch with someone who can provide you with the information you need. I would therefore like to ask you a few more questions?"

Use this checklist to ensure you secure the necessary information:

- ☐ Name and contact details
- ☐ Name of the publication they're from
- ☐ When is their deadline?
- ☐ What is the topic they would like to discuss?
- ☐ Are they requesting an interview or are they just needing some factual information
- ☐ How will the information be used e.g. is the story just about your shelter or is it an industry wide story looking/comparing organisations

It is worth setting up a simple Excel media enquiry log to help you track past media enquiries and how they were dealt with plus upcoming coverage dates.



Introduction

Downloadable PR templates

To help you craft effective communications for your shelter, we've provided some downloadable templates that you can utilise and amend in line with the particular news story or activity you may be working on.

Just click on each heading to open a document preview, where you'll be able to download the template and work from on your computer:

**Press release –
general format
example**

**Press release –
example 1:
fundraiser event
announcement**

**Press release -
example 2:
Reaching a
fundraising
milestone**

**Media request log
example**

**Interview briefing
document example**

**Photography
briefing document
example**

**Email template for
forwarding media
enquiries**

Introductions

Downloadable templates

Press release – general format example

Setting out the typical layout of a press release, providing guidance around header length, what information to include where, inclusion of quotes and contact information for your shelter.

This format is what the press are used to receiving and will avoid them needing to ask follow up questions by providing the information succinctly.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Press release – example 1: fundraiser event announcement

Showing you how you might want to lay out a story about your shelter organising a fundraising event, with the aim of driving awareness and encouraging support from readers to contribute to and/or attend the event.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Press release - example 2: Reaching a fundraising milestone

Showing how you might report on the success of your fundraising event once it has taken place. The aim of this type of release is to showcase the results achieved by the fundraiser, rewarding attendees or donors by demonstrating the impact they've had and also driving awareness for the positive activity undertaken by your shelter.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Introductions

Downloadable templates continued

Interview briefing document example

Details the information typically set out within an interview briefing document. This is useful if, for example, a spokesperson from your shelter is due to be interviewed by the press. It includes basic information for the spokesperson to familiarise themselves with ahead of the interview, such as the time, date and format of the interview, as well as key messages to be landed and on some occasions, the questions that will be asked (if you've had visibility of these prior to the interview taking place).

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Photography briefing document example

Details the information typically set out within a photography briefing document, which is to be shared with whoever you are working with to take photos for your event or campaign. It provides them with a thorough overview of the key details about the day, as well as your expectations for the shoot – what the key shots are, the style you'd like them to be shot in, any inspiration you'd like them to take etc.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Email template for forwarding media enquiries

Useful to have on hand so you can quickly and efficiently process requests that may come through from the media, for things such as imagery or commentary on a current trend or issue in the press.

[DOWNLOAD](#)

Introductions

Downloadable templates continued

Media request log example

Another useful tool to use for keeping track of any media requests that might come through, so you can note down the name of the title/journalist, the nature of their enquiry, any deadlines in place and a status update. This is especially useful for staff who work on shifts, so anyone in the office can check the status of a request at any time.

[DOWNLOAD](#)