

Make Your News Conferences *Work* for the Media

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On almost a weekly basis, we oversee the implementation of news conferences for clients on a local, regional and national basis. So it brings to bear the question of what are the activities marketing folks should consider when developing one. Here's a checklist:

- Issue a media alert up to four days in advance of the news conference. A media alert should provide the basics (e.g. who, what, when, where and why) and follow up with the media the day before the news conference to remind them of the event.
- Consider the accessibility of the news conference location. Is it easy to get to and does it provide enough room to hold guests, news cameras and other media?
- Provide a podium for the speaker(s) to stand at, and just as importantly, for the media to post their microphones.
- Have visuals available. For example, if it's a groundbreaking for a new development, have graphics of the completed project placed on poster boards. Print and television like to show and tell the story.
- Make spokesperson(s) available pre- and post-news conference. Usually media will want one-to-one interviews with key individuals to enhance their story.
- Provide press releases to media at the event. This will help ensure they have all the details discussed during the news conference.