



HOW-TO GUIDE FOR FARMERS MARKET MEDIA OUTREACH

Note: All of this will be more effective if you have taken the time to introduce yourself to the reporter or editor at a non-busy time. Call the reporter (not on deadline) and ask if you can stop by for a short appointment to talk about what the market is doing and planning to do.

Step 1: Write Press Release

1. Before you start, take time to write out answers to the questions “Who? What? When? Where? Why?”
2. Write the press release as if you were writing the story. Smaller newspapers, especially, will cut and paste your words verbatim and run the story.
3. Give your press release a title that names a location in the coverage area of the outlet you are targeting. (Examples: “Bend Farmers Market Expands their Local Area Deliveries” or “Lake Oswego Market Dishes up Brunch for Local Residents”) Most media representatives are swamped with e-mail and will not even open a press release that does not explicitly refer to a location or organization in their coverage area.
4. Tell the editor or reporter what they can expect to see. Be sure they know there will be something good to photograph or film. You greatly increase your chance of coverage.
5. Get quotes from individuals regarding the subject of the press release. Work them into the story. Good sources for quotes are: your farmers market board members, vendors, customers and/or public officials. It is acceptable to draft quotes for people, but you must give them a chance to approve/edit the quote before the press release is distributed.

6. Give contact information for interesting people they can contact to interview. This greatly increases your chances of coverage.
 7. Make sure you give credit where it is due—mention funders, sponsors, co-hosts, etc.
 8. Be sure to include contact info for your organization in your story and at the top of the release.
 9. Double check to make sure that your answers in step 1 are all covered in you release.
 10. Run spell check and have someone else proofread, if time.
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Step 2: Draft and Distribute a Brief Cover E-mail With the Press Release Attached

Include the following information:

- Name and contact info for the individual they can follow-up with for interviews or further information.
- A subject line that includes the title of the press release.
- The name of your market and any other co-hosts.
- Any relevant dates or locations.
- What exactly you are asking of the media outlet (i.e. Are you inviting reporters to cover the actual event? Are you writing an advance promotional story about an event to promote registration or attendance?)
- If you are inviting reporters to attend, include parking info or directions.

Attach:

- Your press release, saved as a document. The media representative may want to cut and paste from this document, which is not possible if it is saved as a PDF, for example.

- One or two high-resolution photos, if available, including a caption suggestion in your cover email.
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Step 3: A Few Days Later, Make Follow-Up Phone Calls to the Outlets to Which You Sent Press Releases

- Find out the least busy time to call.
- Keep it brief. Editors and reporters are busy. Introduce yourself and the name of your market. Ask them if they received the press release (Be in front of your computer so you can re-send the email if necessary while you are on the phone.)
- Briefly recap the information in the press release, as well as the “ask” you are making of that press outlet.
- Ask them if they have any questions. If you want to suggest an interesting angle, do.
- Ask them if they plan to cover the event. (For example: Will they send a reporter to your event?)
- Thank them for their time and invite them to follow up with you if they have any further questions.