The Carolina Agency

Press Conferences

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Types of Press Conferences

- In-person press conference
- A presentation/panel with a Q&A
- Standing media briefing
- Virtual events and conference calls

When to Host

- Big announcement, with more information needed than a press release can give
- Multiple outlets need the ability to ask questions
- A single interview will not do
- Truly big news or a big crisis

Logistics

- Date
  - Schedule at least 2 weeks in advance
  - Check for competing events
  - Best days are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays before noon
- Location:
  - Near reporters
    - Consider the travel time
  - Visually appealing and related to your news
  - Meets the A/V needs

Invitees

- Press
  - Issue a media alert to your press list at least a week in advance
- VIPs
  - People affected by the news
  - Allies and friends
  - Decision makers who may need persuading

Supporting Materials

- Visuals
  - Props such as charts, pictures and maps
  - Slide shows can be difficult to see in photos
- Press Kit/ Backgrounders
- Written copies of the speakers' statements
- Press Release
- Fact Sheet
  - Info about the organization, announcements, challenge/ opportunity
  - Copies of visuals
- Photo or video the press can release after the conference

Speakers

- Moderator
  - Control the conference
  - Keep the reporters and speakers on topic
- Spokespeople
  - Knowledgeable and articulate
  - Look good on camera
  - Mix experts with emotional stories

Speakers

- 10 to 15 minute prepared statements
- Practice responses to questions
  - Positive and negative
  - Assign roles to avoid people talking over each other
- Be clear and concise
- Do not patronize the audience
  - Assume they are intelligent when explaining things
- Dress the part
- Always tell the truth
  - If you do not know the answer, do NOT make something up
  - “I am not sure right now, but I will look into it and get back to you.”

Schedule of Events

- Check in
  - Separate check in desk for press
- Moderator welcomes the audience and introduces the speakers
- Speakers give their statements
- Moderator opens floor to questions
- Moderator ends the event when responses and questions begin to get repetitive
  - Never end by saying, “We’ll take one more question…”
- Total Time
  - 45 minutes – 1 hour

After the Press Conference

- Encourage the media to stay for individual follow up if possible
- Distribute press kits to those who didn’t attend
- Post photos, videos and quotes online

Consider Exposure

- TV
  - What is the best image?
  - Sit speakers close together
  - Seat the audience close to the speakers so they appear in the shot
  - Display logos prominently
- Radio
  - What makes this sound interesting?
  - Minimize background noise and check acoustics
  - Practice reading the prepared statements so they sound natural
- Print
  - What elements bring this to life on the page?
  - Use simple, powerful, quotable lines
  - Don’t say anything that can’t be backed up with facts
  - Only address what you are prepared to discuss

Sources

- http://smallbusiness.chron.com/organize-successful-press-conference-39875.html
- https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/press-conference/main