

TB ANYWHERE IS EVERYWHERE

INVEST * RESEARCH * ACT

Media tips

10 ways of engaging the media

The following are some of the main ways for approaching and engaging the media.

1. Editorial meetings

An editorial statement from your leading newspaper, addressing the responsibilities of your political delegation, is perhaps one of the most powerful forums of media advocacy. You should approach the editorial board members of your paper and offer to provide them with an editorial briefing on the global TB epidemic. If you can arrange an editorial board meeting, this will provide you with an excellent opportunity to gain the editorial support of a newspaper which, in turn, can be very influential in shaping political decisions.

Begin by doing your homework prior to the meeting. Profile the kinds of editorials that appear in the paper and the position they tend to take, particularly in relation to international issues. Arrive armed with facts and figures that are relevant to the newspaper's audience. Make a persuasive argument that their readers should be concerned about the global TB epidemic.

Make clear why specific elected officials from your area have influence on these matters. Be ready to answer any questions the editor might have. After the meeting, research and provide any further information requested.

2. Opinion pieces

Most newspapers print opinion editorials (op-eds) or guest columns. An op-ed is an expression of opinion rather than a release of news. Although style varies

according to different countries, an op-ed tends to be lively, provocative and sometimes controversial. They provide a very effective way to register concern about TB to policy-makers and to inform communities about why they should care about controlling the disease. Op-eds are usually around 600 to 1 000 words.

It is best to call the newspaper first and request their guidelines for submitting an op-ed. If possible, speak to the appropriate editor to alert them that you intend to submit an op-ed, and briefly explain the importance of the issue.

3. Letters to the editor

Newspapers and magazines have a 'letters page' that gives readers the opportunity to express their views or correct previously published information they feel to be inaccurate or misleading. Letters are widely read and provide a good opportunity to promote your cause. Letters should be short and concise. Those over 500 words are unlikely to be published. Well-written letters of no more than 100 words can be very effective.

A letter should aim to make one main point and to end on a challenging note, with a call to action. Letters can also be signed by a number of signatories, representing various organizations or interests, which may increase their impact. If a letter is responding to an article carried in a daily newspaper, it is important to email, fax or deliver it to the paper within a couple of days.

Important!

To be most effective in all of your media advocacy activities, **NAME NAMES!**

First, specifically mention the policy-maker or responsible agency which should take action.

Second, be clear in specifying where increased TB control funding should be directed, such as the Global Fund or the Global Drug Facility, or your county's bilateral development assistance initiative for TB.

By doing so, you will greatly increase the likelihood that these people or institutions will see this media coverage directly.

TB is preventable and curable. FUND THE GLOBAL PLAN TO STOP TB.

4. News advisories

Advisories are used -- along with phone calls -- to alert journalists to a media event or news conference. An advisory should give all of the basic information on the purpose, date, time, location, and speakers at an event, often in a Who, What, When, Where, Why format. A good advisory should also build some anticipation concerning the news that will be announced. A strong headline helps.

5. News releases

Some journalists receive hundreds of news releases each week. For your release to get noticed, the headline and first paragraph must catch their attention. You should devote most of your time to getting this right compared to preparing the rest of the news release. You can either issue the release in advance and embargoed until the date of publication, or you can issue it on the day of a news event/conference.

6. Calls to journalists

Once you have sent an advisory or news release it is imperative to call journalists to make sure they have received it or that the right journalist has it. Sometimes, you will be asked to resend the release. Sometimes it will be to another journalist or bureau. When you call a busy journalist in a large city, you may have only 30 seconds to gain his or her interest in the story. To be successful, you must be direct to the point concerning the importance of your story or event.

Keep it simple and do not overwhelm them with too much information. Consider practicing your "pitch" with a colleague or friend before making your first call. Try to avoid calling when journalists are facing deadlines.

It will also be useful to know something about the publication or programme that you are calling. An editor can sense immediately if you have never read

their publication or watched their programme and may not see you as a credible source of news.

7. Suggest a feature story

Feature stories are usually longer than news stories. They go into greater depth on how an issue affects people. In magazines, they can span several pages and be accompanied by pictures. On television, single feature programmes usually run for just under 30 minutes, and need a strong narrative to engage the viewer. The best way to obtain a feature story is to describe your idea in a two or three-page story proposal.

Be prepared to do a substantial amount of research on this before handing the story over to the journalist to follow up. Your proposal should provide an outline of the story and list interesting people who could be interviewed. The newer, more unusual, significant or dramatic the story, the better. For example, a journalist may be more interested in an unreported story about a TB outbreak in a school than just a general story about TB.

8. Press briefings

If journalists -- who cover hundreds of different stories and may know next to nothing about TB -- are to produce informative and accurate stories, they need to be properly briefed. Consider organizing an informal press briefing that also serves to build good relations with journalists. For example, invite half a dozen selected journalists to attend a briefing in advance of World TB Day, March 24th.

Brief them on key developments and issues relating to TB and your group's relevant work on the issue. You may want to conduct this as a breakfast meeting and provide refreshments.

It is a good idea to have clear briefing materials to distribute, such as fact sheets or advocacy

publications. If you attend an important national or international conference, you may wish to brief journalists in your community about important developments upon your return.

9. News conferences

A news conference can be a very effective way to announce a very newsworthy story to journalists. Speakers take the platform in a venue and make presentations after which journalists can ask questions. This is a tried and tested formula which can make life easier for journalists and for yourself. Be sure that your story warrants holding one, as news conferences can take a lot of time to organize and it can be disheartening if only a few reporters attend.

In some cases, you may find you can achieve the same results by handling the story from your office. For this, you need to send journalists your news release and briefing materials under embargo until the date of publication, highlighting who is available for interview, and talking them through the story in person or on the phone.

10. Photo opportunities

Television news and magazines need good pictures or visuals in order to report on a story. When you plan a media strategy, think about what images you need and how you will supply these. You may want to pay for a photographer to take pictures and then distribute them to selected publications.

You may also want to prepare a video news release (VNR) for radio and television broadcasters and internet news providers to use. Or, arrange a "photo opportunity" for photographers and camera news crews to take pictures themselves. To announce the photo opportunity, send an advisory that gives the "Who, What, When, Where and Why" of the event to media.

"If journalists - who may know next to nothing about TB - are to produce informative and accurate stories, they need to be properly briefed."



10 insights in working with the media

1. Understand the pressures faced by most journalists

Most journalists are overworked and up against tight deadlines. Late afternoons are especially busy for most journalists as they approach deadlines. Don't take it personally if you call a journalist and they simply don't have the time to speak with you because of these pressures. In providing information to a journalist, you can make their job easier by having carefully thought through how it is relevant, interesting and newsworthy to their audience. The easier you make the job, the easier it will be for you.

2. Expect some of your approaches to be rejected

Many newspapers receive dozens of letters to the editor for every one that is printed. Remember that your success in gaining media coverage will likely be related to the number of times you try. If your letter to the editor isn't printed, or your news release isn't picked up, don't be afraid to enquire why.

3. Don't be intimidated

It is very likely that you already know more about the global TB epidemic than anyone else in your immediate community. A professional and competent journalist will usually value establishing contact with well-informed community members.

4. Be passionate and persistent

The fact that you have nothing personally to benefit from your appeal speaks loudly in editorial board meetings and news events. Much more loudly than the voices of people advocating issues clearly in their personal self-interest.

5. Make it local and keep it relevant

More often than not, small and medium size media outlets focus on issues of greatest concern to their community and region, rather than on international issues. To gain coverage of the global TB epidemic in these media, extra creativity is often required to make the connection between the interrelationship of Kinshasa, for example, and Kansas City (see sidebar).

6. Be creative

Much of what makes news these days falls under the category of "human interest." That is, it involves something extraordinary, personal, creative, humorous or even shocking. Consider novel approaches in attracting the attention of your local media to the global TB epidemic.

7. Yet it is appropriate to take the high ground in making your case

Sometimes, it is right to report on an issue not only because it affects the citizens in your community, but because million of lives globally hang in the balance.

8. Be opportunistic

Rapid response and timing can often determine whether or not journalists are receptive to your issue. Your perspective on news of a local outbreak of TB will be much more valued within a few days, than after a couple weeks, after its occurrence.

9. When in doubt, don't make anything up!

If you are questioned on something about which you are uncertain of the answer, don't take a good guess at providing an answer! Rather, promise the journalist you will get back to them with the correct figures or information.

10. And remember...

Anything you say can be printed. When you do want to provide some important background information, but not be quoted or have it attributed to you as a source, clearly state that the information is "off the record." However, if you don't want something reported, don't say it!

“Consider novel approaches in attracting the attention of your local media to the global TB epidemic.”

Localize global issues

- Put local TB outbreaks in the context of the global TB epidemic.
- Have a member of your STOP TB PARTNERSHIP group interviewed on their visit to a TB project in a developing country.
- Work with your STOP TB PARTNERSHIP national office to invite a former TB patient to address a community forum in your locality.
- TB bacilli require no visas to cross international borders. As a third of the world's population is latently infected with the disease, there is no effective way to screen those who may eventually become sick from the disease from entering your country.
- There are likely people in your community who were hospitalized with TB or who lost family members to the disease many decades ago. Consider using their voices and experiences in your media activities.

Is it news?

Journalists likely will look for the following in determining whether or not your story is newsworthy:

- Is it local? If it is a national or global story, is there a local angle?
- Is it something that many people already care about?
- Is there important new information?
- Is it timely and does it have a sense of immediacy?
- Is there controversy or conflict?
- Is it different or unusual?
- Is it the first, the best or the biggest of something?
- Is it tied to an important date or anniversary?
- Does it involve a prominent person or organization?
- Is there an interesting visual image associated with the story?

10 tips for preparing an effective news release

1. Make sure the headline and first paragraph are powerful and newsworthy

The most important information should be in the first paragraph. As a rule of thumb, you should spend more time ensuring that the headline and first few paragraphs are attention-getting and newsworthy as you spend in writing the rest of the news release.

2. Put the most important information first

Use the pyramid principle to order information, featuring the most important and newsworthy information at the top and placing more general background information toward the end.

3. Make use of quotations

Aim to use a direct quote within the first few paragraphs of the news release, and perhaps a couple additional quotes elsewhere in the release. Using memorable quotes can bring the issue to life and provides the best way to express strong opinions. Remember, a quote is the only part of a news release that is reported word for word.

4. Keep it short

Keep the release to no more than two pages. Rather than make the news release too long or cluttered, accompany it with a fact sheet or other background briefing material.

5. Keep it concise

Use short sentences of 25 to 30 words. Use paragraphs containing only two or three sentences. A good length for a news release is between 500 to 1000 words.

6. Use a simple, punchy news style

Avoid jargon and technical abbreviations.

7. Put the date and release details at the top of the page

State if it is EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE at a specific time and date, or if it is FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

8. Concluding the news release

At the end of the news release put END or mark perhaps with * * * to indicate the final page of the release. Follow this with contact names, emails and telephone numbers where journalists can reach you immediately if they need more information while writing up their story to a deadline.

9. Proofread the release carefully!

Make sure all of your figures and statistics are accurate.

10. Is it really news?

Re-read the news release with one thing in mind, namely the first question a journalist will ask when reading it, which will be, "Is this news?"

"Aim to use a direct quote within the first few paragraphs of the news release, and perhaps a couple additional quotes elsewhere in the release."



10 ideas for TB photo opportunities

1. TB clinics

Take journalists to visit a local TB clinic.

2. TB patients

Arrange for a journalist to interview a new TB patient in your community and follow his or her progress throughout the entire course of treatment. Make sure the person is willing.

3. Lungs

Show photographs of lungs “before” with TB, and “after” with DOTS.

4. Celebrities

Have a local celebrity or sports star supervise patients taking their medicines.

5. Outbreaks

TB outbreaks in schools, meeting places, or clubs bring attention to TB.

6. Historic sites

Exhibit photos and medical equipment related to the control of TB in your country a hundred years ago, or hold a press briefing at the site of a former TB sanatorium in your region

7. Balloons

Pass out balloons labeled with the message “The Air We Breathe Can Be Fatal, If We Don’t Control TB.”

8. Clocks

Use a large visible clock that shows somebody becoming sick with TB nearly every 4 seconds.

9. Rallies

Organize rallies to draw attention to the threat of the global TB epidemic.

10. Photocalls

Have a leading politician or dignitary sign a TB petition and then ask them to present it to an even higher leading politician or dignitary in front of photographers!

Sample news release outline

NEWS RELEASE [Insert organization name/logo]

Contact:
 [Media contact]
 [Company name]
 [Telephone number]
 [Fax number]
 [Email address]
 [Web site address]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OR STRICTLY EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE ON: [insert date]

HEADLINE
 City, State, Date — [Opening paragraph. Describes compellingly and succinctly the who, what, where, when and why of the main story.]

[Supporting quote. Insert strong quote from notable figure, activist, or expert to validate story.]

[Remaining body of text. Give brief summary of issues, supply details about the issue on a local, national or global level, states clearly why is this significant in today’s context, and what is happening in the future.]

[If release is more than 1 page use]:
 -more-

[Top of second page]:
 [Abbreviated headline (page 2)]
 [Press release continued]

For more information contact:
 [Media contact]
 [Company name]
 [Telephone number]
 [Fax number]
 [Email address]
 [Web site address]

-- END --

[indicates end of press release]

[include short summary paragraph of the organization(s) issuing press release]

“Give a brief summary of the issues, and supply details about the issue on a local, national or global level.”

10 tips for successful news conferences



1. Consider whether it is appropriate to hold a news conference

You should consider organizing a news conference if you have a big, newsworthy story; ensuring the participation of a high profile speaker; are launching a major new initiative; or releasing important new findings or research data.

2. Consider other options to a news conference

If your news story is only moderately newsworthy, consider other ways of disseminating it to journalists such as a “desk launch” (e-mailing or faxing your release to journalists and following up with a call); an informal press briefing over breakfast or lunch; one-on-one briefings with individual journalists; or a story to just one media outlet as an “exclusive.”

3. Get the timing right

With few exceptions, never schedule your news conference for evenings or the weekend. Check that you are not competing with other important news events the same day. Hold the event in the morning or around lunch time so reporters can meet deadlines.

4. Find a good location for the news conference

Use a central well-known location convenient for journalists and appropriate to the event. Avoid large rooms that give the appearance that few people attended. Make sure the noise level of the room is low.

5. Give attention to arrangement details

Be sure to troubleshoot the following in planning your event:

- Reserve space at the back of the room for television cameras, possibly on a raised platform.
- Reserve a quiet room for radio interviews following the news conference.
- Ensure light and sound systems are in working order.
- If possible, have fax, phone and e-mail capability available.
- Consider displaying large visuals, such as graphs, logos or charts.
- Prepare a “sign-in” sheet for journalists requesting contact details.
- Be sure the switchboard of your organization knows where to direct follow-up calls from journalists.

6. Consider what other materials might be useful for the media

In addition to your news release, consider providing journalists with fact sheets, case studies, reports and easily-understood graphs. Speaker biographies and copies of speeches are also appreciated. Consider putting all of these printed materials together into one press kit. Television crews appreciate receiving B-roll images (broadcast quality video background footage), or video news releases (which are shorter and specific to the news you are releasing).

7. Invite journalists

A few things to plan for include:

- Keep an up-to-date mailing list or database of journalists that might cover this issue.
- Focus on ensuring that the most influential media attend.
- Place your event in journalists’ diaries seven to 10 days before the event.
- Always make a follow-up call to check that the right journalist has received the information.
- Build interest and anticipation for the event without giving out the real “news” of the story.
- Consider providing general, background briefings to important journalists prior to the event, without disclosing to them the details of your news story.
- Wait until the event to distribute your news release to create an element of suspense. If you decide to distribute it prior, use an embargo to prevent journalists from publishing before the event.

8. Prepare speakers

It is useful to go over the following with your speakers a few days prior to the news conference as well as the day of the event:

- Select a moderator who will introduce speakers and manage questions after the presentation.
- Select appropriate speakers who are charismatic, articulate and authoritative.
- Brief speakers on the event’s main message and prepare them on how to answer difficult questions.
- Ensure that each speaker should present for only three to five minutes.
- Have each speaker make different points, while still focusing on the main message.
- Keep speeches short and simple aimed at a general audience and avoid technical jargon.
- Be sure your speakers are available to stay on for questions following the event.

9. Conduct the news conference

Plan a maximum of three speakers on the podium at your news conference and allocate no more than

5 minutes per speaker. If necessary you can place additional speakers in the audience who can be referred to if particular topics come up. Allow an extra 30 minutes for questions from the floor and also offer the opportunity for journalists to carry out one-one-one short interviews with individual speakers (if the speakers agree). Start the event on time — avoid keeping journalists waiting. Encourage lots of questions. Statements should be made in short whole sentences with short breaks between sentences (this allows TV editing). Answers should be kept short and reiterate main messages.

10. Follow-up

When the news conference is over:

- E-mail information to journalists who were unable to attend.
- Gather news clippings of the coverage that result from the news conference and distribute them to important coalition partners and policy makers.
- Thank those who provided good coverage.

“Select appropriate speakers who are charismatic, articulate and authoritative.”

10 tips for television interviews

When publicizing a story, you will want to have one or two spokespeople available to interview who are familiar with both their material and the basic rules of interviewing. It is very important that they be prepared. If an interview has already been arranged, they should become familiar with that particular show, programme or publication. Profile the audience and have in mind a typical viewer, listener or reader. In the case of TV or radio, find out if anyone else is appearing, whether the show is live or pre-recorded, and if the audience will be calling in to ask questions.

1. SOCO (Single Overriding Communications Objective)

Focus on getting one main message across in the interview. Come back to your main message again and again, expressing it in different ways.

2. Anticipate the questions you may be asked

Prepare a question and answer sheet prior to the interview and practice. Think of the questions you most dread being asked, and practice responding to them. Also be sure to have a "last line" ready. The reporter may end the interview by asking, "Is there anything else you would like to add? This is a good place to again go back to your "SOCO" and reiterate your main point.

3. Be enthusiastic about the subject

People will often remember the level of your passion about your subject more than what you specifically say. Don't allow yourself to become defensive or angry, or to lecture the reporter or listeners. The best advice is to simply be yourself and rely on the strong points of your own character.

4. "Touch and Go!"

Don't allow the interviewer to side-track you from your main message. Instead, turn around an irrelevant question by "touching" upon it and then going on to again address your main point. For example, you might handle a question about TB vaccinations by responding, "Yes, it is important for our children to be vaccinated for TB as this can protect them from the disease during childhood. But the only sure means of protecting them throughout their entire life is to reduce the reservoir of infectious TB cases worldwide." Watch politicians when they are interviewed on television to learn the art of "touch and go!"

5. Answer questions in full sentences

If it is not a live interview, the final edited version may not include the voice of the interviewer, so avoid one-word answers. For example, answer the question "How many people die from TB each year globally?" not by just saying "Nearly two million," but with a full sentence such as "Nearly two million people die from TB each year globally".

6. Know where to look

Look at the interviewer – not the camera -- when talking to him or her. If there is an audience, look at them when appropriate. If you are seated during the interview, sit up straight and lean forward slightly.

7. Know what to wear

Ask the producer what you should wear. In general, your attire should be comfortable, neither too formal nor too casual, and without busy designs or patterns.

8. Keep your answers simple

Don't try to make too many complex points. And don't use jargon or highly technical medical language. Rather, use colorful words, analogies and even appropriate clichés.

9. Use powerful language

The challenge is to shape messages about TB that use compelling rhetoric and create a sense of urgency. There is no need for false alarm or sensation to draw attention to TB. The reality of this contagious airborne disease that slowly rots the lungs is frightening enough. This is why, in 1993, the World Health Organization declared a "Global TB Emergency" and in 2005 all African Ministers of Health declared a TB Emergency on the continent.

10. Use memorable phrases

When you have only a few seconds in front of a microphone or in a meeting, you need to use memorable phrases — soundbites — that will stay with your audience long after you have left. The best soundbites - usually last no more than 25 seconds - get to the heart of the problem without lengthy qualified explanations. Broadcast producers can't resist them, and listeners and viewers remember them. The soundbite should capture and communicate the one key message you want to leave with the audience, if they remember nothing else.

TB sound bites

- There is nowhere to hide from TB. Anyone who breathes air is at risk.
- The world is growing smaller and the TB bacilli are growing stronger.
- Every country is at risk from the poor treatment practices of other countries.
- Some TB control efforts are succeeding only in creating stronger TB germs and weaker patients.
- Cure is the best prevention in TB control.
- Tuberculosis was last year's most overlooked tragedy. TB killed more people than all wars, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, airline accidents, terrorist acts and murders worldwide this past year, and with much less fanfare.

10 additional tips for pros

1. What is “old news” to us might still be “news” to others

As noted before, when you assess your audience, consider what information will be news to them. And also consider that some information which is common knowledge among those of us who have been TB advocates for a while might be new and surprising to others. For example, many journalists are still surprised to learn of the devastating impact TB is having on people worldwide, or the dramatic role it plays in the HIV epidemic.

2. Put TB issues in a bigger political context

In Europe, there has been extensive coverage of TB in the context of the European Union expanding to include additional Eastern European countries with high levels of MDR TB. If you live in Japan, consider for example that Japan is vying for a seat on the UN Security Council. Wouldn't its increased support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria help signal to the world its leadership on critical global issues?

3. Use positive reinforcement

Let your legislative offices know that you are always willing to use its contacts and influence with the media not only to call for action, but to also to praise politicians when they demonstrate leadership on important issues such as the control of TB and increasing financial support for the Global Fund.

4. Pick a fight

Controversy can be good. In democracies, open debate of public policies can help move issues forward if you are on the right side of the debate. If someone in your community takes issue in the

media with your call for greater funding to fight the global TB epidemic, this might actually be a blessing rather than a curse. Propose continuing this discussion further on other media outlets such as talk shows.

5. Encourage journalists to investigate a story

Encourage reporters covering your World TB Day event to dig a little deeper. For example, you could suggest they contact your local elected official's office for a statement on what they have been doing to address the global TB epidemic, what their position is on providing greater financial support to the Global Fund, etc.

6. Put a human face on your issue

One person's experience being sick with TB will be more interesting to many journalists than a lot of facts and figures. Thousands of people still become sick with TB in wealthy countries. Explore with your local health department if there is somebody in your community who might wish to speak publicly about their experience with the disease.

7. Organize a media tour

Work with your national TB Programme office or your National Stop TB Partnership office to bring a TB expert or former TB patient to your region for a few days, holding press briefings and organizing interviews in two or three different major metro areas. You might also use this person at a local fund-raising event to help cover their travel costs.

8. Become a resource to journalists

If you are particularly well-versed on other issues of health and international development, make

your areas of expertise known to key journalists. Let them know you'd be glad to help track down information, contacts and spokespeople on these issues, even if it is not directly related to TB. If ever such help is requested by a journalist, enquire as to what deadline they are up against and be sure to respond promptly.

9. Build your reputation as an asset to the media

When speaking with journalists, be respectful of their time limitations. Cultivate a reputation that you will encourage them to cover a story only when you know it is newsworthy. When you have useful background information or updates to provide them, share this with them for their information, but clearly communicate that you don't expect a story from it. Develop a sense of what kinds of stories various journalists and media outlets like to cover. For example, some health reporters specialize on medical and scientific topics, while others are more inclined to report on the social and political aspects of health.

10. Develop “media champions”

An ultimate achievement is to establish media champions committed to reversing the global TB epidemic. Many journalists around the world already consider it to be “their cause” to fight TB and to increase financial support to the Global Fund. Take a long-term view in cultivating and adding other caring journalists from your community to this roster!

With special thanks to Kraig Klautdt, President & CEO, Advocacy Action Fund.

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