

## MEDIA RELATIONS TIPS FOR ARTISTS

### Before you begin

1. **Know your story.** Reporters should be able to determine what your “news” is in the first paragraph. Do you have a new exhibition? Have you formed a notable partnership or received a major commission? Did you win a national award? Are you hosting a new gallery walk/open house? Be sure you can define why you want the media to pay attention to your news.
2. **Know your audience/journalist.** After you determine your story, you need to decide what audiences you are trying to reach and figure out which media would reach that audience. If you are trying to reach young professionals to visit your new gallery/boutique, you may want to target *Indy.com*. But if you are targeting affluent consumers who buy art to furnish their homes, then you may want to target *Indianapolis Monthly HOME* and *Carmel Magazine*.
3. **Have your background facts handy.** If you have a Web site, make sure you have basic information in a media section, or a place where reporters can easily find it. If you don't have a Web site, put a fact sheet together (also called a backgrounder) that you can include in a media kit, and have photos ready on a CD. Pertinent details include: artwork titles, mediums and prices; show dates, times, location; your background and education; artist's statements; etc.
4. **Get good photography.** Speaking of photography, in today's digital age, you must have high-quality jpg images of your work either on your Web site or at the ready. A headshot is good to have as well.
5. **Reach out to the media cooperatively.** If you are part of a group show, work together and send one press release rather than inundating reporters with separate releases from all participants. If your show is sponsored or part of a larger event, check with the organizer to see how your information could be included.

### Getting media attention

1. **It's all about quality.** The days of sending a press release to 100 journalists (or even 10 at the same paper) are over. Read the paper/go online to find a few journalists whose interests and/or “beats” match what you offer.
2. **It takes time.** If you don't get immediate attention or have your news picked up the first time, don't despair. The best media relationships are built over time and require more than a news release. Targeted service, prompt replies, phone calls, e-mails, in-person meetings and follow-up notes are part of the relationship-building process.

3. **But it also has to be timely.** Journalists are stretched for time, and often will call you on deadline. Include a cell phone number in your information so a reporter can reach you, and be sure to call back. Your responsiveness, at all hours of the day, may be the difference between being included in a story or not.
4. **Don't always go for the story.** Sometimes the best way to build relationships with the media is to provide news tips that have nothing to do with you. Be a source for journalists.
5. **Be honest and accurate.** Provide media with timely, accurate information that's appropriate for what they're looking for. And if you don't know the answer, say so and offer to find a source that does. (Spelling and grammar count.)
6. **Be persistent.** That doesn't mean being a pest. If you have emailed and called, resist the temptation to call again, (or to call the journalist's boss). It may not have anything to do with you. Newsrooms are getting smaller and journalists have to do more with less.

#### See alternative attention

1. **Join networking groups.** In addition to traditional networking, there are several online groups you can join to ask questions and share information about reaching local, regional or national media. You also can bypass traditional media and reach out to new audiences directly through social marketing (indyhub, indymojo, smallerindiana etc.).
2. **Share your expertise.** If something works for you, be open to sharing it with your colleagues. Source other artists to the media if asked; the favor will be returned to you.
3. **Read Indy blogs and get to know bloggers. (Or become a blogger yourself).** In addition to the blogs and sites offered through the Arts Council of Indianapolis, eyeonindianapolis.blogspot.com, indyscribe.com, deanosvino.com are just a few examples of blogs that focus from time-to-time on Indianapolis art. Invite the authors out to see your work and learn about what you are doing.