

NATIONAL CERVICAL CANCER COALITION

SPEAKING OUT ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER AND HPV

Communications Plan

A sound communications plan is key to the success of your message. Know that your message serves a need. Before telling others about your message you must first know who your audience is, how to reach them, and most of all, how to convince them to get regular exams and/or seek medical treatment.

An effective message begins with a compelling story along with current facts about cervical cancer and HPV. To educate yourself, attend conferences, visit your local library, talk to other survivors, read the Internet and visit the NCCC's website: www.nccc-online.org.

PREPARE A PLAN OF ACTION

1. Think through:

- Why is your message so important?
- What can others learn from your experiences?
- What do you wish you had known before you began treatment?
- What three pieces of advice do you want people to hear?

2. Define your audience:

- Your current audience base: age, income, neighborhood.
- How will your audience learn about you - articles, word of mouth, speaking engagements?
- Who would you most like to reach?

Women's Groups

Business Groups

Schools and Sports Teams

Sororities and Girls Clubs

Civic Clubs

"Mommy" Groups

Medical Community

3: Define your plan and budget:

- What methods will you use to communicate to your audience?
- What will it cost in money and time to get your message out?
- What marketing tools will you implement? Examples include: writing newspaper or magazine articles; making radio or television appearances; public relations activities such as public speaking or hosting a special event.

NCCC
National Cervical Cancer Coalition
A program of the American Sexual Health Association



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4: Define your objectives:

- Create awareness of cervical cancer/HPV.
- Motivate others to get regular Pap tests.
- Raise awareness about the NCCC's website.

HOW TO CONTACT A REPORTER

Contacting a reporter is easy. The media is always looking for interesting story ideas. Here are eight simple steps to making contact with a reporter.

Familiarize yourself with the publication.

Subscribe to publications in which you want to be interviewed. Become familiar with the writing style and types of articles the health or lifestyle reporters write.

Define the importance of your idea.

Before you pitch a story idea, ask yourself the following questions: Why is my story newsworthy? Is it timely? What is going to differentiate my story from someone else's?

Personalize your pitch.

Do not cold call a reporter. Personalize your email. Include his/her name in the subject line: "Jim Davis, here's a story idea for you." Be sure to double-check the spelling of the reporter's name. "To Whom It May Concern" emails are a dead give-away that you have not done your homework.

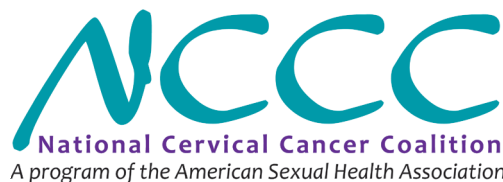
Your email should be brief and include why you think the reporter would be interested in your story idea. State why your story is newsworthy and what value it brings to the publication's readers.

Appeal to the reporter's emotions without going overboard.

Everyone likes a good, heartfelt story. Keep your email brief. If the reporter wants more information, he/she will call you. Include a couple of facts and figures about cervical cancer to underscore the importance of your message.

Be persistent without being a pest.

Reporters do not have time to call everyone back to say whether or not they received your email. If you'd like to follow up to see if the reporter is interested, contact them by phone within two or three days after



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you pitch a story idea. The best time to contact a reporter is first thing in the morning. This will ensure that you are not bothering them while they are working on a deadline. If the reporter you contact is not interested in covering your story, ask them if they can suggest another reporter who might be interested in hearing about your idea.

Avoid pitching the same story idea to two or more reporters at the same publication. If you do contact another reporter at the same media outlet, let each reporter know that the other has been contacted.

Return calls and honor deadlines.

When a reporter calls and leaves a message, be sure you return their call the same day, as many reporters work on a deadline. If you do not know the answer to a question, be a resource. Say something like, “That question would better be answered by the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC). Here is the name and phone number of someone who will be happy to speak with you regarding your question.” Reporters love referrals and will appreciate your assistance. Have them call Fred Wyand at ASHA (919.361.3124).

Don’t fake it until you make it.

When dealing with reporters, honesty is the best policy. Trust and integrity are critical when building relationships with reporters.

Journalists love feedback.

The work is not over after the interview is complete or after the article has been published. To leave a lasting impression, write a thank-you note to the reporter as soon as possible. Everyone likes to be acknowledged for a job well done. Do not show your appreciation by sending gifts or flowers. It is unethical for the press to accept gifts of any kind. After the relationship has been established, the reporter may enjoy hearing from you from time to time with a health report. The reporter may do a follow-up story on you several months down the road.

Special Note: Pitching a story is like fishing. Sometimes you catch a little fish and get a small mention in the news. Other times you catch a big fish and you land a feature article. Then there are times that you catch nothing at all and get no response. You just have to learn when to fish and what type of bait works best. In summary, getting news coverage can only happen with the three Ps: patience, persistence and passion!

