



See Your Selfie: Toolkit #2

1. Connecting, Interfacing and Building Relationships with Local Media

In order to enhance the coverage of your community's Recovery Day activities or the importance of Recovery in general, you need to educate a number of people at your local television and radio station(s) about the issue, your organization and the interest of the community in the subject. Here are a number of steps you can take:

- a) Call up the local station manager and make an appointment to come by for just 20 minutes to introduce yourself and what your organization is going to be doing for Recovery Day.

Be very specific to Recovery Day so as to make the meeting flow quickly.

Let the manager know that you are willing to hold an information session for station staff on the subject of Recovery and its importance to both individuals and the community (30 minutes max). You could offer a "Lunch and Learn" where you bring in the pizza for a lunchtime presentation.

- b) Following your meeting with the manager, you could also ask to meet (just to say hello) with several other key people (news assignment personnel, the person who schedules Public Service Announcements, and one of the better-known reporters who covers community involvement).

Be sure to get their business cards or contact information so that you can call them directly when you are wanting to promote your event(s).

- c) Keep everyone you have met at the station up-to-date on planning for Recovery Day so that they feel aligned with what you are doing. Also ask if there are other people there who should be notified of developments. Try to get everyone in your database so they get your social media posts, newsletters, special announcements etc. If all else fails, call them personally to provide a very quick update.
- d) Should someone at the station self-declare about a problem with drugs or alcohol, either for themselves, for a family member or a friend, do what you can to discretely find help for that person. Such assistance can go a long way to building a long-term relationship with the station.



- e) Keep up-to-date on developments with the local station in terms of personnel changes, special projects and other station promotions. Participate where possible in these promotions to keep a high profile with the station.
- f) Try to have the support go both ways e.g. write letters of support to the station for things they do very well. Copy the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, Broadcast Division (CRTC). Offer to write a positive intervention letter for the station at licence renewal time (usually every 7 years) but you can make the offer anytime.

2. Creating Public Service Announcements (PSA's) at no cost

PSA's are usually 15 or 30 second commercials for a charitable cause or some public service. It's a station's way of supporting local causes of importance to the community. PSA time in a station's schedule is often quite limited as most non-program time is reserved for paid commercials. This is often very sought-after time by many community organizations so you need to make a case for why Recovery Day deserves as much time as possible.

Most often, stations will put a PSA into a cycle for a certain number of weeks and then change to another cause in an effort to help as many good causes in the community as possible. It is very important, therefore, to get your PSA to the station well in advance of an event you are promoting. The best timing should be worked out with the person who schedules on-air PSA time. This is why you want to meet the person who schedules the air time for PSA's and be their new best friend.

Producing a PSA

Television and radio commercials can be very expensive in the commercial marketplace. And your PSA is going to have to compete with such messaging for audience attention. Television spots are the most expensive and can cost around \$250,000 for a national 30 second spot. Radio is much less expensive but you need more of it to have the same effect as a television spot.

However, the first goal should be to get a spot created for you for free (often called Pro Bono). Here are some tips for doing that –

- a) Approach local television or radio production companies much the same as you did for your local broadcaster(s). Find a chance to engage them on the subject of Recovery and what you do. Ask to be their Pro Bono cause for one year and for one spot. Often those who get involved this way will do even more than you ask.
- b) Production companies can often tie your production onto an existing commercial shoot that runs short of time e.g. if the crew is contracted for a full day and the commercial that



they shoot can be done in the morning, your spot can be assigned to the afternoon since the crew is already paid for the day.

- c) As well as production companies, you can also approach local schools that teach television or radio production to see if they will assign your spot to some students who then get graded on how well your spot looks and/or sounds.
- d) You can also approach sponsors who will donate the funds for your spot in return for acknowledgement in all your press, website and other public communications throughout the year. Developing relationships with sponsors this way can be beneficial in other areas as well. Radio broadcasters will often donate more airtime if you purchase even a small amount.

3. Increasing Social Media Engagement

Once you have some media to show, you can adapt it for social media purposes (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) to extend the reach of your message. The key to social media use is having a message that captures the interest of the audience immediately and is of such quality that people want to like it and share it with their own databases.

Here are some tips for extending the reach of your social media messaging:

- a) Tap into the curiosity of the audience e.g. ask a question that intrigues them to click through to more detail
- b) Have a colourful and engaging photo or video
- c) In the body of your text, use language that captures interest quickly. There is no time to build to a point. Hit with your strongest point head-on.
- d) Change your visuals and text display often so that the same message looks like a new one.
- e) Link directly to your website or a landing page with more detail.
- f) Always make your ask – whether it's for money, greater participation, a response to your messaging, a specific activity or project.



- g) The easiest response is to get a like or a share to others. The average person on social media has 300 people in their database. If you can reach out to your 300 and they reach out to their respective 300's, you can quickly reach thousands.
- h) You can buy a "boost" for your message which will extend it to many more.
- i) Find a local blogger or even a high school IT teacher or student who has thousands of social media contacts and have them teach you their tricks for extending the reach of their messages.
- j) Make full use of your network of friends and family to have them like and share your message to everyone they know.