

## 10 ways to hook the media

Many organisations find it difficult to create media opportunities that result in promoting the organisation in local papers.

No matter what size your organisation is you can create an opportunity for the media to profile your organisation by following these tips.

Often volunteer organisations don't approach the local media for support and that means they get what they asked for – nothing! You will be surprised how, with a small amount of preparation, you can achieve great results. It is easy!

The main thing you need to do is create the story for the media. We provide 10 different scenarios here that you can use and there will be at least one that can be made to suit your needs.

Here are ten potential media opportunities.

**1 Local character**

Media love profiling colourful characters – in fact this is often the best chance of having your organisation featured. Choose someone who has an interesting story.

**2 Long service recognition**

Choose a volunteer who has achieved a landmark length of service, or a group of volunteers and present them with a certificate of appreciation recognising their long service. If you don't have a certificate there is a downloadable certificate on the NVW web site.

**3 Local stats**

Media love localised statistics. Can you release stats during NVW? Maybe they could be the number of operations you have attended, how many meals you have prepared and delivered, or how many people you have assisted.

**4 Certificate of Appreciation**

The certificate is downloadable from the NVW web site. Use it to recognise all your volunteers and have them presented by a local dignitary – that could be an MP or the local Mayor.

## **5 Recruiting drive**

Contact the local paper and ask them to help you recruit new members as part of a NVW promotion and feature story. You can do this one as a stand alone or link it in with another of the Top 10 Tips. For example you can feature a local character but also include the key message that more volunteers are required.

## **6 Open Day**

Is your voluntary headquarters appropriate for running an Open Day? Maybe you can do so during NVW and ask the local media to help you promote the event – show the public what you do or use the open day to demonstrate what you do to prospective volunteers.

## **7 Training initiative**

How much training does your organisation do? Maybe you can present the training certificates during NVW or organise an interesting training scenario for the local media to cover.

## **8 Fundraising**

Do you do fundraising? NVW is a good time to launch a fundraising appeal or just to put out a call for local support.

## **9 Donation / sponsorship**

Use NVW as a time to recognise a sponsorship or donation from a local company. You can also link this to another Top 10 Tip to maximise the publicity opportunity.

## **10 New equipment**

Have you recently acquired a new piece of equipment that could be a news story? That could be a vehicle or a significant piece of hardware that makes your job easier or helps you do the job better.

## **How to go about it – 6 easy steps.**

- 1 Choose which Top 10 you are going to use as your media hook – you can offer more than one story option to the media if you like.
- 2 Prepare a few notes as background detail – this can just be dot points with the facts about your story. You don't have to try and write the story but the more information you can give the journalist the more likely you will be to get a great result.
- 3 Contact the local newspaper at least two weeks before NVW (by 26<sup>th</sup> April is timely). If you don't know how to contact them find a copy of the paper you are interested in and the contact details are usually inside the front or back page.
- 4 Call and ask for the editor. Ask the editor if they would be interested in featuring your organisation during NVW to help recognise and thank the local volunteers for their efforts over the past year.

- 5 Tell the editor about the story options you have identified. Be ready to send them the dot points you have prepared as background information.
- 6 Talk to the editor about timing and setting up a photo opportunity, and the rest will just happen.

Yes – it sounds simple. It is simple. Most local newspapers will happily run National Volunteer Week stories but you need to be the first in and put your hand up and say – please feature us! You will be surprised at the response you get.

## Final tips.

- Refer the local newspaper to the Volunteering Australia website for more general information on National Volunteer Week.  
[www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)
- Make sure any invitations linked to National Volunteer Week are sent out with plenty of prior notice, especially if you want to secure the services of the Mayor or other dignitary – the more notice you give the better chance you have of a positive result
- If your organisation has a Head Office PR team please let them know what you are doing to make sure you don't interfere with their plans and that you are working within your organisation's rules

Good luck – go forth and promote. It is not difficult to be a PR expert.

Prepared by: Peter Cocks  
National Communications Manager  
Volunteering Australia  
T: 03 9820 4100  
M: 0417 398 232  
E: [peter.cocks@volunteeringaustralia.org](mailto:peter.cocks@volunteeringaustralia.org)