



HOW TO do PR

The term 'PR' might sound scary, but it's really just about getting your local paper, radio station or TV news talking about you. It's a great way to raise the profile of what your centre is doing and will help ensure everyone in your community knows where to come to improve their skills.

Here are our top tips for getting the most out of your PR coverage:

- **Know your media**

You're the best person to know about the papers, radio stations or TV channels in your area, and you should be able to find their contact details on the internet. Get in touch with them to tell them all about your centre!

- **Find a news hook**

Journalists need a 'news hook' to hook a story onto, and it's up to you to provide it. It could be a special open day you're running - or a campaign event like Get Online Week. It could be an MP or local VIP paying you a visit - always a great way to get media attention! Give them something to get excited about!

- **What else is on offer?**

It's not enough just to hold an event - you've got to sweeten the deal so a journalist can't resist the story. Journalists love a good bit of human interest! Find a couple of really strong, inspirational case study stories about learners you've already helped - and tell the journalist all about them. Offer up the opportunity to talk to them in person (once you've checked your learners are happy with this). Journalists also love statistics, so try and put together some facts and figures, such as the number of people you've helped or the number of people still offline in your town/city.

- **Make a phone call**

Once you're clear about what you're promoting, make a phone call. Ask to speak to a journalist you know is interested in skills/education/technology (someone you've seen in your local paper) or ask to speak to the news editor. Outline your story to them, and don't be afraid to sell yourself. Ask them if it's something they'd be able to cover. The worst that can happen is they say no, and then you can just ask what sort of story they ARE interested in, and how you else you might be able to work with them.

- **Write a press release**

Once you've had an initial chat, it's a good idea to follow up with a press release. Press releases give the journalist all the information they need in the easiest format possible, so they're more likely to cover your story! Start out with a summary of what's going on, and then flesh out the detail with quotes from key people - like your VIP or your Centre Manager, quoting your key stats and one of your learner case studies saying how fabulous your centre is. Remember, journalists often cut from the bottom up, so give them key details as early in the case study as possible.





****Remember - Campaigns like Get Online Week are a great excuse to get in touch with your local media.**

• Use a picture

If you've got a good picture to send with your press release, it's got an even better chance of making the paper. Remember - journalists want to see **FACES**, so avoid boring line-ups, backs of heads, and background chaos! Pick a fab learner/visitor or two, and make sure their faces take up 70% of the picture. They can be smiling at the camera (eg. a new visitor showing off their new skills) or caught in conversation (eg. a brilliant learner in conversation with your MP/VIP).

• Make ANOTHER call!!!

Once you've sent your press release to your local journalist, don't forget about it. Give them a call a couple of days later to see if they've received it, and whether they think they'll be able to use it. Journalists often receive hundreds of press releases each day, and so giving them a call might jog their memory and give your story a better chance of being used.

**** Remember - There's absolutely no substitute for talking to a journalist in person, and building a relationship with them. They're people too, they're interested in the local community, and they want to chat to people about what's happening in it.**

