



PR & Journalism Jargon Glossary

This glossary should provide a detailed overview of PR terms and tools for ADHA members involved in PR activities on behalf of their constituents or components. Since PR efforts emphasize working with the news media, there are also journalism terms highlighted within.

A

Above the Fold: A story placed on the top of a newspaper page, literally above the fold.

Advertorial: A paid editorial piece used in conjunction with or in place of an advertisement. Often times, an organization that regularly advertises in a certain publication will receive special offers for an advertorial through the strong relationship.

ANR: Audio News Release.

Article: This is a news story drafted by a reporter and printed in a newspaper, newsletter, magazine or online. A true article is objective, with no bias or opinion. Articles can be a news release printed verbatim as chosen by the editor at his/her discretion. (Not to be confused with a news release. See *News Release*.)

AP Style: Associated Press Style. The most common, most used and most respected editorial style used in journalism. Most PR practitioners follows this style as it makes working with journalists easier and provides a level of mutual respect. A factual and language-use reference and guide. (See *News Wire*.)

B

Backgrounder: Historical profiles, organizational profiles, etc.—used as background information for reporters as they prepare for interviews and complete their stories.

Banner: Top of a newspaper (either print or online) that provides the name of the publication, teasers or other information, such as the high and low temperatures for the day if it's a daily.

Beat: The subject or geographical area assigned to a reporter.

Brief/Blurb: A shorter version of an article.

B-roll: Background footage. Organizations produce B-roll for TV stations to use for news broadcasts that require running visual images in the background while a news reporter's voice is heard in the voice-over. (Example: dental hygienist applying sealants on a patient.)

Byline: The author of an article or Op-ed. (Often times, Op-eds are ghost written.)

C

Calendar Advisory/Announcement: Directed to calendar editors, general editors or community calendar producers for announcing a public event in the community calendar section of a newspaper or on the community calendar announcements of local broadcast stations. (Due to its similar structure, see News Alert.)

Circulation: The number of copies of a publication distributed either paid or non-paid.

Clip: Term used for a hard copy of an article placed through PR efforts. Organizations use clipping services to compile clips based on specific search terms.

Coverage: Represents a story earned through PR efforts.

Crawl: The text that runs along the bottom or top of a TV screen during a news program, such as what was made popular with CNN. Many news programs are now using this technique to keep viewers apprised of traffic or weather updates.

Cutline: Description of a photo printed underneath or to the side of a photo.

D

Dateline: This includes the city from and the date upon which a press release was distributed. Wire releases also include the time the news crossed the wire.

Distribution: The process of sending news announcements through various methods, including email, fax or mail. This term also encompasses the delivery breakout of news, such as national or local distribution, or a distribution of 300. Can also be used as another term for circulation.

DMA: Designated Market Area. This represents the regional area included in the reach of a broadcast station or a publication.

E

Estimated Airtime Equivalency: This represents the monetary value of airtime for a given broadcast story if it was purchased rather than earned through editorial placements. (Also referred to as ad equivalent value.)

F

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions. Detailed questions and answers prepared either in anticipation of questions that will be asked about an issue by a certain audience or as a result of an influx of questions being received. FAQs are disseminated for external consumption.

Feature Photo: A large photo, usually enclosed in a border, printed with a long cutline that tells the brief but complete story of the photo. These are typically light-hearted or entertaining and can take the place of a short feature article for stories that have a visual aspect. They can also be used in connection with a larger ongoing serious news story where the visual impact is key, such as aftermath photos following combat.

Frequency: The average number of times a household or a person viewed a given TV or radio program during a specific time period.

G

Guest Editorial: Usually written by high-profile people in the news who submit an op-ed piece to a newspaper. They may act like an op-ed from that newspaper's editorial board, but it is actually someone either particularly involved in a current issue or has appropriate professional experience to speak on a particular topic of interest to the general public. These are not guaranteed for placement. (See Op-ed.)

H

Header: Another term for headline, often used as the headline term for press releases.

Hit: See *Coverage*.

I

Inverted Pyramid: Standard news writing style, which is used in PR written materials, which highlights the most important information first and follows suit through the end of the article, press release, op-ed, etc. The purpose is two-fold; first, to grab the reader's attention and second, to aid in the editing process depending on length.

L

Lead: The first paragraph of an article that expresses the main point about the forthcoming news.

Letter-to-the-Editor: Written by readers of newspapers, these can be submitted by anyone. They are generally written in response to a previously printed newspaper article or in response to a public issue. There is no guarantee for placement. There are specific submission guidelines and each newspaper is different.

M

Media List: Database of news media contacts, usually developed specifically for a targeted news announcement.

Media Statement: As a rule, these are drafted in response to an issue or crisis. They can be verbally delivered for TV or radio interviews or distributed via email/fax/hand delivery to a news organization for use in a story. The purpose is to provide a concise, carefully worded

comment from an organization without participating in an interview, which is useful when there is no further information available and a spokesperson cannot release information at a given time. For serious issues or crises, these are reviewed and approved by legal representation.

Monitor/Monitoring: The process of searching for news coverage on an ongoing basis.

Multibox: A box into which more than one person can plug equipment to record a room's sound system. Often used by TV crews covering press conferences.

N

News Alert/Advisory: Written in "who, what, where, when, why" format, these are distributed to a targeted news media list for the purpose of reminding a reporter/editor/producer about a news event that is coming up and extending an invitation to attend and schedule interviews with spokespersons. (Example: grand opening event, ribbon cutting, community health fair.)

News Bureau: A regional office of a national (or international) news organization. Reporters from these offices typically provide local stories with national impact.

News Release: Written as a news story, these are distributed to a targeted news media list for the purpose of compelling a reporter/editor/producer to use the story or interest them in writing their own story and utilizing spokespersons. These are not guaranteed for placement in a newspaper or on a TV/radio station.

News Wire: News organizations that have a host of beat reporters producing news stories on countless topics and distributing these stories over the wire for member newspapers and broadcast affiliates to use directly as a news wire story, or to localize to their market. (Example: Associated Press [AP], United Press International [UPI].)

O

Op-ed: A shortened term for an opinion editorial piece. This is not a straight news article, but a commentary including potentially subjective interpretation. The editors of a newspaper write these for their op-ed page. Topical issue-oriented news of the day, especially political news, is typically what is chosen. Most newspapers also welcome op-ed submissions from members of the public. These are not guaranteed for placement.

P

Photo Alert: Similar to a news alert, these are directed to a photo editor for visually appealing news events, usually detailing examples of specific shots that will be available. (Example: sign-raising, celebrity attendance, children or animals doing something cute.)

Pitch Call: An important PR tactic used to build relationships with the news media and discuss the potential for news stories on behalf of your organization.

Pitch Letter: A personal letter to a reporter or producer suggesting a targeted news story based on the beat of the reporter and knowledge of the reporter's writing subject preferences.

Placement: See *Coverage*.

Play: Describes how an organization is positioned within a news story. Did it play well? Was it positive, negative, objective, minor or major compared to other organizations represented?

Press Kit: A packet comprised of recent relevant news releases, spokesperson bio, relevant fact sheets and other backgrounders. Not to be confused with a media kit, which is the industry term for an advertising kit.

Press Release: See *News Release*.

PR: Public Relations is the management of strategic communications between an organization and its various publics, with an emphasis on media relations. Specifically, it is the management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the internal and external communications policies and procedures of an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

PSA: Public Service Announcement. Organizations produce TV or radio PSAs and distribute to news organizations for the purpose of airing a strictly community service-oriented announcement. There is a cost for the production of the PSA, but the broadcast spot is aired on the TV or radio station at no cost.

There is debate about whether broadcast news organizations are currently required by the FCC to dedicate a certain amount of air time for PSAs as a service to the listening public, as was the case in the past. However, most stations continue to offer air time for legitimate announcements that are in the public interest. In addition, it can be difficult to secure an air time that reaches a major audience.

Public Affairs: Public policy or issue-oriented PR or PR in support of governmental affairs efforts.

Q

Q&A: This is a preparatory document developed for spokespersons in anticipation of a media interview. Expected questions are listed with specific answers.

R

Reach: The number of different persons or unduplicated households who will be exposed to a news story during a specific time period.

S

Shot Sheet: A detailed list of required photographs for a hired photographer.

Sidebar: A related shorter article printed alongside a longer story.

Stet: Used in editing to ignore the previous editing mark.

Syndicated Program: A TV program sold by an independent producer to a local station for local sponsorship.

T

Talking Points: Concise statements developed as a spokesperson tool for media interviews, but can also be used for informal speaking engagements or significant one-on-one meetings. Often they are drawn from an organization's key messages.

Teaser: Also, a news hook printed in the banner of a newspaper, in the far left column, or along the bottom of the front page to tease readers about stories on the inside.

Tickler File: The file a reporter or producer will keep when you begin sending news announcements and building a relationship.

V

VNR: Video News Release.

Voice-over: A reporter or interviewee heard over video footage for a TV news story.

W

Wire Service/Wire Release: Wire services are outside vendors paid by organizations to distribute press releases over the wire. News organizations subscribe to a variety of wire services to receive news. (Example: Ascribe, US Newswire, PR Newswire)

Etc.

or -30-: Notation at the end of press release to identify its conclusion.