

How to Organize a Press Conference

Hold a press conference only when you have news to present to the public, i.e. a news announcement, a new report released, a staged protest, etc.

Determine your Target Audience:

The target audience for your news will determine what kind of event you stage and what media outlets to invite. That means where you stage the event, who speaks, what the banners look like and numerous other details will be decided by your target audience. For example, events promoting youth related messages will look and sound very different from an event targeting seniors.

Good and Bad News Days & Times:

Tuesday –Thursday in the late morning hours are prime time for press conferences. Do not stage your events late in the afternoon or evening when many reporters are on deadline. If you must stage a rally after work, for example, at least do it during the evening television news so the station can send cameras for live coverage. Mondays are not preferred because offices will be closed over the previous weekend and you will not be able to reach key reporters for a couple of days before the event. Fridays are not good either, because the news may come out in Saturday’s media, the least read issue of the newspaper.



Practice Your Event

For press conferences, consider a “dress rehearsal” the day before with your speakers (at least those who can attend). Fire questions that reporters may ask at the speakers during the rehearsal, and test any audio visual equipment you may be using. If time is an issue, meet briefly before prior to the event.

Avoid Being “Bumped” – Check for competing events.

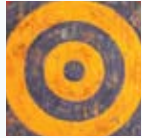
Keep the Event Short – About 30 to 45 minutes is the length of a good press conference.

Location – Make your event convenient for reporters, yet dynamic and appropriate in terms of backdrop.

Speakers Lineup:

Limit your speakers at a press conference to three or four maximum. The first speaker welcomes, hosts, introduces other speakers and communicates key messages. Typical speakers might include: An executive director or other key staff person, board member, a person or two representing the personal human interest, a public official, celebrity, local politician or ally and an “expert”, say, the author of the report you are realizing or the lawyer in charge of a case.

Here is your Check List for a Press Conference:



- News defined for press conference
- Identified target audience
- Location, time and date scheduled and confirmed
- Checked calendar for conflicts
- Speakers identified and confirmed



- Media advisory drafted and sent to reporters
- Deliverables produced (press kit, reports, videos, etc.)
- Logistics in place for media event (security, crew, volunteers)
- Decorations produced (banners, posters, podium logo, charts, etc.)
- Pitch call to reporters made



- Dress rehearsal for speakers at press conference
- Audio-visual equipment secured for space
- Media check-in sheet put out. Someone assigned to staff the check-in desk at all times



- Reporters greeted and checked in as they arrive
- First speaker starts on time
- Other speakers start on time
- Q&A period starts
- Closing after Q&A
- Follow-up work completed