WOMENomics® Forum Toolkit

Section IV: Media Guide
Welcome to the WOMENomics® Media Guide. This is Section IV of a six-part Toolkit, designed to help you conduct a WOMENomics® Forum at your workplace or in your community. All six sections of the Toolkit are available to you on our website, www.bpwfoundation.org:

I. Introduction and Overview
II. Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide (Equal Pay, Diversity, Work-Life Balance)
III. Empowered Workforce Discussion Guide (Empowering all Working Women, with targeted research on sub-populations such as Women Veterans, Young Careerists, Women in the Green Economy)

IV. Media Guide
V. Event Planning Guide
VI. Webchat Guide

This section is a guide on how to interact with the media to garner attention and interest about your Summit. It contains information on:

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Attachments: Sample Press Release, Sample Media Advisory (pp. 8-9)

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A.) Working with the Media to Gain Attention and Credibility

The BPW Foundation media toolkit is meant to be a guide on how to interact with the media to garner attention and interest about your WOMENomics® Forum. No matter what your goals and objectives are, getting coverage can help you promote and gain support for your organization and ideas. While most organizations develop a media plan when promoting an event, it is important to maintain relations with members of the press throughout the year. Visit the BPW Foundation press room to see examples of press releases and BPW in the news. Here are some ideas on how to develop an ongoing media strategy and plan.

Devise a Strategy for Positive Media Coverage: Develop a calendar of media events to highlight your projects using ready-made news hooks like a WOMENomics® Forum, Equal Pay Day, Earth Day, International Women's Day, National Business Women's Week or Veteran's Day. Research reporters’ interests and past articles. Cultivate relationships with members of the press, suggesting ideas for feature stories, "expert" responses to breaking news, and guests for their shows. Set up teleconference briefings with reporters, to brief them on your activities related to the subjects they cover. Write and submit opinion columns to newspapers and magazines. Utilize Congressional testimony as the basis for press releases. When applicable, join coalition efforts that support your message with the media. Be on the look-out for creative opportunities to link your group to other activities in your community and state. Finally, consider contributing content and material to special advertising supplements included in some publications. Click here to see the “Hiring Vets” advertising supplement from a recent issue of Forbes Magazine.

Attract Editorial Endorsements and Columnist Support: Set up meetings with editorial boards of local papers to encourage them to take a stand on your issues. Send columnists ideas for op-ed pieces. Encourage local newspapers and TV stations to endorse events that bring publicity and funding to your issue.

Build Media Skills of Spokespeople: Train your spokespeople by practicing and honing your message and image into a persuasive, articulate presentation. Develop profiles of members willing to share their stories with the press—have guidelines to protect their privacy.

Include Evaluation Methods: Make sure your communications plan includes mechanisms to evaluate your media activities and goals. Evaluation methods might include: measuring increases in membership, funding, or visibility.

B.) Tips for Working with the Media to Promote a Forum

1. Understand your issue and goals — you want a clear and concise message.
2. Create a list of journalists who are interested in the topics you will be discussing. Read the newspaper, watch television, and listen to the radio to determine who is interested in your issues. Gather addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail address for those reporters you want to contact. When compiling your list don’t overlook neighborhood papers, and other organizations’ newsletters and

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publications (i.e. the Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, churches, League of Women Voters, and community bulletin boards).

3. Issue news releases for the announcement of an event, such as the formation of an organizing committee or confirmed speakers. Put together press kits that make it easy for the media to extract key information for their stories. Circulate newsletters and leaflets in high circulation areas such as community bulletin boards, sports clubs, restaurants, doctors’ offices, etc.

4. Consider using alternative media such as window signs, posters, websites, email listservs, etc.

C.) Quick Tips for Using a Media Advisory

A media advisory is one page that simply states the facts about the activity or detailed subject matter information. [See Sample Media Advisory Attachment, page 9, below.] It is used to tell assignment editors the essentials of your event, like the time, place, and participants, or provide detailed subject matter information. The advisory should be followed up with a press release and phone call.

- List the event, its participants, the date, and location. Be sure to include the name and phone number of a contact person for the press. Briefly spell out the purpose of the event. Are you releasing new research findings? Protesting government actions? Let broadcasters know if you'll have video or a live feed. Your advisory should be short.
- Write a strong headline and lead sentence that peak reporters’ interests. Don't reveal the news you'll be releasing, but do provide a tantalizing glimpse that gives them reason to attend.
- Fax or e-mail your advisory to reporters who cover the issue, and to editors, news directors, bureau chiefs, and TV/radio producers. Also, send it to the daily calendars (daybooks) or wire services.
- Follow up with a phone call giving the essential details of your event—make sure your pitch is tight and persuasive. Leave a message if the journalist does not answer your call.

D.) Writing and Using a Press Release: Some Things You Should Know

In addition to the following suggestions, please be sure to check the sample press release provided (page 8) below.

What is newsworthy?
- The announcement of the announcement of the upcoming event.
- The announcement of an advisory committee planning the WOMENomics® forum.
- The announcement of who the speakers will be.
- Information about the topics being discussed and why they are important to your community, Is there something happening in your community that you can tie the forum to?

What will get a reporters’ attention?
- Make it unusual; such as announcing that it's the first forum of its kind in the community
- Emphasize how the issue effects people in your community

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• Tie it to a theme or issue already in the news
• Try to find a human interest angle

What is a good format to follow?
• A press release should include all the facts necessary for reporters to file a story, so that reporters will rely on your release as they write their stories. Write in a fluent, newsy style that conveys authority.
• Your headline should grab reporters’ attention, and your lead sentence should summarize what's most newsworthy or the news “hook.”
• First paragraph should contain the five W's (who, what, when, where, and why).
• Second paragraph should expand on the information provided in the lead paragraph.
• Third paragraph should include a quote from an organization representative.
• Final paragraph should include information about your organization.
• Print the news release on organizational letterhead. Include contact information and your website if you have one.
• Send to reporters who got the media advisory.
• Send out the press release on letterhead stationery of the sponsoring group.

E.) Pitching Your Stories by Phone

• Follow up your press release with a phone call and "pitch." Be ready to resend the release, since the reporters often will say they haven’t seen it.
• Make your calls in the morning. This gives you a better chance of talking to reporters instead of their machines. It's also when most editors and producers decide what to cover in their evening news or next day's paper. The afternoon in a newsroom means deadline time, and no one has time to talk.
• Use pitch calls to build relationships. Get to know the journalists who cover your field. Make a habit of calling them with your group's response to breaking news and with quotes for their stories. Suggest possible interviews with experts, as well as "ordinary" people who give a human face to complex issues. You can also suggest getting together to discuss additional story ideas and angles.

F.) The Press Kit: Things to Include
At the event or meeting provide a reporter with a press kit. This allows you to give her/him information in addition to the details about the forum. Items you might include are:
• Press release on the event
• Fact sheet about the WOMENomics® Forum
• Fact sheet about BPW Foundation
• Fact sheet about your local organization
• Fact sheet on issues about workplace equity and work-life balance
• Biography on officer/s or speaker/s
• Business card with contact information including phone, address, e-mail and website

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G.) Taking Care of the Reporter

- When reporters come to your event, welcome them and, if possible, provide them with an escort who is knowledgeable and friendly.
- Introduce the reporter to the key participants and provide them with relevant materials.
- If an article appears about your event, you write the reporter a note thanking him/her for his/her interest and reminding them of other topic areas BPW can provide information about.

H.) Op Eds and Letters to the Editor

Op-ed columns and letters to the editor give you the opportunity to communicate directly with the public, including influential decision-makers, and to shape or frame a debate in your own words.

Op-Ed Quick Tips

An op-ed is a column or guest essay published in the opinion section of a newspaper (“Opposite the Editorial” page). Most are between 500-750 words, and most outlets will take submissions by fax, e-mail, or mail. Here are some of the criteria for the top 100 newspapers, but check your papers’ websites or call to find out the specifics for each publication. After your WOMENomics Forum, you may reinforce your message by writing an op-ed on findings, points of agreement, results, and more.

- Op-eds should be timely, lively, and present strong arguments. Newspapers are looking for an unusual or provocative opinion on a current issue, or a call-to-arms on a neglected topic. Op-ed editors are not looking for event announcements, promotional materials or generic ideas.
- Determine your goal and audience. It could be summarizing your Forum, starting a grassroots campaign, passing legislation, increasing funding, or educating the public on an issue.
- Figure out what you want to say and, in your best “voice,” summarize your point in a single, clear sentence. For example, "By ratifying CEDAW, the U.S. can become a full partner in the effort to secure basic human rights of women and girls everywhere." Use your local president or a member expert to sign the column's byline.
- The first sentence should get the reader's attention.
- Be timely. Link your op-ed to a holiday or anniversary, a newly-released report, an end-of-year summary, or your Summit.
- Be short and specific. Eliminate unnecessary words and repetitious or stray ideas. Have others read and critique it for you. Restate your key point or argument at the end.
- E-mail and/or fax are the fastest methods to submit your piece. Include a short cover letter with your name and title, affiliation, address, e-mail, and day and evening phone numbers.
- Once you’ve sent your piece, don't call the newspaper or magazine repeatedly, but do check to be sure it has been received. Be ready to make updates and revisions just before publication.
• If your op-ed is rejected, don't be discouraged. Send your op-ed to another news outlet. Keep writing and submitting pieces. Post it on your blog or on your website. Often, it is just a matter of your op-ed being at the right place at the right time.
• If your piece does get published, send copies to partners, supporters, funders, reporters, elected officials, colleagues, and other allies. An op-ed can serve as a springboard to talk-show appearances, panel discussions, and a host of other opportunities.

Letters to the Editor Quick Tips

Letters to the editor allow you to offer a short rebuttal, enhancement, or missing perspective to an article or commentary in the paper. Most letters should be 150-250 words.
• Respond quickly to the article you've read (note the headline and date it ran).
• Make your points short and specific.
• Point out an event or activity that was not covered to report on.
• State important facts that support your point.
• Identify the author and his/her affiliation.
• Include full contact information plus day and evening phone numbers.
• Respond quickly.
• Send your letter by e-mail in the body of the text, not as an attachment. Check the paper’s website for specific submission rules.
• Many media outlets have online reader forums and interactive online discussions with reporters. Some news magazine shows encourage viewers to respond while a show is on air, and then read selected e-mails in real time. These e-mails should be short, clear and punchy—only a few sentences long.

I.) Public Relations on the Internet and Social Media

The explosive growth of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn has transformed the practice of communications. Before these sites arrived on the scene, people consumed news in a much different way: they were passive consumers, while journalists were the actors, dictating the news of the day. Therefore, organizations interested in promoting a product or idea simply worked the media channels to amplify their message.

Today, organizations intent on communicating a message can no longer simply distribute a press release, then sit back and wait. They must meet today’s new “active” news consumers where they are – on news sites, blogs, and social media sites - and engage with them (ask questions, spark conversations, share news, etc.) in order to build credibility and loyalty. Increased credibility leads to an increase in influencers who will help spread the organization’s message.

• Use the Internet as an enhancement, not a replacement for personal contact. Even though you may e-mail your press release still follow-up with a phone call. Leave complete but concise messages on the reporter’s voice mail.

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Remember that bloggers are just as important to your media outreach as other news outlets. Bloggers appreciate it when you spend time getting to read and learn about their blog, offering comments and engaging with other readers before jumping in to promote your news item. Once you’ve done that, a good next step is offering the blogger a compelling, substantive “guest post” for their site.

- Do not send attachments by e-mail unless requested. Keep all information in the body of the e-mail.

- If sending the same press release to multiple recipients, be sure and put the addresses in a "Blind Copy" line.

- Utilize your website, blog, or Facebook page to promote your events and post your press releases.

- Share information on local community listserves and topic-specific discussion boards.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (BPW CONTACT)

(DATE)                     (PHONE NUMBER)

E-MAIL ADDRESS

LOCAL WORKING WOMEN DISCUSS WORKPLACE EQUITY AND THE WAGE GAP AT BPW WOMENomics ® FORUM

• At the current rate of change, the wage gap will not be eliminated until 2039.
• Full-time working women earn 77 cents to every dollar earned by men
• Over the course of her lifetime, the average woman loses $431,000 in pay over a 40-year career
• Wage disparity exists across all educational levels and in all states.

Participate in a forum dedicated to learning how to climb the corporate ladder through networking and mentoring as women who have been through it before tell their stories of how they were successful at “playing ball with the old boys club.” Also learn about how the gender wage gap affects you.

(Your town) residents interested in participating in this forum should contact (your contact).

(Name noted participants)

Sponsored by BPW/(name of Local Organization) as part of National Business Women’s Week™, the WOMENomics ® Forum is a program of the BPW Foundation.

(Time and place of event)

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BPW Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) research and education organization. BPW Foundation empowers working women to achieve their full potential and partners with employers to build successful workplaces through education, research, knowledge and policy. Through its work, BPW Foundation supports workforce development programs and workplace policies that recognize the diverse needs of working women, communities and businesses.

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SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

What:
- WOMENomics® forum hosted by (name of partners)
- Community leaders will discuss issues affecting working women to gain a better understanding of what working women need and want in the workplace.
- WOMENomics® is a grassroots initiative developed by the BPW Foundation to bring together local business, government, educational institutions and civil organizations in the community to identify, act on, and resolve the everyday issues challenging working women.

Why:
- Women are a central force in our nation’s economy and now make up half of the workforce.
- The economic and social health of communities increasingly depends upon identifying and addressing problems and obstacles facing working women and their families.
- By bringing together the key players, WOMENomics® helps communities address these issues.

Who:
- Name dignitaries and participants.

When:
- Date and time information. Be sure to include particulars such as press conference at (time), luncheon at (time), and dignitaries available for interviews at (time).

Where:
- Include the address.

Contact:
- Name and phone number, daytime and evening. Website if there is information about the program listed.