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ASSOCIATION of REFLEXOLOGISTS

Media Advice Pack for AoR Members

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Introduction

Dear Member

The purpose of this pack is to familiarise those seeking publicity with the way the media works and how best to maximise your efforts successfully.

The pack cannot perform miracles! If you do not have an interesting story to tell, it is difficult to turn something dull into something compelling. If however, you have story worth telling, then hopefully this pack will help you to make news.

I wish you luck in your publicity public relations journey, and I would appreciate hearing about your successes.

Kindest Regards

Association of Reflexologists

P.S: Thank you to Keir Giles and Martin McGlown for their help and advice.

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Understanding the Media

Prior to working through the pack, it is worth mentioning a few things that will most probably happen to any story you might issue to the media:-

- Very few newspapers or publications will publish your press release
- No journalist is likely to allow you to see the story prior to publication
- You cannot dictate where your story appears in a publication or broadcast
- There is no guarantee that your story will appear or be used
- If a rival, competitor or anyone raising contentious issues about your story speaks to a journalist, there is nothing you can do, unless it is factually incorrect

Always remember:-

- Everything you say to a journalist can be used in an article. Nothing is off the record, ever!
- You may be misquoted
- Do not say anything you would not be happy to see in print
- Your comments may be used out of context, misinterpreted or sensationalised
- Tailor your language to your audience
- Despite an interview, you might get no mention of your name/a small quote
- You have no control over the Headline – this is not decided by the reporter and can have a large impact on the subtext of any article.

Who does what?

Before you approach a paper or magazine, it is worth having a basic understanding of what people do.

Editorial Assistant – ensures the smooth running of the office. They are often the Editor's first line of defence and filter calls. The EA opens the post and might pick out the more interesting items to pass to someone else.

Reporter – A reporter talks to people and writes about it. Feature writer and news correspondent are a subset of reporter.

Chief Reporter – Usually the Editor has promoted him/her beyond the 'reporter' tag.

Features Editor – Should you want to pitch an idea to an editorial team; the Features Editor is a 'must' to know. In the case of magazines you may be able to get a list of forward features. This will enable you to contact them when you know when they are going to write something relevant.

News Editor – This person commissions and edits the news section, usually found at the front of a newspaper or magazine.

Editor – The Editor is responsible for the overall shape and feel of the publication. They will do some writing but they are really more like a Managing Director.

Sub-Editor – The Sub-Editor is the person who takes pieces of writing or 'copy' and turns them into a style that is consistent with the rest of the magazine or publication.

Advertising Manager – The Advertising and Editorial departments should always be separate. However, the editorial department on a magazine will ensure their advertising team has an idea of future features. For example, a newspaper may decide to produce a feature on dining out in October; the advertising team can then obtain dining-related advertising sales.

The Freelance Journalist – not all articles and reports are undertaken by staff, and the Freelance Journalist will write numerous articles and is a very good contact to cultivate. The Freelance will offer

his/her ideas to various magazines and newspapers. They will have a pretty good idea of what is coming up in their section of the market. The AoR is frequently contacted by these journalists resulting in a considerable amount of positive publicity.

Who do you Target?

It is advisable to consider developing a contact list of the journalists you wish to target. The simplest way is to clearly identify the publications you wish to focus on. This list can include: newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

Once your list is drawn up, contact them and ask to whom you should send press releases. Keep in touch with any changes as often media people move around.

Area Groups may wish to recruit a Public Relations Officer to undertake this.

Writing Press Releases

How to Write a Press Release that's Successful

What is a Press Release?

By definition a press release is simply a statement prepared for distribution to the media. The purpose of a press release is to give journalists information that is useful, accurate and interesting. The objective is to gain their interest and ultimately publicity.

Press releases conform to an established format. Journalists receive so many press releases a day, they have set standards and expectations that you must conform to just to have your release read, let alone published.

Nowadays the most effective method of distributing a press release is via e-mail. Over 95 percent of journalists prefer this method, some rarely read releases sent by post! If the press release is well written, having an electronic format will allow journalists to copy and paste the extracts which are relevant to their article; this is beneficial to the issuer of the release as it ensures that the key message is not lost in translation. It is a good idea to send the press release as an attachment (formatting suggestions to follow) and at the same time to copy and paste this into the main body of the email.

Press releases should include the AoR logo in the top right-hand corner of the document. The AoR name, web address, location address and telephone number should be printed clearly at the top of the page. **PRESS RELEASE** should be spelt out in all CAPS and centered in bold. The press release contact person's name should be underneath the wording and all contact numbers printed clearly underneath. If the press release is for IMMEDIATE RELEASE, say so, on the left margin directly above the title in all caps.

The next essential component of the press release is the Headline or Title. It should be centered, and in **bold**. The heading of the press release should capture the journalist. The title of the press release should be short and snappy, and hopefully grab the attention of the journalist and impress them enough to read on.

Now you are ready for the useful, accurate and interesting BODY of the press release. The body of the press release begins with the date and area for which the press release is originated. The body of the press release is very basic; who, what, where, when and why. The first section of the press release should contain in brief detail what the press release is about. The second section explains, in detail: who cares; why you should care; where one can find it; when it will happen. Also, included in the second

'informative' section is generally a quote that gives the release a personal touch. This goes a long way with journalists. Press releases and news stories are boring to journalists without a 'human interest'. This means that where you can speak about real people and real situations. The third and generally final section is a summation of the release and further information on the AoR with the AoR contact information clearly spelled out.

Paragraphs should be kept brief and concise; try to keep your press releases to a single page, where possible, and a maximum of two pages. Journalists only want the salient information and don't have time to wade through page after page.

The content of the press release, beginning with the date and area of origin, should be typed in a clear, basic font (Times New Roman, Arial, etc.) and double-spaced. If your press release exceeds one page, the second page should indicate 'Page Two' in the upper right hand corner. Journalistic standards have set basic parameters to define the end of a press release: **-ends-**. This signals the end of the release.

Pictures

A picture is worth a thousand words. Accompanying your story with a compelling photo will make it stand out and be noticed. It also gives the story a better chance of reaching the front pages of the publication as opposed to relegating it to the back columns. If you do not have a photo to accompany this but know of the perfect opportunity for one, issue a photocall notice; this is a press release that alerts picture editors to a great picture opportunity.

Press Release Checklist

- AoR Letterhead, Name, Address, Phone Number, Web Address
- PRESS RELEASE in all caps
- Contact Person's Name
- Immediate Release or Release Date (all caps)
- HEADLINE or TITLE in BOLD/CAPS
- BODY-Date/Area-who, what, when, where and why
- Catchy Text
- Sum it up...
- Basic Font, Double Spaced, Page Numbers, and **-ends-**
- Action Plan/Calendar
- An easy way to remember the essentials for a good press release is **FART – Fast, Accurate, Readable and Tight!**

Following your Press Release

So, you have written your Press Release, sent it off, so what is next?

Many inexperienced public relations people believe that it is a great idea to follow up each Press Release with a call to the journalist. This approach is not usually successful. Generally if you are writing interesting releases, you will be contacted and the release used. If you decide to follow up prepared to be re-buffed.

If you want to send future releases, then a follow up call may be a good method of paving the way. Use the opportunity to ask if there was something inherently wrong with your item. Look at what you have released objectively and review it to see if it was:

- Brief
- To the point
- Clear in its message
- Tailored to the publication

The Journalist's Call

There are occasions when you send out a Press Release and you do not receive a response and assume that there is no interest. Realistically, due to the vast number of Press Releases received, it may be a while before it is read and acted upon. If it sparks the interest of a journalist, you will receive a call. There are, however, a few things to remember:-

- If you are not thoroughly up to date with the story etc. or need to check the details/information, inform the journalist that you are in a meeting and will call them back once you have the information to hand.
- If a call comes in while you are out, return it as soon as possible. The journalist may move on to someone else if you are unavailable or do not swiftly respond to their call.

What the Journalist wants/does not want

First and foremost a good story! If you have a good story or can contribute a useful view as another story, this will be well received.

There are a few things that a journalist does not want:-

- Comments about matters that you want them to write about
- A telling off for not using previous Press Releases

The AoR call

As mentioned previously your head office in Taunton receives numerous calls from TV/Radio researchers and freelance journalists wishing to speak to a therapist usually about a specific topic e.g. fertility. You may receive a call/email please let us know if you are/are not happy to assist. If you are, great if not we can quickly contact someone else.

Media Interviews

BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS!

Here are a few of the Ground Rules;

Listen carefully to the question and answer it

This is not as obvious as it seems. Most interviewees are too busy thinking of their answer to listen closely to the question. Having answered it, always look to "bridge" to a point in your own favour if the question is along a line that permits it. Try to answer the question without waffling or being evasive. Keep it conversational and avoid professional jargon.

Ask for clarification or to have the question repeated

Some questions are tough because they are unclear or ambiguous or put in the context of a statement. Do not be intimidated, ask the questioner either to repeat or restate his question more clearly.

If you do not know the answer to the question, simply say so

If you get a question you do not wish to answer, say so!

Tell the truth, even if it hurts. And stick to the facts

If you cannot answer truthfully – that is, you have the answer but cannot give it – respond as if it was a question you do not wish to answer. “I’m sorry but I am not in a position to give that information” – and explain why.

“No comment” means “You are absolutely right!”

Not only is “no comment” a highhanded way of dealing with any question, it is almost always a dead give-away that the premise of the questioner is absolutely correct.

Avoid “in my personal opinion”

Prefacing an answer by this qualifier does not protect you. It can be deleted in editing and what follows becomes an “official” answer.

Do not be intimidated by a questioner

If interrupted in mid-stream, or contradicted, stand your ground politely but firmly tell him/her that you would like to finish the thought before dealing with another question.

Say the most important things first – then expand

As obvious as that may sound bear in mind that we are conditioned to do just the opposite; to develop our reasoning and then make our point.

Stay within your own field of knowledge

Do not hazard an answer if the question is clearly outside your area of expertise. Decline on the grounds that you are not familiar with the subject. Speak from the standpoint of the public’s interest but do not duck your self-interest in the matter.

Do not argue with a questioner – and never lose your cool

You can easily find yourself giving out much more information than you had intended, and at the same time provoke hostility that will undermine your position with the audience.

Let the interviewer worry about “dead air”

When you have answered the question, stop. Do not be tempted into saying more than you had intended.

Radio/TV Interviews

If you are contacted to take part in either a Radio or TV interview, it may be wise to ask a few simple questions:-

1. Ask them for a brief outline to the background to the interest shown. It could be, for example, that a contentious topic has surfaced.
2. What information do they want from you?
3. Will there be any other parties involved? You may think you are the sole person being interviewed only to find that others are involved and it is a debate!

Over the telephone – specific advice:

1. Arrange a call back time that is convenient and which allows for advance preparation;
2. have an issues/answers list before you with any exact wording written down for difficult subjects;
3. Speak slowly and distinctly;

4. Have a pad and pen handy to note any questions;
5. Assume that everything including the preliminary discussions may eventually be part of the interview;
6. Be prepared for an interview to last up to five minutes and perhaps later edited to two to three minutes;
7. Always assume the interview is live.

AoR Support

The AoR are here to help and advise you on all aspects of public relations.

Your Association attracts many calls from researchers and journalists and due to members support the AoR attracts much publicity.

The website details the imminent/future articles or media activities giving members an idea of what publicity we have obtained or what is planned. A word of warning though! Just because we are informed that an article will be appearing in print or other media we cannot guarantee it will happen. If a more interesting or contentious, news worthy story presents itself our news may take a back seat.

ATTACHMENTS

Example Press Release



Association of Reflexologists (AoR)
Doreen Baker – Chief Executive
Web address: www.aor.org.uk
5 Fore Street
Taunton
TA1 1HX
Tel: 01823 364 957

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05 November 2007

PRESS RELEASE

Making a B-line for Reflexology

B-line has been announced as the new official supplier for Association of Reflexologists (AoR) creams and foot care products. The new partnership will be inaugurated at the upcoming Jane Plant seminar run by the AoR at the CBI Centre in London on the 24th of November 2007.

Over the past months the AoR has been researching a selection of products, using the July conference in Warwick as the perfect stage to gather feedback from its members, and is now satisfied that B-line is what the members and the AoR are looking for. Founded 18 years ago by Annette Foley Craigen, B-line's foundations lie in its foot care products; seeing that feet were neglected within the beauty industry and being pushed to the side by the more "glamorous" hair colours and cosmetics, Annette decide to take things into her own hands. B-line was founded on the understanding that our feet and their care are essential to our wellbeing, an ethos that matches that of reflexology and the AoR. One of the pioneers in the use of Tea Tree Oil, the strongest known antiseptic which forms the basis of her unique B-line

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range, Annette has played a key role in raising awareness of feet while creating a desirable image of pampering, relaxation and sheer luxury.

The AoR is the largest reflexology organisation in the UK and boasts in excess of 8000 members. As a membership organisation the AoR seeks to offer its members the best in benefits and support, aiming to help reflexologists in their individual businesses as well as to bring reflexology to the forefront of complementary therapy. By partnering with B-line, the AoR are able to offer their members remarkable discounts on a range of high quality products.

The AoR Chief Executive Doreen Baker and B-line owner Annette Foley Craigen will both be present to celebrate this partnership at the upcoming AoR seminar. B-line will be demonstrating their products, offering AoR members the chance to become acquainted with B-line products and to start making the most of the AoR discounts. Following this all products and discounts will be available from the AoR website on www.aor.org.uk.

-ENDS-

For further information contact
Association of Reflexologists
Tel: 01823 351010

Association of Reflexologists

The Association of Reflexologists (AoR) is a membership organisation offering a range of professional benefits to its members. The AoR was founded by ten people in 1984 and has since grown to boast a membership of over 8000 qualified Reflexologists. Now the leading reflexology organisation in the UK the AoR is an active participant of the Reflexology Forum and is a member of the Reflexology in Europe Network (RiEN).