

TOOLKIT:

I ARCTIC

Guide to getting media coverage

No matter what you do for your I ♥ Arctic human banner photo — organize Arctic themed rallies, concerts, marches, potlucks, invite local leaders to speak about the Arctic, you'll want media attention to raise the profile of your event. It is critical to have your event in local, regional, state and potentially even national media outlets. Getting media attention helps to better tell the story of the I ♥ Arctic day of action, and it makes your event reach out so much further.

TIPS TO SUPPORT YOU WITH MEDIA WORK FOR YOUR EVENT



- Make a media list: research radio, print, TV news outlets, online media outlets, popular blogs, and try and find contact information for the news desks. If you know of specific reporters that cover environmental related stories, even better
- Write your media pitches and send media advisories to reporters 3 or 4 days before the event – you'll find a sample media advisory below
- Call the reporter one day before the event to confirm they are attending – it also serves the journalist as a friendly reminder. Call again on the day, just some hours before the event, to get a final confirmation.
- Practice a pitch call to a reporter before calling. You'll want to be quick (2 minutes tops) and explain why this event is important to a news outlet's readers/viewers. You'll find a sample media pitch below.
- Be persistent when calling reporters. Sometimes it can take 10 calls to get a reporter on the phone (don't rely on leaving messages)
- Be friendly and listen to what the reporter has to say
- Prepare a "press packet" for members of the press who attend the event, including the media release, [background briefing](#) (you'll find this on [SaveTheArctic.org/ILoveArctic](#)), contact info for speakers and organisers, and other background campaign documents
- After the event, give pitches to media outlets that did not come and send them press releases and your best photo

SAMPLE MEDIA PITCH

Reporter: Hello.

You: Hi, [Reporter's name]. This is [Your name] from [Your City or Group of People]. I'm calling to let you know that this Saturday April 20th we are participating in the global I Love Arctic day of action. We are holding an I Love Arctic event at [Your place] to bring attention to dangerous oil drilling in the melting Arctic. At the event we will be expecting [Number of expected participants] and we will be forming a heart shape with everyone to take an aerial human banner photo. Our event is just one of many happening around the world in over 30 countries on the same day.

Reporter: Sure. Can you send me a press advisory?

You: Absolutely. I'll send you an advisory. Is your email still [reporter@email.com]?

Reporter: Yes. I'll look for it.

You: Great. I hope to speak with you soon.

QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

In the following you'll find a few guidelines on how to write a press release and an example you can tweak for your own needs. Please be aware that there is no fixed way to write a press release and creativity is encouraged and may even increase your chances to reach through to a media outlet.

What is the story

What the story is about is important to spell out right away, but what is even more important, is why the story concerns the journalist. Journalists don't print stories out of their good will, but because it's a good story. Think about it as if it's a story you want to tell a friend. What about it is extraordinary? Is it touching? Are there consequences?

A classic mantra is the well known show it - don't tell it. It is a good rule of thumb that relieves your press release from an abundant amount of heavy adjectives. An often used exercise is to describe the feeling of being in love without using the actual word or synonyms.

Another important part is the who, when, and where. Who is involved? When is this event happening and where?

Try to make this all fit in the headline, and the following one in two paragraphs. The shorter you are able to capture the interest of the journalist, the better the chances of your story making it online or in print.

Background

After you have 'sold' your story it is time to explain the event in greater depth. Here you can also link to background materials that back up any postulates. Journalists will be critical towards statements with references to specific numbers, facts, etc.

Alternatively you can choose to bring a quote from someone involved. Journalists often prefer a personal touch to the story, and for good reason. People like to read about what other people feel and to understand why they are doing something out of the ordinary. This is by no means different when it comes to people being creative for the greater good. In a quote, primarily use feelings, opinions, and expert statements.

If a journalist calls you back because you caught their interest, there is a fairly good chance they will ask you: 'Why are you doing this?'

Contact details

It's critical to include contact details at the end of a press release. Journalist might need more details, quotes or pictures. As the responsible person for media relations you might wish to include your own details, but if you quote someone else remember to include their details too. Contact details should contain name, title, phone no. and email address.

Oh, and the most important thing. Pick up the phone! Anyone included in the contact section should be notified so they will pick up the phone as well.

Distribution

The key word here is timing. Most newspapers hold daily editorial meetings where stories to pursue are decided on. Naturally, the chances of your story getting priority increase if the journalist has your press release before the meeting takes place, preferably as much as an hour before. This is usually in the morning, but if you are in doubt, call and ask when the meeting takes place.

The next thing you want to consider is the profile of the media you wish to reach. What kind of readers, listeners, and viewers are associated with the media outlet? Is it a local paper or radio station? Is it national? If you shape your press release to fit the profile of the media outlet you will increase your chances of getting coverage.

Example of a press release

If you are not up for writing your own press release feel free to tweak the example below into your own.

---- BEGINS ----

[Your City or Group of People] loves the Arctic

[Your City], April 20th 2013 - More than [Number of expected participants] people will gather today in an I Love Arctic human banner at [Your place] to show world leaders and national politicians their heartfelt concern for the melting Arctic and the dangerous race for the exploitation of Arctic resources. Together with thousands of people from Buenos Aires to Bangkok in more than 30 countries across the globe, people from [Your City or Group of People] join the call for Arctic protection on this global day of action.

“Oil companies are heading into the Arctic in their search for dirty fossil fuel while driving climate change forward. What happens in the Arctic concerns us all and it is completely unacceptable that oil companies see the melting Arctic as a business opportunity instead of a warning sign. National politicians as well as world leaders needs to step up to the challenge, tackle climate change and put an end to Arctic destruction,” says [Firstname Lastname], organiser of the human banner activity in [Your City].

The I Love Arctic global day of action is part of the global movement around the Save The Arctic campaign from the environmental organization Greenpeace. So far more than 2.7 million people have signed on to the campaign joining Greenpeace’s call for the creation of a global sanctuary in the uninhabited area around the North Pole.

Aerial photographs of all the human banners from around the world will be taken to the Foreign Ministers Meeting of the Arctic Council in mid May in Kiruna, Sweden. Here Greenpeace will exhibit the photographs as well as deliver them in a large book to the Foreign Ministers, showing them that the world demands ambitious and necessary political action to preserve and protect the Arctic environment.

Contact

For further info and pictures of the human banner contact [Firstname Lastname], organizer from [Your City or Group of People], cell phone: [+12 3456 7890]or at [email@email.com]

---- ENDS ----

QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING A MEDIA ADVISORY

It is good to inform the media about your event some days before it takes place. Journalists plan ahead and so do their editors.

A media advisory can be a simple email informing the recipient about something that will happen in the immediate future. The important things to include are of course the who, when, and where since this is basically a set of information you want them to know about.

However, do try to think of this in the same way as you do a press release. Why is the event important? Why is it a good story? And don't forget: show it, don't tell it.

Some wire services (a media service that is writing news stories to media outlets) organise a calendar with events of media interest. Try to find out if your country/region/state has a wire service. Find out who is in charge and sent them the media advisory too.

No matter which approach you take, don't forget to fill in sufficient contact details if a journalist wants more information.

The day before the event it is a good idea to call some of the media outlets that you've emailed. Ask for the relevant editor and inform them briefly of your event and ask if they are considering covering the event. Most likely you will not get a definite 'yes' or 'no', but it serves as a friendly reminder. Do keep it brief and to point - editors are busy people.

If you are not up for writing your media advisory release, feel free to tweak the example below into your own.

Example of a media advisory

----- Begins -----

[Your City or Group of People] loves the Arctic

Media advisory

On April 20th 2013 more than [Number of expected participants] people will gather in an I Love Arctic human banner at [Your place] to show world leaders and national politicians their heartfelt concern for the melting Arctic and the dangerous race for the exploitation of Arctic resources. Together with thousands of people from Buenos Aires to Bangkok in more than 30 countries across the globe, people from [Your City or Group of People] join the call for Arctic protection on this global day of action.

Date: April 20th 2013

Time:[Your starting time]

Where: [Your place]

Contact details: [Firstname Lastname, mobile phone number, e-mail]

For more information about the I Love Arctic global day of action please visit our website at SaveTheArctic.org/ILoveArctic

---- Ends ----

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW



With a bit of luck, everything goes the right way and a journalist will turn up to the event wishing to interview a spokesperson that can explain what is going on. It's a good idea to be prepared for this.

The story here is about you and your friends doing something for the Arctic, and that is what the journalist wants to hear about. The 'what' and 'why' from the press release will come in handy now. Run the 'what' and 'why' over in your head, write it down, practice saying it out loud in front of the mirror, in the shower, or to a friend pretending to be a reporter. Short precise answers are good - especially for TV and radio. Don't forget to do it in your own words, you are the one who is opposed

to the madness going on in the Arctic. Explain your feelings and the reader, listener or viewer will recognize and be able to relate to them.

Following is a set of likely questions and suggested answers for your inspiration.

Example questions and answers to prepare for an interview

Q: You are making a human banner shaped as a heart spelling out I Love Arctic. Why is that?

A: We wish to show world leaders and national politicians our heartfelt concerns for the Arctic. We are making this human banner for the Arctic together with thousands of people from all over the world. The oil industry is on a reckless hunt for dirty fossil fuels, which threatens Arctic wildlife such as polar bears and narwhals and is driving destructive climate change even further. What happens in the Arctic concerns us all.

Q: Why is the Arctic in need of some love?

A: The Arctic is where climate change is having its most severe impact. Last summer the extent of Arctic sea ice was the lowest ever in recorded history. Some scientist are saying that within a few decades we may see ice free summers in the Arctic with devastating consequences for the region's wildlife and the global climate.

Q: But there are no politicians here, how do you think your heart will affect them?

A: In May in the city of Kiruna, in the northern part of Sweden, the Arctic Council will be meeting to discuss the fate of the Arctic. We are bringing pictures of human banners from this global day of action taking place from Buenos Aires to Bangkok and in over 30 countries to the Arctic Council's meeting in Kiruna. This is too big to be ignored.

Q: You say you want to stop oil drilling in the Arctic, but don't we need the oil to drive our cars?

A: The technologies needed for a transition to renewable energy are well known, all we need is the political will to make it happen. If we are to avoid catastrophic climate change we can't even afford to burn all the oil we already know exists in the ground and that's why its pure madness that governments allow oil companies to carve up the Arctic in search for even more oil.

Good Luck with your media work!

Your I ♥ Arctic team at Greenpeace

Ethan, Raquel, Dan, Eoin, Sune, Shai and Markus

