

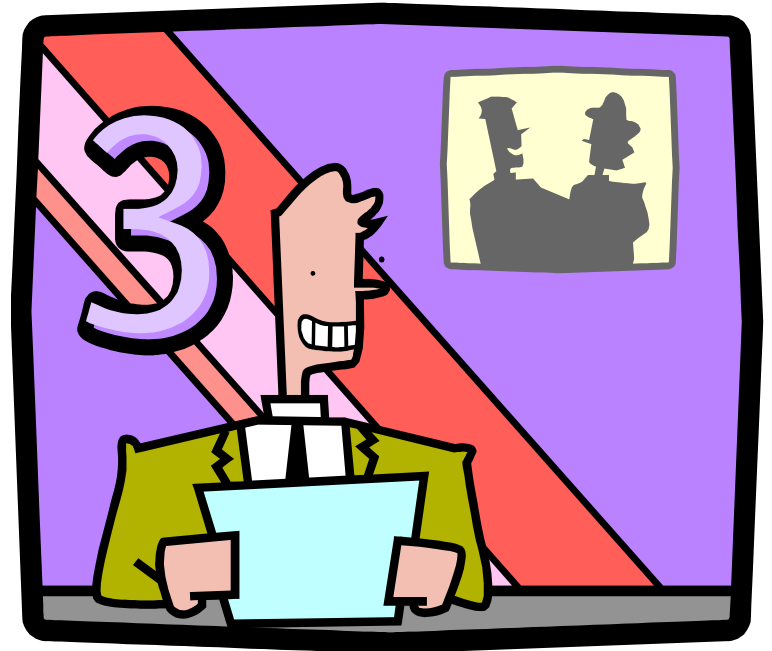
# ***Media and Your Display***

# Topics:

- Types Of Media Coverage
- Effective Press Releases
- Groups To Target
- How To Make Them Want You
- On-Camera Interviews
- The Dreaded *DOUBLE SWITCH*
- How To Avoid Negative News Coverage
- Contests
- National Media
- Specials and Documentaries

# THE FOUR TYPES OF MEDIA

- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper and Magazines
- Internet



# TELEVISION

- News Features that include background information
- Weather Forecasts from your display
- News Closing Credit Shots
- Early Morning “Features” during the Morning News (the untapped resource)

# RADIO

- Newscasts
  - Your display featured during the radio news
- Telephone Interviews
  - DJ's love to talk with interesting people on the air
- Contests
  - Offer to do something special for their listeners
    - Sync lights to a song that a listener chooses
    - Award a custom display item to a winning listener
- Live broadcast from your display

# NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- Submit your display to the “Light Tour” listing
- Feature Stories
  - Interview and Photos



# INTERNET

- News Services (CNN, MSN, Yahoo, etc.)
  - Reach millions of people worldwide
- Personal Websites with links
  - Ask other Christmas forum members to add your link or address to their sites.



# PRESS RELEASE

- The basic method to attract media is through a Press Release.
  - Single sheet that gets right to the point.
  - News agencies receive hundreds of press releases every day. Most are discarded after just a quick glance. The title and first sentence may be all that is read so make sure you grab their attention right off the bat!
  - Include your contact information.
  - Make your press release easy and fun to read.
  - Include your website (if you have one) so they can find out more about you and your display.
  - Make an email version of your press release also.



# PRESS RELEASE

- Finding Fax Numbers
  - Internet Search: Most media organizations have websites that list contact information.
  - Call and ask for their press release fax number.
- Emails
  - Many media outlets have an email address just for press releases. Look for it on their websites.
  - Emailed press releases should be followed by a fax if possible.

# PRESS RELEASE

- GET OTHERS TO CALL IN YOUR STORY
  - Every Media Outlet has a number to call to report a story
  - Get your friends and neighbors to spread the word and “leak” the story.
    - Print maps and business cards for them to pass out
    - Post maps and flyers in local businesses

# PRESS RELEASE

- Go directly to reporters who have covered your display previously.
- Make friends with them!
- Direct emails or phone calls work better than standard press releases.



# GROUPS TO TARGET

- “Features” Reporters
  - Many newscasts have Features Reporters who do fun live segments throughout the newscast.

# GROUPS TO TARGET

- Weather People
  - Christmas displays fit in well with the weather. Ask them to do the weather forecast live from your display.

# GROUPS TO TARGET

- Specific Reporters/Columnists who do “Special Interest” or “Human Interest” stories.
  - Let them know what you are up to.
  - Offer to do an ongoing series throughout the year as you prepare your display.
- Radio Personalities
  - They love to hear about the fun and strange experiences you have had.
  - Offer to do contests.

# MAKE THEM WANT YOU

- Be sure to point out the unique things that you have or do with your display
  - Things that other displays don't have:
    - Live Music
    - Thousands of Lights, Blowmolds, Inflatables, Wireframes, etc.
    - Pyrotechnics
    - Train Rides
    - Live Santa
    - Etc.

# MAKE THEM WANT YOU

- Other things that make them want to feature you.
  - Special reason for the display or items in the display.
  - Lighting Ceremony or Special Events:
    - Plan these to occur during evening news cast time block so they can go live from your display.
    - Make sure you have a well planned out and exciting show.
    - Invite as many friends, neighbors, and family as possible.



# MAKE THEM WANT YOU

- Other things that make them want to feature you.
  - If possible put your information on a website so reporters can do research.
    - Websites give reporters a place to find out what you have, why, when, etc.
    - Many reporters will use information from your website in place of (or to supplement) an interview.
    - Keep your website updated with current information.

# THE ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW

- Where do you look while on camera?
  - Ask the reporter or cameraman where they want you to look.
  - Most want you to look at the reporter, not into the camera lens.
    - Exception: When you are conversing with the anchors at the studio look into the lens.
  - Keep your eyes trained on one thing. Don't look around

# THE ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW

- How to talk and what to say while on camera:
  - **Give short answers. Don't ramble.**
    - Short answers make the editing process easier.
    - Quickly get to your main point. Don't answer a question with a lot of background information.
    - Pause briefly between statements.
    - Short statements can be used for sound bites.
    - Live broadcasts have tight time slots. Keep statements brief and to-the-point.

# THE ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW

- How to talk and what to say while on camera:
  - **Smile and be enthusiastic.**
    - If you act excited and enthusiastic people will want to visit your display.
    - The reporters job will be easier and they will want to feature you again next year.

# THE ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW

- How to talk and what to say while on camera:
  - **Avoid distracting mannerisms.**
    - “Um”, grammar errors, fidgeting, etc.
    - Practice in front of a mirror or with a video camera before the interview.
    - Try to think of what questions will be asked. Have your answers rehearsed and ready.

# THE DOUBLE SWITCH

## (When the Media attacks)

- Don't act surprised or defensive.
- Turn things around in your favor. Replace your answer with something positive even if it's completely unrelated (be a Politician!)
- Don't deny an allegation if it's true.
  - Apologize and explain what you are doing to correct the problem. Focus on the good points.
  - Explain your intentions. "I'm sorry for the traffic problems. I just wanted to do something special for the children. It's all worth it when I see their smiles."

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE COVERAGE

- Prepare your neighbors for what is going to occur.
  - Talk with them before the season starts.
  - Listen to their concerns.
- Make your neighbors part of your display or events.
  - Ask the neighborhood kids to participate in interviews, lighting ceremonies, train rides, etc.
  - Ask neighbors to help with security, traffic, or crowd control. Give them ownership in the event.

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE COVERAGE

- Be a good neighbor.
  - Send *thank you* cards and goodies. (Butter them up.)
  - Share some of your special moments and experiences to let them know their sacrifice is worth the inconvenience.
  - Help them out when they are in need of something.
  - Remember hosting a large display is a privilege
  - Be the best neighbor you can be **ALL YEAR LONG.**



# AVOIDING NEGATIVE

- COMMON PROBLEMS
  - Overly excited and noisy crowds.
  - Traffic back-ups (from large crowds or those stopping their cars in the middle of the street to watch.)
  - Busses and Limos.
  - Property damage (vehicles driving over lawns & mailboxes.)
  - Food wrappers and cigarette butts.
  - Rude and Crude spectators.

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE

- COMMON PROBLEMS
  - Impatient visitors starting confrontations with other spectators.
  - Loud car radios (rolling their windows down and turning up your FM station so they can hear the music outside.)
  - Horn honking (their way of telling you that they like the display.)
  - People looking for a bathroom (they'll use the neighbors' bushes.)

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE

- DEALING WITH PROBLEMS
  - Make it hard for your neighbors to say bad things.
  - Continually check with neighbors to see if you can address their concerns.
  - Do something special for your neighbors.
    - Thank-you cards
    - Christmas gifts
    - Neighborhood party
    - A special preview of the display just for the neighbors.

# AVOIDING NEGATIVE

- DEALING WITH PROBLEMS
  - Consider traffic and crowd control using your local police or neighbors.
  - Mark or rope off the property boundaries.
  - Spend time every morning cleaning up garbage left by your visitors.
  - If using yard speakers or an FM transmitter, consider including messages about noise, parking, neighbors, etc.



- Winning a contest is a great way to make people aware of your display.
  - Talk with your community officials to find out what contests are available.
  - Watch for contests in newspapers, on TV, and on the Web.

# NATIONAL MEDIA

- Most national media stories are picked from local network feeds.
- National media will rarely accept press releases or tips from the public.
- Network News Journals, Interview Shows, and Specials often find their stories by scanning local features from all across the world.
- One exception is the *Good Morning America* contest.

# SPECIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES

- HGTV, Discovery Channel, TechTV, and others:
  - They are not always looking for the biggest or best. They are looking for specific displays that fit their theme.
  - Most want displays that are *religion neutral*.

# SPECIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES

- They use multiple pre-arranged takes. You'll have plenty of time to "get it right."
- Understand that they will make things appear how they want. Don't let it surprise or bother you. Some common examples are:
  - Giving you credit for your neighbors display.
  - Editing your comments to make it sound like you said something totally different.
- They will do whatever they need to make the show interesting.

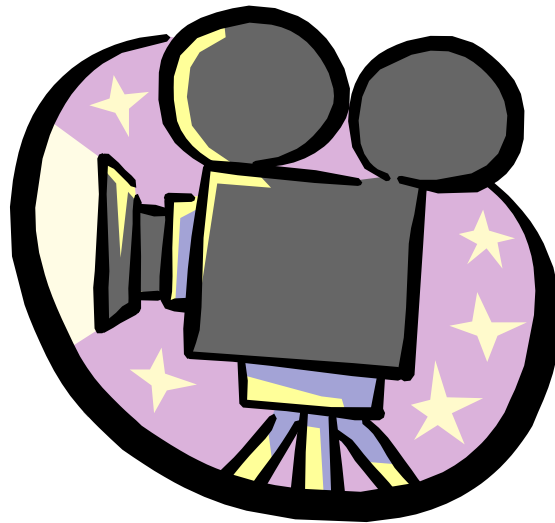


# SPECIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES

- Copy Write and Public Domain:
  - Networks and Production Companies face large fines if they include protected material without proper approval.
  - The approval process is somewhat cumbersome and complicated. They usually won't go to the trouble of getting permission, even if you offer to do the ground-work.
  - You will probably be asked to use only Public Domain music and images. This limits what you can use.

# SPECIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES

- Most footage will never make it into the final show.
  - A five to ten minute segment will be edited from around twelve hours of video footage.



# SUMMARY

- Don't expect the media to show up in droves your first year. It takes time to cultivate an interest.
- Make sure you have something out of the ordinary.
- Find ways to get everyone talking about your display.
- Make the reporters' jobs easy by providing them with plenty of quality material.
- Practice responding to negative question.

# SUMMARY

- The most important thing to do:
  - Have fun and share your enthusiasm!