

BUILD MEDIA RELATIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

While the media is not an audience, they are a conduit to an audience. Establishing a positive relationship is key in using their influence to push the command message.

Use this checklist to enact a media relations plan that will potentially shape the community's attitude toward the military. Large media outlets will not necessarily have the same availability or accessibility as smaller agencies, so courting smaller news brands, magazines and newspapers could warrant a more positive relationship.

1. Set goals and objectives for building a relationship with media outlets.
2. Survey media outlets available to you in the local area.
3. Research each outlet:
 - a. Determine the goal of the organization.
 - b. Note what they typically cover.
 - c. Assess their disposition (positive/neutral/negative) toward the military/government.
 - d. Review their typical news cycle.
 - e. Understand what a headline story in the news looks like and how the media outlet covers the topic.
4. Identify which audiences the military is and is not reaching.
5. Brainstorm how the public affairs team can grow their relationship with the media:
 - a. Invite agencies to the installation to cover a story.

- b. Host a media day to give everyone access.
 - c. Call agencies to ask what they are doing and what they want; share something the command is doing to create interest.
 6. Prepare to connect with outlets:
 - a. Create a press kit, [fact sheet](#) or another resource that contains background information on the unit or installation.
 - b. Compile common questions and answers the media might ask the PA team.
 7. Reach out to individual reporters who cover DoD-related stories:
 - a. Introduce yourself.
 - b. Tell reporters your area(s) of expertise and how you can help them.
 - c. Provide your contact information.
 8. Follow through on planning and implementing the events and strategies gathered during your brainstorming session(s).
 9. Set checkpoints to evaluate if the PA team meets objectives.
 10. Build an internal media list that factors your intended audience(s) and relevant media contact information; review and update this list periodically.