

Butchers DIY Media Kit

Why should I engage the media?

Media can be a useful tool to let your customers and potential customers know what you're up to.

Traditional media (newspapers, radio and television) continue to play an important role in influencing consumers.

Whether or not you already advertise with your media, there is an opportunity to engage them in a different way, free, through providing them with stories.

If you advertise, you may already be getting your specials and activities included in the media, but consider also trying to get stories published and aired to further spread those messages.

Getting Started

1. Know your media

If you already have a relationship with your local media and their journalists (reporters), use these as your contacts. First step complete! Just find out what their deadlines are so you can ensure you're giving them information when they need it.

No media contacts? A few phone calls will have you well on your way.

Do a little research:

- Find out what local media you have: is there a newspaper, radio station or television network?
- For each media outlet you have, who is the best journalist or contact for you to speak to? Get their phone number and an email address.
- Ask what the deadlines are for stories. This will vary but this will tell you when they need information by in order for it to be included in their paper or news bulletin.

Most media outlets will provide you this information if you call their reception. Keep a note of this information. If your local paper only comes out once or twice a week, make a particular note of the days their deadline falls on, as this will influence your activity.

Have a think about the types of stories your local media usually run and how. While most won't have a formula in the way the story is written, you may notice patterns in what you read, see and hear. Use that knowledge as a tool. For example, if you know your paper likes to run positive stories about successful local business, you'll know you're in with a shot if you tell them your butcher shop is doing something new to try and help consumers in your town.

2. Know your business

Journalists are in the business of asking questions, so before you speak to one, have a think about what they and your customers may want to know about you and your business.

Summarise this into a sentence or two.

For example:

- What is your business? (Is it family-run? Is it part of a chain?)
- How long have you been in your location? (Are you second generation? Is the store a town icon?)
- Do you have a particular profile in town that may help you get your business story across? (Are you a former premierships player for the local footy team? Chamber of commerce president?)
- What sets you apart from other local butchers? (Do you have your own range of sauces or ready-to-heat meals?)
- What community groups do you support or sponsor? (Do you sponsor the local football team or donate sausages for the childcare centre's Christmas party?)

For example, "I'm a third generation butcher who has worked for Bob's Butchers since I was 17 and we're still supplying quality local meat. We're also now helping busy families by offering heat-and-eat dinner solutions."

That works for your intro and can be transformed for inclusion in your media release as:

"John from Bob's Butchers is a third generation butcher and is proudly offering quality local meat. The range now includes heat-and-eat dinner solutions for busy families."

3. Media releases

Most journalists are eagerly looking for new stories and yours could be the one they want to share.

Journalists want a story that will get readers engaged and interested. You need to present a story that will get readers engaged and interested.

A weekly special is unlikely to generate interest, but a new product range, in-store activity, a seasonal campaign or sponsorship of a community event may.

Some of the questions to ask yourself include:

- What is the key message? (What are you doing? What is new?)
- Why do people want to know?
- When is it happening? (Is it timely?)
- What else do people need to know?

Media releases, also known as press releases, are a way to make an announcement or share your story with the media. Some will use them as the base of a story, calling you for more details, but others may present or publish a story using only the information in the release.

Some tips:

- Make sure you answer the key questions of Who, What, When, Why, Where, How.
- Keep the release to a single page.
- Write a clear headline. It can be funny or light, but your headline should explain your key message or theme.
- Put your most important information at the top of the release and make your first sentence your best. It should summarise the key information.
- Use the second paragraph to provide any additional information or background.

- Include some quotes from yourself which expand on your key messages. Make your quotes simple but useful, don't just repeat your first sentence. Make them sound human!
- Re-read your release, checking spelling and grammar.
- Get somebody else to re-read it for you.
- Re-read again.

Look at your local media's deadlines and work out the best time for the release to be sent to your media. Send the release to your contacts and give them time to read it. If you are holding an event, follow up with a phone call the day prior to see if they are attending. You can call journalists to follow up your release, but remember that not all media release will end up as stories or news items.

Also think about possible photo opportunities for your local newspaper. They may ring you to arrange a time, so have an idea about what you can do. For example, do you have access to an Australian flag for your Australia Day campaign photo? Do you have a Santa hat or holly for your Christmas shot?

4. Be approachable, be savvy

With the basics covered, you can now engage your local media as you need to.

You may also find that now the local journalists know who you are, they may approach you for comment on other stories they're writing.

This is a good thing! Just make sure if you're asked for comment on an issue, do take some time to think about your response. Make sure you are clear on the question, know the answer and see if there is also a chance to promote your business. This can be a real benefit for your business.

Think outside the square for opportunities to promote your business in the media. Many journalists like being given new ideas to pitch to their bosses. Is there a cooking page in your local paper? Can you support them with some recipe ideas or a bit of a product for a reader competition? Could you write a column or be a tipster for the local footy comp?

5. Let us know

What did you learn from the experience? What do you want to learn more about? Let us know.

Are you regularly doing local media and want to share some tips with fellow butchers? Get in touch.