



Public Relations Tips

January 2009

Public Relations Plan



- League Service Corporations, in tandem with their respective league public relations departments, should leverage relationships by reaching out to the local and state media to keep the “Invest In America” program in front of the public. The key is to raise awareness of the program and show the credit union difference.

Public Relations Plan



Keeping the Message Current

- “Invest in America” garnered amazing media coverage after the GM, Chrysler and national rollouts.
- It’s safe to say that nearly every TV, radio and newspaper across the country ran something, even just a brief line or two.
- The MCUL has tracked more than 250 outlets that have run something.
- In today’s media market, the message can get pushed aside quickly.
- Media strategy should be a three-pronged state approach to get the most coverage of “Invest in America” by utilizing TV, Radio and Newspaper.

Public Relations Plan

Secondary Tactics



League Secondary Tactics

- Maintain contact with selected local and state reporters:
 1. Personalize updates with specific numbers and member stories
 2. Pitch idea behind the credit union partnership
 3. Try to get on a segment of a statewide radio show
- This story has long term value, keep it fresh with:
 - The number of cars sold for each automaker
 - The number of credit union car loans made
 - The relative impacts on GM and Chrysler
 - The percentage of auto loans financed by credit unions
- Letters to the editor and op-ed pieces could be another tactic in response to stories about the auto industry or the credit crunch that don't include credit unions.

Public Relations Plan

Secondary Tactics



Local CUs Secondary Tactics

- Maintain Contact with local reporters
 1. Feed them member stories (Especially stories about members who would not have been able to otherwise obtain financing)
 2. Feed them the number of loans made (update on a monthly basis)
 3. Pitch TV reporter the story and set up with the dealer beforehand
 4. Work to get on morning drive-time radio shows
 5. It's not a bad thing to only get a brief on the business page. Anything to keep "Invest in America" in the public eye.
 6. Watch for letter to the editor opportunities if your local paper doesn't want to run anything on the program.

Public Relations Plan

Pitching the Media



Newspaper

(Remember, media companies are cutting back. Make their job as easy as you can)

- Newspapers are cutting staff, some as much as 50%.
- Pitch to newspaper through a news release and a follow-up call.
- Leverage your ad person at the paper for whom you should talk to.
- Make league/CU CEO or VP available for interviews.
- When updating loan numbers, consider writing a brief that the paper can cut and paste for the business section.
- **League** – Pitch the story on how well state CUs are doing in the program and how many loans are being made.
- **CUs** – Pitch the story on the impact the program is having on the community. Find a good story of a member that had success with the program.

Public Relations Plan Pitching the Media



Television

(Remember, media companies are cutting back. Make their job as easy as you can)

- Pitch TV stations with a release and a follow-up call. Call after 10am and before 3pm.
- **League** – Identify credit unions in each television market to make CEO or VP available for the electronic media. Make the league CEO available for interviews. Think visual.
- Personalized stories work best for TV.
- **CUs** – News hook should come from how well CU is doing in the program and the number of loans made. Have a personal story from a member ready and the person available for the interview. You could even have a dealer you work with also available. The more you do the better the story will be.

Public Relations Plan

Pitching the Media



Radio

- Radio can be powerful at certain times of the day.
- Pitch to radio with a news release and follow-up call.
- Call the radio show producer, not the host (unless you have an existing relationship with the host).
- **League** – Look for opportunities for a station with statewide listenership. Many times this is public radio. Pitch CEO to appear in person or on the phone. Pitch local CU CEO to also appear.
- **CUs** – Look for opportunities on drive time shows. Expect an in-person interview or from the phone. Make your credit union available for a radio newscast soundbite.
- Be proactive!

Public Relations Plan Pitching the Media



Summary

- With media doing more with less, the more you can provide every element of the story, the better the coverage will be.
- Stay in constant contact with reporters. Provide fresh details of the program. Personalize the story whenever you can.
- **League** – Identify credit unions in various markets that can speak to the media. Take a macro approach to the program.
- **CUs** – Leverage your media relationships. Keep the media abreast of how well your credit union is keeping the line of credit available for consumers.
- Be proactive and don't wait for the media to call. Give them a compelling story they can't ignore.