

# Get the Attention Your Nonprofit Deserves

Develop an online media center that will please donors and attract reporters

## Why have a Media Center?

I'm assuming you wouldn't be looking at this article if you didn't know that a press kit is valuable; but just in case you didn't know ALL the reasons why you should do one (other than the obvious one – to get publicity), here are some thoughts:

1. **The corporate world leads the way** - I'm a firm believer in applying corporate strategies in the nonprofit world (only if they're legal!) so if a press kit is standard operating procedure for them – it should be for nonprofits as well. Businesses use the press kit to promote themselves to the media AND to their investors AND customers to show they have value, that they have something exciting going on and that they are a worthwhile company to invest in / buy from. Nonprofits are no different; you need to show your donors and your consumers the same thing.
2. **Give your donors the info they need** - This takes us into how you present yourself to current and potential donors. A press kit has lots of information that may not be currently on your website like bios of your top management staff, the history of your organization, great photos and all the elements of a press kit that we discuss below. These extra materials can GREATLY influence a donor to make a buying decision. Yes you heard me, BUYING decision – that's really what it comes down to. Like it or not, you are selling something (a program or service that fills a need in the community) and the more information about you that you have available online the more likely you are to attract donors. We cover more of this in our "How to Attract More Donors, Volunteers, and Consumers with a Professional Website" class.
3. **Show your expertise** - The contents of your press kit can help show your expertise in your industry. In ANY business, for profit or nonprofit, it's important to develop your reputation as an expert. Donors are more likely to donate to organizations that have expertise in their fields. Consumers are more likely to seek help from organizations that have experts. Reporters are more likely to contact you about a story or to comment on a story if you are known as experts. Having management bios in your press kit helps showcase your credentials, but another great way to show your expertise is to produce articles, research, "white papers" on topics relevant in your industry and the Press Room is a great way to showcase them. A great example is the nonprofit Healthcare Without Harm; they regularly conduct in-depth research – sometimes partnering with other agencies - <http://www.noharm.org/us/pressRoom/latestNews.cfm>

## What do you call it?

Take your pick; it seems that everyone does it differently. I personally prefer Media Center as the information inside is really for anyone interested in your organization not just the Press – quite a few people choose this name and then have a category called Press Kit within that contains the items most likely needed by reporters.

Sample Names		
Media Center	Press Kit	Information Center
Online Press Kit	News Room	Press Center
Press Room	Media Room	

# Get the Attention Your Nonprofit Deserves

## What Goes in a Media Center?

1. **News / Press Releases** – A lot of nonprofits think that since they have not had any coverage in the newspapers yet that they have nothing to put here. But this section isn't for coverage already done – it's a place for you to put press releases that you've written announcing news from your organization.
2. **In the News** – This is a great title for any news coverage you have had. It might be tempting to put all news about your industry even if you were not mentioned in that news; stick with news that mentions your organization in some way. You will need to check for permission to reprint the article and what it costs to obtain professional copies. A professionally reproduced story will have the publisher's masthead and the article typed on a white background.
3. **Story Ideas** – not everyone is doing this – but it's a very creative idea for those who don't have enough to fill up separate categories. Come up with story ideas for the reporters and call it that – Story Ideas.
4. **Fact Sheets** – This is another great way to help develop that “We are the Experts” mentality and show it to the world. You can use statistics that you gathered and interpreted or ones that others have put together about your industry. You can also use Fact Sheets to tell about your organization that include highlights of your accomplishments. Use the Fact Sheet as a branding opportunity and have your logo, tagline and contact information at the top.
5. **Research** – There is no better way to show off your expertise than to produce articles and reports based on your research. If you have limited staff and resources, you can pair up with another nonprofit in your industry and co-write or co-conduct research that is important to your constituents.
6. **Case Studies, Success Stories, or Testimonials** – this is a great way to not only show the outcomes of your program but it gives reporters an great opportunity to peruse other possible story ideas with your consumers as the focus; this is the best possible way to promote your nonprofit.
7. **Company Info** – It's tempting to make this section all about the programs but I would add emphasis to the history of the organization which many nonprofits leave off their website entirely. Most people are interested in how your organization developed into what it is today and this is great info for any news stories. You also don't have to repeat the company info within the press section if you already have it under About Us section of your website.
8. **Logos and Photos** – There may be an opportunity for a story to include graphics. It's not just for traditional media; many times other websites will want to swap links with you and it would be great to provide them with your logo to give better name/brand recognition. For photos, you can have a photo or photos available for each of your press releases or you can have a separate photo gallery that people can have access to for publishing.
9. **Corporate Bios** – You will want brief bios and photos of your management team or key staff. Every nonprofit executive should have professional photos taken by a real photographer (trust me, they will do a much better job than you or your staff to get the most flattering and amazing photos ever!), a short version and a long version of their bio.
10. **Contact Info** – make sure you provide an email address and phone number for a specific person. You may want to mention that members of the media can contact that person for a print copy of the press kit (if you have one). I would also avoid making people fill out forms to contact you.