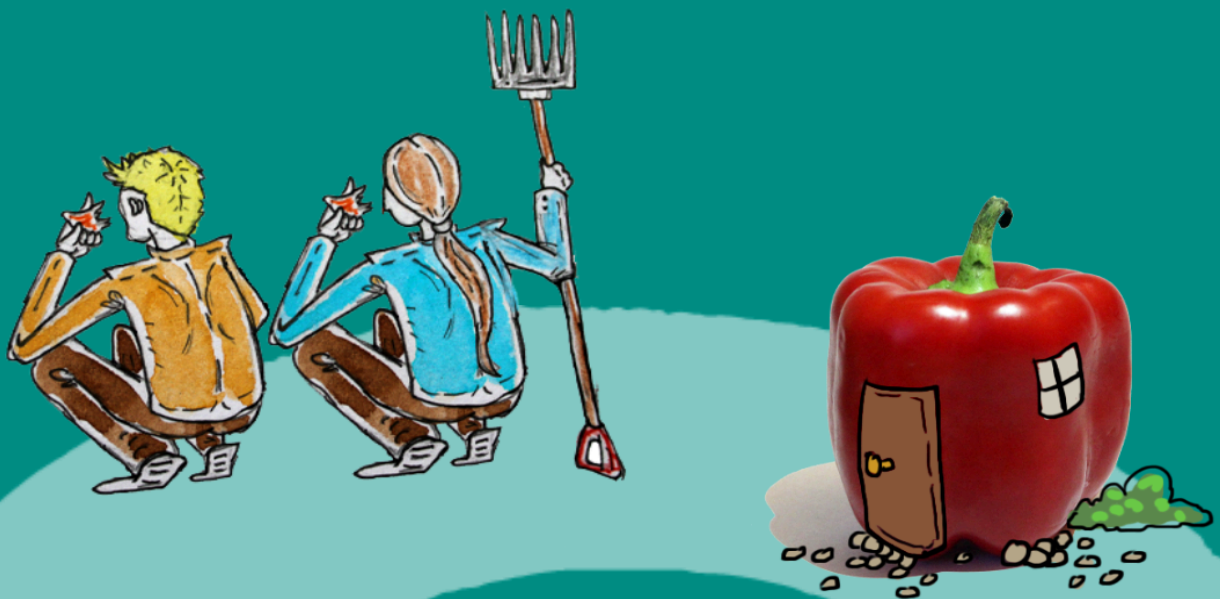


COMMS TOOLKIT

JUST FACT



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INTRODUCTION

Hello!

This toolkit aims to help you promote your community group or organisation on a budget with limited time.

We suggest that you read through the toolkit initially and then spend time on section 1 - this will help you with everything else.

We have focused on Facebook and Instagram as the key social media channels to use. We have also set up some template graphics and leaflets that you can amend as required.

In section 4 you will find lots of useful links to free guides and tools.

We hope you find this useful. But let us know if you have any suggestions or require more information.

Warm wishes

Heidi & Zoe

SECTION 1. GETTING STARTED!

What you will have by the end of this section:

- Your project aims
- Your comms objectives
- Your key audiences mapped out
- Your key messages and calls to action

1) What's your aim?

This can be as detailed or as short as you like. You might even have this already.

Write your aim here:

Eg. We want our Food Coop to be the main place where local people buy fruit and vegetables every week.

2) What are your comms objectives?

Now this is the fun bit! How can comms help you meet this aim? What steps do you need to take? **Write your comms objectives:**

Eg. Raise awareness of the benefits of organic food/increase the number of people coming to the food coop/Hold fun community events to engage local people in the benefits of local and organic food

3) Who are you talking to?

Who do you want to attract? Who are you talking to? Who would make your project a success? And where will you find them or how will they hear about you? To bring it to life you could give these people a name. Remember you are thinking about a broad group of people that have similar characteristics.

Now answer these questions:

1. Name 2 or 3 key audiences you would like to attract. Think about their age, where they live or work, do they have children, their ages etc

2. Where do these people hang out? Think about where they live, work, what they like to do, where would they go in their normal daily lives, and where would they visit?

3. Are they on social media? Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, do they listen to local radio, read local newspapers, local news websites and community newsletters? You won't know this for sure, but you can make an informed guess.

After answering these questions you could have something like this:

Target audience 1 Sara - Parent of a child at a local primary school. Drop the child off each morning and pick up at 3.30pm. Shops locally. Does school pick up and go to park with children after school. Might visit a local cafe. They are on Facebook and are members of local FB groups.

4) What are you going to say?

This is where your key messages come in. Think about why your key audiences would want to use your services or get involved in your organisation? You'll need clear, strong key messages that will grab people's attention and most importantly are easy to understand - don't use acronyms or jargon. Keep your messaging short and powerful, emphasising two or three essential points about your project. You may need to create different messaging for each audience. Doing this now, means you have them ready to use for all your comms needs in the future. Here's an example:

- Food Coop offers fresh and affordable organic fruit and vegetables
- Organic food is good for your health - more vitamins and minerals and tastes better!
- Supporting your local food coop is supporting your community

Now write your key messages

5) What do you want your audience to do?

This is your call to action. You need to tell your audience what you'd like them to do. Examples include 'like and share', 'donate and support', or tell a friend. Keep your call to action practical and realistic.

- Question - reply in comments
- Click to find out more - URL
- Book now - URL
- Let us know if you agree - by hitting like
- Please share or tag a friend

6) Where will you find your target audiences?

Next, you need to think about where you will find them and which channels to use. This is where the work you put into your target audiences will help you decide. You will also need to consider how much time and resources you have.

Remember Sara? - thinking about her daily life, and interests, here are some ideas of what comms could be implemented: *Target the primary school with a leaflet drop or ask if posters can be put on information boards outside the school. Put leaflets or posters in local cafes. Post on Facebook and in local Facebook groups.*

In the next section, we will look at some of the comms channels and tools that you could use to reach your target audiences. Oh and well done for getting this far.....

SECTION 2 - WHICH CHANNELS TO USE

What you will be able to do by the end of this section:

- Have set up social media account(s)
- Know how to post and engage
- Have a content plan
- Know how to use social media advertising
- Have set up a Canva account to create graphics and leaflets
- Know how to create a QR code
- Set up a MailChimp account to send newsletters
- Have set up a page on the parent organisation's website or landing page
- Mapped out other ways to promote your organisation

SOCIAL MEDIA

You know that saying - how long is a piece of string? Well, that's social media for you - it can be all-consuming in time and energy. In this toolkit, we are giving tips on how to start and manage a social media channel with minimal time.

1) Time to get social!

The key thing to remember is that social media is exactly what it says on the tin! - "Social"- think of it as a party, where you want to circulate and converse with different people. Where you will be asking questions, listening as well as talking.

Here's some pointers:

- Think about the type of content your audience finds interesting. Don't just post the same thing and all about yourself. Would you do this at a party?
- Ask questions - start a conversation in your posts. This helps build a community and increase engagement
- Share content from other accounts you follow, that would be of interest to your audiences eg. a new cafe opened in your area. You might find they will repost something from you.

2) Content planning

Save time by planning out the type of content you want to post. Here you need to think about your audiences. Why would they want to follow you on social media? What can you do for them? Brainstorm what they might find interesting, and useful. Eg A food coop could add value by posting recipes, nutrition tips, tips on saving money on a food shop, stories about producers, inspirational quotes, and stats. Use the 70/20/10 rule:

70% value content Most of what you post should be of value to your community members in some way. It should be informative, but it can also be entertaining or inspiring. Keep it relevant to your organisation, and if you can, create it yourself.

20% shared content. Sharing content from other sources can help uplift voices outside your organisation that need to be heard, or it can just get people to engage. You can save posts you see online to a dedicated folder for this purpose and share them as needed.

10% promotional content These can be posts promoting your organisation, events, fundraisers, and other online channels like a blog. It's a good idea to keep these to a minimum so people don't feel like they're being sold to all the time.

3) Amplify!

So how do you build your followers? You need to get out there circulating at that "party" Here's some tactics to use:

- Follow other accounts (relevant to your work/organisations) - think about what other organisations, brands etc your target audience would be engaging with. Like and comment on their content and follow them - don't spam though. By doing this, people will start to get to know you and hopefully in time will follow you too.
- Engagement - You want people to interact with your content - likes, shares, and comments (this will tell Facebook/Instagram that your content is popular, so the algorithm will show it to more people). So make sure to ask questions in your captions, to encourage engagement. Eg Tell us what your favourite fruit is in the comments below. Be clear about what you want them to do. E.g. Hit like if you think organic food tastes better.
- Hashtags - make sure to use a range of hashtags, to help to be discovered. More on this later.

- Direct message accounts that are in your local area to ask them to promote your organisation/event to their followers. You could offer to reciprocate. Eg a local cafe that Sara might go to.
- Run a prize draw or other competition. This is a great way to get new followers. You could ask local businesses for a prize in return for promoting them too.
- Use meta ads to advertise or boost your posts to get in front of more people. More about this later.

4) Which social media channel(s)?

Firstly think about where your audiences are and which social media channels they are likely to use. In this toolkit we are focussing on Facebook and Instagram, both owned by Meta.

Facebook

How to set up

1. Go to facebook.com/pages/create
2. Give your page a title (organisation name)
3. Select 'Company and Organisations' as your Page type
4. Select your page subcategory
5. Add a profile photo (organisation's logo)
6. Add a cover photo that showcases your programs (820 pixels x 312 pixels)

Make sure to complete your profile details, contact information, about you, opening times etc and keep it up to date.

What's great about Facebook

- Small businesses and organisations often use Facebook Pages instead of website
- Share opening times
- Easy to share in relevant local Facebook Groups
- You can set up Facebook events for followers to register
- Great way to promote events

Tip: Join local Facebook Groups to join the conversation and where appropriate you can mention your organisation/service

Instagram

This platform is all about imagery and video. Have a look at other accounts for ideas - but it's good to choose colours/types of photography so that your Instagram account looks and feels coherent. This is where your brand colours can be used to great effect. Make sure to add a link to your bio. This could be to your website or you could set up a [LinkTree account](#). This free tool allows you to add different URL links.

Once you have set up an Instagram account you will need to convert it to a Business account, as this will give you access to better analytics and tools. Below gives instructions on setting up an account and then converting it to a business account.

Setting up your Instagram account

If you don't have an instagram and/or facebook account:

- Download the Instagram and open the app
- Tap Create new account and enter your email address or mobile number, then tap Next.
- Enter the confirmation code sent to your email address or mobile number, then tap Next.
- Create a password, then tap Next.
- Enter your birthday, then tap Next. Note: Use your own birthday, even if this account is for a business
- Add your name, then tap Next.
- , then tap Next.
- Read Instagram's terms and policies, then tap I agree
- Add a profile picture, then tap Next.

To create an account if you have a Facebook account

If you create a new Instagram account using your Facebook account, both accounts will use the same login information.

- Download the Instagram app from the [App Store](#) (iPhone) or [Google Play](#) (Android).
- Open the app
- If your Facebook account shows, you can:
 - Tap Continue as [name] to learn more about what happens when you create an Instagram account with your Facebook account.
 - Choose not to use your Facebook account and tap Create new account, then follow the steps above to create a new Instagram account.
 - To create an Instagram account with your Facebook account, tap Yes, continue, then tap Next to sync your name, profile picture and avatar across apps. Note: You'll be prompted to log in to your Facebook account if you're currently logged out.
 - If you'd like to create an Instagram account without your Facebook account, tap Continue without Facebook.
 - Tap [Continue without Facebook](#), then tap Next.
- Read Instagram's terms and policies, then tap I agree,

How to set up a business account on Instagram

Go to your profile and tap  in the top right-hand corner.

- Tap Account type and tools.
- Tap Switch to a professional account.
- Tap Continue.
- Select a Category for your business and tap Done.
- Select Business and tap Next.
- Tap Next.
- Add contact details and tap Next. To skip this step, tap Don't use my contact info.
- To share logins using Accounts Centre, tap Login to Facebook. You can follow the steps to connect your business account to a Facebook Page associated with your business. This step is optional, and will make it easier to use all of the features available for businesses across Meta. Note: At this time, only one Facebook Page can be connected to your business account. To skip this step, tap Skip.
- Set up your professional account by completing the optional steps or tap X in the top right-hand corner to return to your profile.

- To display or hide business information on your profile, go to your profile and tap Edit profile. Go to Profile display under Public Business Information to choose whether you want to hide or display your category label and contact info. Then, tap Done.

Instagram Stories

These only last 24 hours, so great to give behind-the-scenes updates or for sharing other account's content. You can do Instagram Lives - live footage or interviews. You can also link with another account and have a live chat about a subject (promote this beforehand, so people know to tune in). Use stickers (to make it more engaging and to be found). The countdown and location stickers are great for events. You can also add polls and ask a question sticker to engage with your audiences. Stories are a great way to reach new followers. Here's a great [guide on how to use Insta Stories](#).

Time Saver Tip - You Can Choose To [Share Your Posts From Facebook To Instagram Automatically](#). This Is A Great Time Saver. You May Need To Edit Your Post In Instagram To Direct People To Your Bio For Any Calls To Action In The Post.

5) What to include in your post

Hashtags

These are a must for increasing your reach - so people can find you. Choose hashtags about your cause/purpose eg. #FoodCoop, location eg. #TowerHamlets and then general ones #Organicfood #ClimateFriendly. You can also do some detective work by looking at your competitors or similar organisations to see which hashtags they are using.

Tip: Create your own branded hashtag - so that people can find you on that hashtag. You can add this to all your promotional materials too. Eg. #LimeHouseFoodCoop or #EatYourVeg

Emojis

Emojis bring posts to life. But do not overuse and ensure they do not replace a word. Ensure emojis are relevant and inclusive.



Tagging

- Tag organisation/individual when @mention in a post
- Credit if the information is found from another account/using an image - Tag with a thank you if using a creator's information/image
- Tag anyone you are talking about or who you want to respond

Call to action - what do you want the reader to do? Read, book a ticket, find out more, like, share. And then add a URL

Images/videos

Make sure to include an image or video - the algorithm loves this. You can create graphics and videos in [Canva](#), a free tool that also has an image library. Also worth taking photos regularly, so you have a library of images to use.

Make sure to use the correct-sized image:

Instagram: 1080 x 1080 pixels (Square)

Stories: 1920 x 1080 pixels (portrait)

Facebook: 1200 x 628 pixels.

[Here are some templates](#)

Tip: You could create template graphics using [Canva](#) or Google (both free) for the different types of content. So they are ready for you to just drop in the image and/or text.

6) When to post

Think about when your audiences might be looking at their phones. Will it be after the children have gone to sleep? Will it be lunchtime or when they wake up? You can check your social media analytics to see when your followers are most active and then post at that time or use a scheduler (see 9).

The next question is how often to post. When starting a new social media channel, you need to post regularly - once or twice a day. This can be made easier by scheduling ahead of time. But if this is too much, try and aim for twice a week.

7) Paid Posts

Meta's (Facebook/Instagram) algorithm means that only 2-5% of your followers will see your posts. With a very small budget, you can set up an ad in Meta Ads Manager. You can download the app to your phone.

You can choose who you want your ad to be shown to. This could be your existing followers or an audience similar to your current followers or you can create a very tailored audience based on demographics and interests. [Find out how to set up and run an advert.](#) You can also choose whether you want the ad to only be on Facebook or Instagram or both.

If you are short on time, you could choose a well-performing post (see 6 below) and then click the "[boost post](#)" button. This is simple to set up, but you won't have as many choices on audiences and calls to action.

8) How to know your posts are working - the numbers!

If you love data, then you could spend a few hours looking at this. But if you are short on time, here's what to look for. Go into Facebook or Instagram and click on settings and analytics.

As a new social media account, you will be focussing on brand awareness (you want as many people as possible to see you/find out about you). So look at impressions (how many times your post has been seen), engagement (total number of times people have taken action on your post (liked/shared etc) - this shows that your content is interesting) and new followers (that your account is being seen and people want to see your content).

You can then keep a record and look at how things are progressing. Are the numbers going up? If so, do more of the same. Are they dropping? Try something new. You can also look at the analytics per post. Which was the most popular? Was it a video? Then post more videos.

9) Scheduling your social media posts

One way to ensure you have regular posts going out is to pre schedule them on a [free online scheduling tool](#). You can set aside some time once a week to plan your posts and to schedule them. They will then be posted at the allocated time, whilst you can be doing something else. Make sure to check in on them though to answer any questions.

LEAFLET/POSTERS

Create your own branded posters and leaflets using Canva or Google Slides. Ensure they are eye-catching, accessible for readability and include all the key information - including dates and times, location, website link booking link or contact information. You could add in social media handles and a QR code (which can be created on Canva too)

Think about where you can leave leaflets and put up posters. It's back to where you think your target audience will be. Eg for a food coop - Local cafes, supermarket boards, or primary school reception areas or ask for your local school to give them out to the children to take home.

[Here are some templates](#)

Tip QR Codes: These are great ways for people to quickly open a URL link to their mobile phones. You can create a QR code, using your chosen URL link, in Canva. Select Apps and look for QR code Generator

NEWSLETTER

You can use your newsletter to tell your subscribers about events, updates about your organisations, and special offers. Just like we talked about in social media, remember to include content that your audience will be interested in. You can share local news and events too, your recommendations, tips and ideas, recipes etc. You want them to enjoy the newsletter and not to unsubscribe. It's a great tool to keep in regular touch with your audience, drip feeding ways for them to get involved or take action.

Free tools like [MailChimp](#) are useful for creating e-newsletters. Reach out to your social media followers or people you know and ask them to sign up for your newsletter. Also, have a sign-up sheet or a QR code linking to a digital sign-up form (which you can set up in MailChimp) at any local in-person events. You can find more information on creating an [e-newsletter](#).

[GDPR](#) General Data Protection Regulation is the data privacy and security law and it applies across the UK. Make sure your methods for collecting and storing personal data, including email addresses, are GDPR-compliant.

WEB PAGE

If you have time you could build your own website using a [free online website builder tool](#). If you are short on time you can create a very simple landing page, with key information and images. Mailchimp offers this for free, with lots of [helpful resources to get you started](#).

If you have a parent organisation that you are part of, then you could ask them to host a page on the website for you. Here you could include static elements such as maps, opening times, mission statements, and photos). You will need to ensure these are correct and updated if anything changes of course! You can include a link to your email sign-up form and social media. If you are posting regular updates on Facebook, this will

be the way for your audiences to get up-to-date information and again you could link this to your partner web page.

EVENTS

Promoting events

Make sure you promote it on your social media channels and make sure to create a [Facebook event](#). You might want to consider boosting your post to reach more people. If there are other stall holders, then ask them to promote the event too with their networks. Put posters up in places where your key audiences might go. Also look at posting on online local event listings. Post about it in local facebook groups too.

Your stall

If you have a stall make sure to have good signage with calls to action - follow on social media, subscribe to the newsletter - and use a QR code, so people can easily open up your newsletter sign-up form or website. Think about investing in pop-up signs and/or banners.

Timeline for promoting an event

Timings	Things to do
8 weeks before the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create your promotional assets - posters/leaflets, social media graphics. Set up a Facebook event page• Do you need a way for people to book and pay for tickets? Use an online ticketing platform like Eventbrite. You could offer early bird tickets to encourage people to book early. Also, consider adding a custom question - do they want to subscribe to your newsletter?• Create a QR code in Canva to add to the posters/leaflets• Ask the venue to promote the event on their social media channels and give out/put up leaflets/posters
6 weeks before the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post your Facebook event to your Facebook page. Consider boosting the event.• Start putting posters up on local notice boards,

	<p>community centres, cafes etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post on online notice boards • Print and leave leaflets at local shops, doctor surgeries, schools, community centres • Schedule your social media posts, and call to action - ask people to share your posts or tag a friend • Contact local businesses to ask if they want to support the event with a raffle prize or free promotion in their newsletter.
5 weeks before the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DM local businesses/influencers to ask them to share your event on social media. You could offer free or reduced-price tickets • Consider paid advertising on social media • Share social media posts and graphics with other stall holders for them to share on social media
4 weeks before the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local press and radio to ask them to feature the event. • Share sneak peeks on Instagram stories of what people can expect from the event - any special offers? Other stall holders (use photos from past events). Add countdown sticker
2 weeks before the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On social media create new posts to invigorate the promotional campaign. These could be countdown graphics - 2 weeks until.... Tag organisations and ask them to share • Try making a video or reel • Follow up with media • Get your stall point of sale/calls to action ready. Create posters (put them in a frame or acrylic stand) with calls to action - follow on social media/subscribe to our newsletter etc - make QR codes to the URL links to add to the posters.

<p>Week leading up to the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep posting on social media - 1 week to.... • If people have registered for the event on an online ticketing platform, then draft and schedule reminder emails, with the date, and time. 2 days before and on the day • Send reminders/confirmations to stall holders • If the event is ticketed make sure to print off a attendee list, so you can check off the names
<p>After the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a thank you email to all attendees. You can add more calls to action - follow on social media, and subscribe to the newsletter. • You could add a survey to see how the event could be improved - use _____ or _____ • If you added a custom question about subscribing to your newsletter, download the list of people who said yes. This can then be uploaded to your Mailchimp subscriber list. Remember GDPR and delete any lists from your computer.

LOCAL PR

Look out for ways to be featured in local press or local radio. Remember it needs to be newsworthy. Think of an interesting angle - a hook that the press would find interesting. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is your story interesting? Think about what would capture people's attention. Is there anything controversial or surprising about your story? Are there colourful photos that bring it to life?
- Is your story relevant? Think about the audiences, the type of stories they run.
- Is your story timely? Why is NOW the right time to cover your story? Link your story to a calendar date (e.g. Organic September) or time of the year or relate it to current news stories
- Is your story significant? Explain why your story matters. What hard hitting facts and figures can you use? Can you relate your story to a big issue in the news?
- Does your story have human interest? Putting a human face to your story will help you to secure media coverage and to capture the audience's attention at a deeper level

Think about how the local press could cover your story - could it be an interview, a news story (maybe some stats or a report), an opinion piece or perhaps you could write a letter for their letter section.

How to get in contact with the media

- Prepare a short write-up of your story or a [press release](#). Get in touch with the media by: Emailing or phoning them – look at their publication/ website for contact details
- Tagging a journalist or media on Facebook or sending a message
- Being easy to find online – if there is lots of relevant content on your website and on social media, journalists are more likely to find you. Make sure you have contact details and respond quickly to any requests.

It's good too to have quotes, testimonials (local people's opinions/ experiences) and photographs. Don't expect it to be picked up the first time around. But by keeping in contact with them, with interesting stories, they will have you on their radar.

SECTION 3 - YOUR COMMS PLAN

What you will be able to do by the end of this section:

- Created a comms calendar**
- Mapped out key dates that you will include in your comms**
- Mapped out weekly hashtags**
- Have an idea of what type of content to post on which day**
- Created content ideas for your newsletter**

So how are you going to plan your content? How will you know what to post about and when? How will you find the time?

Set up a monthly calendar plan on an excel spreadsheet or in a notebook. Have a look at this [social media calendar](#) for key dates and celebrations that you could hook your content to. Note these dates on your plan. For instance a food coop could run a special social media campaign and/or event around Organic September.

Look at hashtags for these key dates and also for weekly events eg. #CharityTuesday or #MondayMotivation. So you could plan for Mondays, to post a motivational tip or quote. And then on Wednesday it could be a recipe of the week. etc . This way you know what content you need to find/create. You can then schedule all your social media posts ahead of time, using a social media scheduling tool. This in turn will help you save time.

By doing this you will also be able to plot out what content to include in your newsletters and relevant times to hold events. Use mailchimp template to make writing your newsletter easy, using the same headings each time, and use a google doc throughout the month to prepare ideas/events/recipes in advance of sending out the newsletter - then all you have to do is pop them all into your template at the end of each month. You can schedule sending out to make this easier too.

SECTION 4 - RESOURCES AND TOOLS

[How to create graphics in Canva](#)

[How to set up a landing page with Mailchimp](#)

[How to set up a newsletter in Mailchimp](#)

[How to set up an ad on Facebook or Instagram](#)

[How to boost a post](#)

[Linktree for your Instagram bio](#)

[How to run a prize drawer on social media](#)

[How to build a free website](#)

[Free online social media scheduling tool](#)

[How to set up a ticketing event page on Ticket Tailor](#)

[Social media content calendar](#)

[Free social media scheduler](#)

[How to get in local media](#)

[How to write a press release](#)