

The Press Release, the Press Conference

In most cases, the media will be pursuing you for a reaction to an issue or event that may have an impact on your campaign. However, there will be times when you have something to say, and will seek media coverage.

There are two fundamental tools for this purpose: the press release and the press conference.

The Press Release

Try to keep press releases to one page, and include just enough information to pique the interest of reporters. Reporters may not contact you for direct comment if they feel the press release provides all the information they need, or the release may be passed over because reporters do not have time to read lengthy information.

Don't issue a release or conduct a press conference unless you have something important, new, or relevant to say.

Overuse of the press release and press conference is the quickest way to dampen media interest in the campaign, and tends to reflect poorly on the candidate.

The Press Conference

When calling a press conference, you are asking reporters to come and listen to what you have to say, take pictures or video, and leave with a story fit to print or air. For this reason, press conferences must be used sparingly.

After the candidate delivers a brief, clear, and concise statement, the floor is opened to questions from the media.

During the question and answer period, keep your answers brief and to the point. Stay on track with your key messages, and present yourself as a confident, competent, and relatable candidate. Some reporters may wish to do a more in-depth interview, and this could be arranged as a one-on-one session after the press conference. Again, if you do not know the answer, don't "wing it". Promise to respond at a later time, and always follow up on phone calls and emails, either directly or through your team.

If there are additional speakers in the press conference, their statements should also be brief and be vetted by the campaign team for accuracy and compatibility. Often, in provincial and federal campaigns, a visit in your local area by the party leader garners media interests. When possible, build an event with a press conference around that opportunity.

Like press releases, too many press conferences can erode the candidate's credibility. Reserve press conferences for major announcements such as announcing your candidacy, or major developments that have a direct impact on the community.

Be sure to send a media advisory in advance to let news outlets know when and where the press conference will be held, and provide a general idea about its content.

The location of the press conference should take into consideration the media's equipment and space requirements. A microphone that all media can plug into makes their job easier.

Holding a press conference outdoors, when possible, can make for more interesting visuals for television.

Sample Press Release

For immediate release

Smith Announces Run for Party Nomination

February 4, 2018 Antigonish

Jane Smith, 23-year resident of Antigonish, has today announced her intention to seek the _____ Party nomination for the provincial constituency of Antigonish.

In announcing her bid today, Ms. Smith said, "The people of Antigonish have given me a lot over the years and I want to give back in a way that will make a difference by representing them in the Nova Scotia Legislature."

Smith is a teacher at Antigonish High School and has spent many years volunteering at the local women's centre, as a volunteer fire fighter, and as a United Way fundraiser. This is her first bid for provincial office.

"Politics interests me because change interests me, and I think the people of Antigonish want change in representation and in the way politics is done," she said. "I believe, with my experience and skills, I have a valuable contribution to make," she added.

Her primary concerns are the education system, health care, and employment in the Antigonish area.

A native Nova Scotian, Jane Smith moved to Antigonish in 1995 to begin her career as a teacher. She is a single parent who is raising two children: Jason, 17, and Melissa, 15.

For more information, or Ms. Smith's biography and resumé, contact the Committee to

Elect Jane Smith at _____.

Contact:

(name of person handling media enquiries)

(name of party)

(phone number) (email address) (website address)