

# HANDY HINTS ON DOMESTIC PUBLICITY

## BE PART OF FÁILTE IRELAND'S DOMESTIC PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Fáilte Ireland's domestic consumer marketing team manage a year round publicity campaign to stimulate media coverage and promote home holidays via the [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie) platform. These activities include: organising TV, radio, and print promotions, press releases, press trips, online marketing initiatives, cooperative marketing campaigns, and supplying travel editorial. The following opportunities are available for Irish tourism businesses to participate in these national and regional promotions:

### ■ HAVE YOUR EVENTS INCLUDED IN DISCOVER IRELAND NEWS RELEASES:

The team issue weekly national and regional news releases promoting a range of home holiday ideas using [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie) as the call to action. These include information of what's happening in the marketplace, interesting festival and events and new initiatives, which if suitable, may be included. We endeavour to, but can't always guarantee, copies of coverage or details of follow up.

Businesses looking to be included in these news releases can send their information to [publicity@failteireland.ie](mailto:publicity@failteireland.ie).

When sending your information please ensure:

- Information is sent as early as possible – for example news releases for magazines and supplements are often issued at least eight weeks in advance of an event.
- If possible please include a relevant and impactful high-resolution image with your release.

### ■ GET INVOLVED IN MEDIA PROMOTIONS:

As part of the home holiday marketing campaign a number of promotions will be run on national and regional TV, radio, print and online media during 2011. These are an effective way of promoting the domestic holiday experience.

These promotions regularly require a prize giveaway on behalf of [www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie), but your property or activity will get mentioned in the script.

If you would like to offer a prize giveaway you can email [publicity@failteireland.ie](mailto:publicity@failteireland.ie):

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The minimum prize value required for promotions is to the value of €500 however depending on the media platform the prize value is often higher. The larger the prize the greater the level of coverage but we are limited to the amount of content we can include in scripts. We endeavour to, but can't always guarantee, final sign off on all scripts for prizes with each respective provider.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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**P**ublicity is a crucial aspect to a business's success. It can help to set your organisation apart from the competition. There are many components to a publicity plan but this document concentrates on a selection of non-paid for publicity initiatives (i.e. where no media fee is required).

Editorial placement (i.e. an article in a paper, or a mention on TV or radio) is invaluable because it cannot be bought. When your message is offered as news, it carries the implied endorsement of the news media and becomes more credible.

Good publicity has the potential to develop a strong brand image, increase public exposure and awareness of your tourism business and increase profitability.

## FIRST STEPS

- **Identify your target market:** Every company has a number of groups it can communicate with. It is important to know who you want to reach from the outset. Therefore segment the general public into specific target groups that you want to reach e.g. singles, young families and over 55's, and then prioritise them.
- **Identify the appropriate media:** You need to develop a good relationship with the media. Become familiar with all types of media (e.g. you may prefer to read the Irish Times to The Star but your target market may read The Star). See the style of articles being printed and familiarise yourself with the journalists names. Discover which media's demographic matches with your priority markets and write specific news releases and story pitches for them. It's important to keep your media database up-to-date.
- **Become familiar with all types of media:** Media consumption is changing rapidly and the online world is becoming increasingly popular. Do research yourself or speak to professionals about how you can have a presence in this space. Make sure you take note of where your target market is consuming their information and familiarise yourself with every medium – print (newspapers, magazine), radio, TV and online (websites, social media) – and their uses. Online articles can be very effective at driving traffic to your website, whereas a well placed travel article, TV/radio interview or competition might encourage someone to pick up the phone or check out your website. Ask yourself, who will be interested in receiving your information?
- **Identify the appropriate media:** Discover which media's demographic matches with your priority markets and put together a targeted list of media for every piece of communication. Ask yourself, are they interested in what you have to say? You may prefer to read the Irish Times to The Star but your target market may read The Star. If you are targeting families, then Woman's Way, Ireland AM, and morning drive time radio work well, while it might be better to target The Irish Times for the over 55s. In many cases, specialist media and magazines could be an effective way to reach your prime target audiences. For instance if you are a guesthouse with facilities such as freezers and drying rooms for anglers then you could target the relevant angling media in addition to mainstream media. Also don't forget about regional or local media. If you're a hotel in Dublin, you might want to feature in Cork and Galway newspapers.
- **Make sure your news is of interest to your target media:** When you have identified your target media, then find out what interests them, what they like to talk/write about. Read articles, watch chat shows and listen to radio interviews to familiarise yourself with their content/style.
- **Keep consumer and business separate:** The way you speak to your consumers is very different to the way you speak to your trade partners, and it's the same with PR. If you want to speak to a consumer, then tell them why they should visit or highlight special offers, and if you want to speak to the trade, then tell them what you're doing for the industry, new developments, new appointments etc
- **Pitch stories that will interest your targeted media:** Just because you think its groundbreaking news, does not make it so. Think about what your targeted media want. Xpose might be interested in spa news, while joe.ie would be interested in adventure activities and events.
- **Develop a good relationship with the media:** Familiarise yourself with journalists, radio and TV presenters and bloggers names and get to know who covers what.
- **Pitch to the right journalist:** Don't send everything to everyone. Speak to people who are interested in hearing. If you want to promote your new restaurant then email/speak with food critics; if you want to highlight the new activities at your hotel, then a travel journalist would work best; if you have just appointed a new MD, then target the business and news pages. Sometimes of course these overlap.
- **Write in the style of your targeted media:** Write news releases tailored for the media you are using – if you are targeting a tabloid, then keep your language conversational and creative, using puns. If you are targeting a broadsheet, your language needs to be more formal and elaborate. Radio stations, websites and bloggers prefer a short paragraph, as it helps them to keep the information concise, but some websites will take longer pieces.
- **Get to know your local media:** Local media (print and radio) have a great impact on local communities. Keep them informed and up-to-date on ongoing developments. Invite them to your premises annually so they can see your tourism product first hand. The cost of hosting some light finger food may be repaid tenfold if you receive positive coverage!

If you invite a reporter from your local newspaper or magazine for coffee or lunch, don't ask "Will you write about me?" Instead offer to help them e.g. offer yourself as a resource in your area of expertise or your product as a resource for competition prizes or photographic opportunities. If you have the knowledge, talk about trends you are seeing in your industry, so you can provide not just consumer focussed information but content and business information for every section of their media. Even opportunities such as providing a recipe from your restaurant can spark reader interest in your product. Remember local media are interested in local people and their initiatives/achievements.

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## NEWS RELEASES

A NEWS RELEASE IS ONE OF THE MOST BASIC AND COST EFFECTIVE METHODS TO GENERATE PUBLICITY. IF YOU ARE GOOD AT WRITING, YOU CAN DO THIS YOURSELF.

### 1. Make sure it's newsworthy

- ✓ A different and unique way of doing business
- ✓ Special holiday packages and/or targeting a new market
- ✓ An upcoming special event
- ✓ An innovative or new product, event or service (e.g. an iPhone app)
- ✓ An expansion of your operation
- ✓ A new senior staff member
- ✓ Increases in your sales/revenue/bednights in newsworthy numbers
- ✓ If you have won an award or gained professional recognition
- ✓ A great photo opportunity for the media
- ✓ A competition
- ✓ Suggested itineraries that might interest different demographics.

### 2. Always include the following:

- ✓ The name, address, phone number and email address of your organisation
- ✓ The person to contact for more information, and their title or job description
- ✓ A release date - the date you would like your information to be published
- ✓ A headline - the title of the release. Be creative. This can make all the difference between an automatic email deletion or catching the journalist's attention. e.g. 'Girlie Getaways - Sisters are doing it for themselves!' sounds better than 'Spa breaks for girls'. Or 'Take a Walk on the Wild side with Adventure Holidays on Ireland's West Coast!' sounds more interesting than 'New holiday breaks available'.

### 3. Distributing your press release:

- Do NOT blast your email out to everyone together. The best results come from one to one correspondence, where you can include a brief introductory note on why it's relevant to that publication, what segment of the radio programme it might sit well with etc.

### 4. Other Considerations:

- News releases should be two pages maximum, however a one page release is generally preferred by the media.
- If you need to include extra information, or details on your company, put these at the end in a section called Editors Notes.
- The subject matter, title and opening paragraph are the most important part of your release. Before you start to write the press release, identify the key message that you want to communicate. It's recommended there should be no more than 2 key points in any release. The most important information must be contained in the first paragraph as newspapers edit from the bottom up. Your first paragraph also should reflect your caption.
- When a journalist writes a story, they always seek the answer to six questions – who, what, when, where, why and how? Therefore your releases should be structured in this way. You should aim to answer these six questions in your first two paragraphs.
- Be concise, don't use jargon or technical language, and do not make your article opinionated. The journalist will come to their own conclusions. If the release is succinct and clear, the paper may just copy and paste the information directly, so write like you would if you were a journalist speaking to your readers. If it is difficult to understand the editor/producer won't waste time reading it.
- Each press release should be written in a style that reflects the message it is trying to convey. For example, a release for the adventure product should be written in an upbeat, creative and exciting style. Keep your tone relevant to your product/business, yet bear in mind the style of the media you are trying to attract.
- Remember every journalist is looking for a good story so there is ample scope to have a newsworthy item covered. Think of news that would interest the reader. Often the more unusual or quirky events/initiatives will achieve greater coverage.
- Provide at least one relevant high resolution image where possible. Good imagery is a strong influence on whether a story gets published or not. Where possible imagery should involve people and actions. It is important to have a library of good imagery available for media requests.
- A timely follow-up is important two or three days after sending the release. This pitch should be clear and straight to the point: did they receive the release; do they need any further information; or are they interested in doing a press trip?
- Timing of press releases: Lead times vary for different media outlets. Magazines may require several months between receiving your pitch and publishing a story, while newspapers may only need a few days of lead time. Radio and television stations are generally focused on breaking news, which means you will need to act fast and, if possible, create a message relating to the hot topic of the day or week e.g. if the weather is exceptionally bad you could capitalise on the fantastic indoor facilities your tourism business has. However, always be honest – don't represent your product as something it is not – negative publicity can be very damaging.
- When the importance of an event speaks for itself, you can send a media alert by email instead of a press release. A media alert usually covers only the who, what, when and where of an event, and invites reporters to attend.
- Don't be afraid to pitch ideas/themes (in which your business could feature) for news articles/travel features as journalists are always searching for new stories and different angles.
- If you want more expertise, then contact a PR company, who can develop a plan for you within budget. And remember, you dictate the budget, so don't be afraid to say you have limited spend. They will work with what you have. However, your results will correlate to your spend.

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## OTHER PUBLICITY INITIATIVES

- Contact your local University / IT to see if a student studying communications or PR would like to use your company as a case study. It's a great way to get fresh ideas and advice.
- Take advantage of the potential of your local community. If possible, get a local celebrity / hero to be an ambassador for your tourism business, this will provide a good local media angle.
- If you have a VIP/celebrity guest ask them to provide a quote on their experience at your premises and request a photo too. Not only can this grace the walls of your premises, and feature on your website but regional media may well pick up on it.
- Tailor packages to local groups, such as teambuilding for local businesses or sports teams. Not only will this provide another good local media angle, but it may also be an additional revenue stream.
- Run competitions – you can often get free or relatively cheap competitions if you provide an excellent prize. Pool your resources with other local tourism businesses and offer prizes for media competitions from your locale to regional press and radio.
- There are plenty of opportunities to interact with the local community e.g. adventure or spa demonstrations at local events, shopping centres, schools.
- Don't miss opportunities to use other events to your advantage and offer tailored packages e.g. for students in the local IT or University during Fresher's Week, or offer spa treats to your local weightwatchers class.
- Partner with a suitable brand where you could your name on their pack in exchange for prizes.
- Use social media – get on Twitter and tweet about new developments, and start a Facebook page and invite friends to discuss events held in your premises. Reward your fans, keep them up to date on what's happening in your area and provide them with helpful tips.
- Cut out newspaper clippings and upload them to your website – people like to see the media are talking about you.
- Get yourself on relevant websites like Trip Advisor – ask guests to do reviews for you.
- Consider websites such as Pigsback.com or City Deals, which are becoming increasingly popular. They offer great discounts throughout the country, for everything from hotel rooms and events to restaurants and activities. You may not make a profit on the deals that are booked, but you will get a high level of awareness as your deal will be emailed to thousands of people. You can also cap how many offers you give away.

## RADIO INTERVIEWS

- If you pitch something of interest to radio stations, they might ask you to come on air to discuss the topic.
- Make sure you or your chosen speaker is clear and concise, and easy to understand.
- Be prepared. It is reasonable to request a list of questions in advance of a radio interview. Some interviews are pre-recorded and can therefore be edited before airing, if you are unhappy with a response, you can request that they might re-record the section although they may refuse. Often interviews are live..
- Preparation is key to steady nerves. If the interview has stemmed from a press release you issued make sure the interviewee has read the release and can talk easily about the content. They should try to make the information relevant to the demographic of the radio station e.g. on a radio show aimed at a younger audience 'we have fantastic adventure activities perfect for young singles or groups of friends such as...'
- Questions should be pre-empted using the 'who, what, when, where, why and how' format.
- Make a note of the three key points you want to get across – repeat these during the interview (using different words). Be concise and articulate.
- Try to repeat your website address at least twice in every interview so people can get more information or booking details.
- If you are unsure what the presenter is asking you, it's fine to ask them to clarify.
- Ask for an mpeg of your interview when you finish, so you can see what went well and take note of what you can improve on.
- These mpegs could then be used for content on your website.