



MAKING YOUR MEDIA CALL COUNT

Getting on the phone (or talking in person) is often the quickest way of communicating with media and a good way to build relationships. But, making an effective call is often not as simple as picking up the phone.

Think of it as a sales call rather than a conversation – and bear in mind that while some journalists appreciate phone calls, others may just prefer email).

You might call a journalist in order to:

- Offer further information or answer questions about a media release or email you have sent
- **DO NOT simply call to check the journalist has received your media release - make sure your call adds value!**
- Tell them about breaking news e.g. call radio newsrooms just before bulletin
- Introduce yourself if you have not been in touch before
- Investigate their possible interest in a topic/subject/interview opportunity
- Discuss a possible contribution to future feature or invite them to an event

Some tips for calling journalists:

- Research: the media outlet, the journalist, and the best time to call
- If you're not sure, call the main switchboard ask to be put through the newsroom and ask the person who answers the phone who the best contact person would be for a story on your subject
- Write down your main points before calling to ensure you communicate your key messages in the conversation or voicemail – you often have 20-30 seconds to “pitch” your story or make your point
- Have written material ready to send if necessary
- Pick up the phone and introduce yourself; ask if this is a convenient time for them to talk (if not, ask when would be a better time, or if they would prefer something in writing first)
- Briefly state your purpose for calling, state key points clearly and listen to their responses (taking notes is useful)
- Ask if they are interested
- Be prepared with alternatives. For example, if they are not interested in doing a pre-event story, ask whether they could send a journalist on the day or use it in the social pages
- Accept “no” for an answer if necessary (can politely ask why if appropriate)
- Agree the next steps to be taken (if any), thank them
- Take the agreed action!