

GGI PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDELINES

Table of Contents

PR TARGET GROUPS	3
Overview and general considerations	3
Intra-network activities	3
Internal company activities	3
PR INSTRUMENTS	4
General considerations	4
Website design	4
Email distribution	5
Press conferences and press interviews	5
Articles for publication in the trade press	5
Lectures	6
Radio and TV	6
Readers' letters	6
Other	6
Press releases	7
Appropriate recipients of press releases	7
Format	7
Content	9
Cultivating editorial contacts	10
Checklist:	10
PLANNING ACTIVITIES	12
Prioritisation	12
Assessment of the usefulness of potential instruments for the various different target groups	14



INTRODUCTION

These guidelines, which apply to all GGI members, give advice and handy hints on how to manage press and public relations efficiently.

A growing number of members are not restricting themselves to trade journals and magazines to present their companies and projects, highlight their international focus and stress the consequent benefit to clients, or publish the results of any working groups or professional conferences in which they are involved, but are also making this information available to interested members of the public through other media.

The image your company reflects externally is very important in the competitive environment. Some GGI members do not have their own press/PR departments and so it is all the more essential to organise the press/PR work in such a way that the best possible results can be achieved with the minimum of expenditure.

Your public profile and that of GGI can be significantly heightened by professional press and public relations work. The stronger the network, the more useful it will be to your company.

The most important forms of press and PR work are described below. The guidelines detail the preparation of press releases and their placement in the press. It should be recalled that the guidelines are based on Swiss standards and you should consequently take into account that conditions may vary from country to country.

Pages 11 and 12 gives a bullet point check list of the major points to be considered when engaging in press work and PR. The section also gives an example of a press release. GGI would be happy to supply you with some appropriate sections of text, which you might like to incorporate in any press releases published by your own company.

Wishing you every success with your press and public relations work,

Barbara Reiss

Head of Communications

b.reiss@ggi.com



PR TARGET GROUPS

Overview and general considerations relating to target groups

Overview and general considerations

Public relations exercises might be targeted at:

- Establishing and cultivating a positive image
- Raising the level of public awareness of your company locally/regionally
- Highlighting your specific core competencies to potential clients and associates
- Sharpening your profile compared to your competitors and generally cultivating your image with lawyers, auditors and management consultants
- Increasing your attractiveness as an employer

Depending on your priorities, a number of different potential target groups of varying importance to your company can be addressed.

Intra-network activities

These include the flow of information between GGI Head office and the membership and communication between members. GGI Head office supports communication among members and encourages information and client exchanges between members by providing assistance such as:

- A directory containing address details of the membership (website and Members' directory)
- GGI Intranet (where emails can be sent directly to the addresses selected)
- Posting details of member profiles on the Intranet
- Organising conferences which focus on networking aspects

Internal company activities

Each company determines the flow of information between management and employees and communication between members of staff for itself. It is absolutely essential that all employees are informed of your membership of GGI and that they know what GGI is and the benefits membership can bring to your company and its clients. We recommend to browse the members' section of the GGI website for further information.

The public arena

The general public can be divided into local/regional and national/international segments. Local/regional level corresponds to the population in and around your town or city, or possibly, the area covered by the regional daily newspapers.

In this context, "national" covers the rest of the country which is served by national newspapers and magazines, radio, TV and of course, the Internet.



A strong presence in the local or regional press facilitates and promotes contacts (new clients, working groups, politics, potential employees and cooperation partners). Beyond this, more frequent reports in the media can contribute to raise the level of public awareness of GGI and your company.

Suggestion: One of your goals should be aimed at expanding your presence in the local press (GGI = local strength, global structure). The preconditions for this are good contacts with local newspaper editors and keeping them regularly supplied with useful information on your company and its activities. Press releases and articles produced by your company are suitable tools for this.

PR INSTRUMENTS

General considerations, website, email distribution, press releases, press conferences and press interviews, articles for publication, lectures, radio & TV, readers' letters, other, flyers and brochures.

General considerations

Public relations involve a range of instruments which can be categorised according to various different criteria. One method is by the medium used (e.g. press, internet, lectures), another way is to split the instruments used into active and passive. Active instruments of PR are any measure which directly addresses the target, e.g. email recipients or press releases. Passive communication instruments constitute information which, although made available, must be accessed or obtained by recipients themselves, such as a website for example.

The cost of potential PR instruments should be assessed in order to check whether their cost effectiveness is appropriate. In this context, the best instruments include:

- The simplest and most versatile (multifunctional)
- Those which can reach the maximum potential (key) target groups
- Those requiring the least possible time and manpower.

The major PR instruments are described and discussed below. Instruments are frequently combined, for example press releases are generally sent to newspaper editors by email and frequently refer readers to the relevant website for further information.

Website design

Websites have become one of the core elements of a company's public relations. All GGI members have undertaken to maintain an English-language website. These sites represent your company's visiting card and its shop window, so to speak. No other instrument is as versatile and no other medium can reach many of the target groups named above with such relative ease. Although websites are "passive" sources of information, they can easily be combined with active instruments. For instance, press releases may refer readers to websites for additional important information and a hotlink to the site can be incorporated into emails.



Since the information can be downloaded onto any computer, websites are a superb way of distributing brochures, flyers and leaflets quickly, easily and at no cost, saving time, effort and postage. However, the cost of maintaining and updating websites should not be underestimated. Ultimately, the expenditure involved is not dependent on the structure of the site, but to a large extent, on the volume of information which needs to be regularly updated. All GGI members can post the GGI logo on their websites and link into: <http://www.ggi.com>. GGI provides an example of the text under the “International” heading (which you can find under the GGI downloads section of the Intranet).

Email distribution

Email recipients are superbly well placed to transmit the information quickly, simply and cheaply to a larger number of selected recipients. An important part of PR work consists of establishing and updating lists of email recipients. You can also easily select your own list of email recipients on the GGI Intranet (e.g., “International taxation” practice group, or “GGI members based in Germany” or “all GGI members”).

Press conferences and press interviews

The object and purpose of a press conference is to work as efficiently as possible to provide maximum information in the minimum time. Although most press conferences last no longer than an hour, their organisation takes a great deal of time and usually also involves a degree of cost. Subsequently, before organising a press conference, it is a good idea to check very carefully whether the subject is so interesting (to the public) that it justifies engaging in a press and public relations exercise of such a demanding and complex nature. It is likely to prove the exception in the case of your company and so we shall not be giving any detailed recommendations on this.

However, unlike a press conference, *press interviews* are much more informal and not necessarily related to a particular event, but serve rather more to cultivate contacts with representatives of the media. This is a good occasion to give background information and generate a candid exchange. In this way, members of the media will receive the impression that they are being given advance warning of major events. Beyond this, an interview with the press is a good opportunity to introduce yourself and demonstrate your credentials as a knowledgeable contact. Interviews of this type can also be combined with a tour of the company premises.

Articles for publication in the trade press

Alongside official press releases, your company is of course always free to submit its own articles to the press. The more frequently your company appears in the editorial pages with articles on the profession, the better. To achieve the optimum PR effect, on no account omit to mention the name of your company.

Your company PR officer should proofread any articles to be submitted to the trade press from the newspaper editor’s viewpoint, before sending it in. This guarantees a uniform corporate identity and ensures that the text complies with the basic rules of journalism.



Lectures

Lectures are an excellent exercise in PR, even though they are rather time-consuming. With subjects of an immediate topical nature or those of more general public interest, an invitation or press release should be sent in advance to selected editors.

Radio and TV

Particularly interesting information can be spread by radio and TV as well as the print media, although it should be taken into account that unless a “spontaneous” interview with a representative of your company is being broadcasted, this usually costs considerably more than sending out a press release. At the same time, the “permanence” and sustained use of such broadcasts is usually negligible (for example, items broadcasted on radio and TV are hard to put into your press portfolio). Consequently, radio and TV are less relevant to day-to-day public relations and using these media is likely to be sporadic and restricted to particular occasions.

Readers’ letters

A reader’s letter gives a personal perspective on a published item, or of course, it can also be your company’s viewpoint, or that of a member of your company. Readers’ letters are therefore suitable to stimulate discussion and debate among the readership and to draw the direct attention of the editor-in-chief and editor responsible for a particular piece. Letters from readers and viewers are generally taken very seriously by editors-in-chief and if published, they distinguish the writers from the mass of the readership. If the letter is brief and to the point (a maximum of one A4 page), you have every chance of being published.

It should be remembered that the point of the letter must be an important one, so that it distinguishes itself from those sent by the rather more “notorious” correspondents. In any case, the sender must be clearly visible. Ideally, to stand a chance of publication, readers’ letters should be original and containing statements of striking relevance. Readers’ letters should not always necessarily be critical, but can also agree with the sentiments expressed in a particular piece.

Other

In addition to the standard instruments described, there are many other possible ways of handling public relations and these include special activities, such as taking an information stand at a trade fair, participating in conferences, involving yourself in campaigns, such as charity events, or issuing newsletters, etc. Some of these activities may be very time consuming, and they may not be very effective and so fail to produce the anticipated results.

The heading “Other” contains a variety of “merchandising” options, such as the producing and distributing of giveaways such as pens, USB flash drives, etc. Brochures, flyers and annual reports remain important PR tools for your company. You can download the GGI logo in a range of different formats from the GGI Intranet.



Press releases

Press releases (including press information, notices and statements) are the most important active instruments for reaching the “general public”. Press releases contain brief and precise factual information which the publisher considers worthy of publication and which are offered to the (print) media. Whether and in what form such press releases should be published is up to the editor.

Appropriate recipients of press releases

Newspaper editors receive countless press releases every day. Whether or not they are published depends on the news value of the content, whether the information has landed on the right desk and if the editor responsible can use it without spending too much time and effort on it. Many press releases are not printed, because they do not reach the right person. Often, the content does not suit the medium or editorial department to which the press release has been sent. To make the effort worthwhile, it is essential for your press officer to establish the right contact first.

- a) *TV, radio, trade press or newspaper?* The choice of medium depends on whether or not the event is of local, regional or national significance. It is best to ignore any subjective feelings, as of course we all believe that our news is particularly important. The news content of the press release must be objectively assessed. Of course, newspapers are not necessarily the only potential recipients, there may be items of interest to the trade press, and there are many small community radio and TV stations where information of a local or regional character is of interest.
- b) *To which department should press releases be sent?* A question which should be asked if a newspaper has been selected as the right medium. A number of departments may be relevant to reports concerning GGI: the business section, if the report relates to business; the local section, if the publication has strong local connections. There may be a number of different headings under which your item may find a good home, such as sections on local companies, or trade supplements carrying a special feature on lawyers, etc.
- c) *Who is the right contact?* Should the recipient to whom the press release is addressed be a radio or TV station, then we recommend you send it directly to the news editor’s office and, if you are contacting a newspaper, then send your release to the editor of the section concerned. If you send your press release to the right editorial department, you have a greater chance of having it published.

Format

The content of the press release must be utterly convincing, but even the most interesting event can be rendered dull by poor copy and bad presentation.



Key layout criteria:

- Always use the same template for press releases, as this ensures a high level of recognition.
- A press release must always be marked “PRESS RELEASE” or “PRESS NOTIFICATION” at the top. Press releases are also frequently headed up with the words “Kindly reprint the text below”.
- Always place your company logo at the top right hand corner of your press releases. Your address, phone, fax, website and email details should appear below this or in the footer of every page. Do not fail to give a contact with phone number who can be reached during working hours to answer any queries.
- The reason for the press release should be clearly evident and the newsworthiness of the content should fully justify its publication in the press.
- Headlines, titles and sublines should not contain any redundancy, but should complement each other by giving additional information. It is essential to include the most important news factor in the headline.
- As it is often the hard copy of texts which are edited, i.e. adjusted and put into the right form for the publication concerned, it is a good idea to set wide margins and one and a half line spacing, to make it easier to correct.
- Enhancements, such as bold, italics or various different typefaces should be used for headings and leads only, and not in the running text.
- Giving details on the length of the piece (such as number of words or characters) is also a good idea, as this makes the work of the editor easier.
- A “good” press release is one which the editor can copy directly into the page template or scan in. The less work the editor has, the more likely it will be that your press release will be printed. Texts which fit this description are often printed the next day.
- Press releases should not contain abbreviations or acronyms that the editor may not understand, otherwise your press release will quickly be abandoned in favor of another one.
- Send press releases by email or fax. Check with the editor first as to which method is preferable.

In principle, the following applies: copy your press release into the mail and avoid sending it as a pdf or Word file, since fear of viruses may prevent your file from even being opened. A press release should be worded in such a way that the editor can accept it (virtually) as it is, or can be quickly and easily amended to suit the house style of the publication concerned.



Content

What is newsworthy? In principle, any type of event (having just joined GGI, GGI conference taking place in your town, projects of interest to readers, advance notice of seminars, the opening of new offices, your activities, new publications, and so on). The press release can be also posted under the press release section of your website, so that it becomes generally available.

How much information should a press release contain? The golden rule is: short and to the point. There is no fundamental entitlement to have the press release printed in full. Please avoid giving instructions such as: “kindly print in full”, as in many cases, this may result in a rejection of your press release.

- The press release should include all the important information as concisely as possible. 200-400 words (or 2000-3000 characters incl. spaces) is an appropriate length. The shorter your press release, the greater its chances of being printed. It should never be longer than two A4 pages.
- Start your press release by answering the big five W questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?
- Your press release should be worded in such a way that it is best printed exactly as it is. A good press release should never be written in the first person singular (instead, use “our company...”; “we are organising...”) and avoid addressing the reader directly.
- The language used for press releases should be in good journalistic style. Keep the sentence structure simple and concise. Where possible, give one item of information per clause in your key sentences and do not use complex sub-clauses. Direct or indirect quotes support the authenticity of the news you are reporting. Avoid using foreign words and abbreviations.
- Your press release should be structured in chronological sequence. This means that key information should be given at the beginning, and secondary information at the end.
- People mentioned in the press release should always be named in full (eg. first and last names plus position). This saves the editor having to carry out time consuming research. Avoid using “Mr.” and “Mrs.” or “Ms.”, unless you have already mentioned their first names.
- The accuracy of the press release is also important. For example, if you are reporting an event, such as a conference, be sure that you give the precise number of visitors attending. If your press release is aiming to invite a member of the editorial team to the event, check the date, time and venue again before sending it out. Editors are unforgiving when it comes to even the smallest mistake. Anyone finding themselves in a venue on the wrong date will not accept the same mistake a second time.



Cultivating editorial contacts

Good press relations help cultivating good contacts. If you would like to initiate contact with a new editor or if the press officer of your company changes, it is a good idea to have a proper introduction. Knowing the face at the other end of the telephone or email is always so much more pleasant for both parties.

Two or three days after sending the press release, follow it up with a brief telephone call. You can then ask what type of feature is in the pipeline and whether the press representative is interested in receiving further information in the form of a press pack (company brochure, publications, GGI material).

Never send a press release without giving the editorial department advance warning by phone, unless you have already been working together for some years and this is acceptable. Check when and if your press release has been printed and whether or not the content has been correctly reproduced. If not, make a friendly overture to the editorial office, asking for the release to be reprinted with the appropriate corrections.

Checklist:

- What is the key item of information in your press release?
- Which medium is suitable for your press release?
- Who in the editorial department is the right contact?
- Have you answered the “big Ws” at the start of your press release?
- Is the press release structured in such a way that it can be cut down from the end (in other words, does the key information appear at the beginning and the more specific details at the end)?
- Does the press release conform to the prescribed format?
- Afterwards: was the press release (correctly) published?

If the press release concerns notice of an event (seminar, new membership of GGI, GGI conference):

- Was a follow-up report agreed?
- Is a press representative coming to the event?
- Arrange assistance for the press representative at the event.



PRESS RELEASE (EXAMPLE)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GGI Geneva Group International ranks 6th worldwide

Zurich, Switzerland, July 25, 2014 – Geneva Group International (GGI) is ranked 6th worldwide in the latest survey of international networks and associations carried out by Accountancy Magazine.

As the largest global multidisciplinary alliance, GGI's cumulated fee income has reached US\$ 4.593 billion. GGI was established in 1995 and currently has 680 offices over 116 countries, and a total professional staff of 22,200 FTE that takes care of the accounting, legal, taxation and consulting matters of its growing international clientele.

Every year Accountancy Magazine, the official journal of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, publishes an annual survey of the top 25 international networks and associations.

GGI Geneva Group International
Schaffhauserstrasse 550
CH-8052 Zurich
Switzerland

Contact:

Barbara Reiss

T: +41 (0) 44 256 18 18

F: +41 (0) 44 256 18 11

E: b.reiss@ggi.com

W: www.ggi.com

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Determining the priorities

The aforementioned analysis of target groups and instruments of PR clearly demonstrate the wide-ranging variety of potential activities. However, not everything which is conceivable or theoretically possible is useful or feasible. The main obstacles relate to the fact that those involved in public relations may be directly or indirectly under pressure of time. If the time an employee has for public relations is only around 10% of the available working time (approx. half a day per week/ 22 days per year), then most of the available time will already have been taken up with day-to-day business (eg. maintaining and updating the website, updating the email distribution lists and cultivating contact with the local press). This means that any additional work must be prioritised. In principle, the criteria described above apply when defining the priorities. Consequently, in addition to the day-to-day work, public relations exercises should concentrate on activities which:

- Address the highest possible number of target groups which are key to your company
- Produce results which are multi-functional (and if possible, repeated) in use
- Require the minimum time, human and financial resources to achieve the maximum possible outcome.

Prioritisation

This section proposes a matrix for assessing the effectiveness of the key potential instruments of public relations used to address the diverse target groups. At the same time, the table illustrates which target groups we consider to be of particular importance to your company/GGI. It also gives an estimate of the required resources. Radio and TV, along with readers' letters, press conferences and press interviews are not reflected in the matrix as, in our opinion, these instruments are less important to your company/GGI due to lack of space and in any event.

The assessments are subjective and only give a rough, personal estimate. This applies both to the target group prioritisation, as well as to the resources needed for the diverse instruments and the assessment of the effectiveness of the instruments in reaching individual target groups. In some cases, no concrete target groups could be allocated, as this always depends on the individual case concerned (i.e. the publications in which press releases are printed/the target group addressed). The matrix is therefore rather general and where prioritisation of target groups is concerned, the assessment is also relative. All target groups are important, however, some are more important than others for your company or for the particular message you are trying to convey.

When assessing the resources needed for certain instruments, it is important to remember that several components have been included. A distinction should also be made between the "initial resources" and the "secondary resources". Preparing an email distribution list can be very time consuming, while the updating process is less so. It is also important to distinguish who bears the cost of the estimated resources needed and how often. For example, the resources required for lectures usually only affect the person giving the lecture, and not the press and PR officer. In addition, the

resources needed depend on the number and length of the lectures and whether new lectures have to be prepared or material already available can be used.

Suggestion: reflect on what the matrix for your company might look like and design an outline activity plan for the year. The plan should already identify the responsibilities for individual actions.

Send your press releases to your list of email recipients, GGI Head office and your own staff.

- Send INSIDER to your clients and your staff
- Send GGI Head Office any article and publication which might be of interest to other GGI members. We are happy to publish these on our website, (see under Publications / Resources / Press).
- Give some thought to the various different places where you could publish your information (e.g., trade press articles on your website, mailing to clients, GGI website, GGI INSIDER)

		PR instruments					
Target groups		Website	Email distribution list	Press releases	Trade press articles	INSIDER	Lectures
		Local publications	o	--	++++	--	--
	National publications	o	--	++	--	--	--
	GGI members	++++	++++	++	++	++++	o
	Your own company	++++	++++	++	++	++++	+
	Clients	++++	++++	++	++	++++	++
	Potential employees	++++	--	++	++	--	o

Target groups

Very important

Less important

Instruments

More costly

Relatively less costly



Assessment

-- *unimportant for the target group to be addressed*

o *less important for the target group to be addressed*

++ *very useful /very effective*

++++ *highly useful / highly effective, particularly relevant to key target groups*



Assessment of the usefulness of potential instruments for the various different target groups

The considerations on which the assessments are based can be illustrated by a number of brief concrete examples. All the target groups can be reached by **websites** since these are the first ports of call of almost every target group today when looking for information on your company/GGI.

Email distribution lists are an efficient medium to provide specific target groups with selected information. Of course the email addresses should be available and a list of recipients should exist. Up-to-date information on all GGI members can always be sought on the GGI Intranet.

Press releases are information multipliers. The same press release can be sent to many different editorial offices. Press releases are very versatile, newspapers can help you reach the local and possibly even the national wider public, and trade magazines address the professional world (colleges, institutes, associations, professional organisations). Articles in the local press are a good way of reaching the local population, but they do not have national cover. On the other hand, national newspapers are also read locally.

Key points to keep in mind when drafting your annual plan:

- Who is your company's press and public relations officer?
- What defines your corporate identity?
- Who is responsible for ensuring (checking) that your corporate identity is uniformly applied?
- Who is or should be authorised to update which area(s) of your website and how?
- Who is responsible for the decisions concerning the overall layout/content of the website?
- What is your company's participation plan in particular activities/trade fairs/conferences?
- Does your company organise seminars? And who is responsible for this?
- Who and how defines content and format of brochures/flyers/other publications?