

PRACTICAL PR FOR YOUR CARE HOME

Create Excitement, Interest And A Great
Reputation Using The Power Of The Press

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Full Beds Forever

Care Home Marketing Series

from
CareHome
Marketing Expert

Now the boring but necessary legal bit!

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Right, let's get on with the good stuff now!

How to create a 12 month PR campaign

Spending time developing creative PR opportunities isn't a luxury you have. It can be difficult to identify good PR opportunities for your care home but with my formula I'll help you make it manageable.

The easiest way is to have an ideas jotter that you can use as a book of ideas for PR opportunities. To get started, break your creative thinking down into bite-sized chunks and use the following categories as your guide:

- Seasonal
- Topical
- National events

Within these categories start to think about how they can be connected to your care home, your residents and employees. For instance: In December you could organise a Christmas carol concert at your care home, for residents, provided by the local choral society.

With this example you can see how something seasonal and topical, that involves residents, could turn into a PR opportunity; especially with the added element of a community society providing the entertainment.

Keep thinking about possible ideas and writing them down. For now though I have taken the time out of this huge task and provided you with a workable 12 month PR schedule.

The calendar isn't prescriptive; it is simply a suggestion of topics and themes you could adopt. Use it as it is, or use it as a basis to create your own ideas.

I'd print this off, maybe even blow it up, and place it in a prominent place in your office to keep it front of mind and very much part of the day-to-day of what you do.

12 month PR Calendar:

I have started to populate the calendar for you with various suggestions and explanations.

Continue in this way until you have a complete action plan to work towards.

Remember to keep the focus on:

Residents

Employees

Care Home

Month	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
January	New year celebrations -organise a party with a theme. Seeing the New Year in is always a good local press topic.	Farmhouse breakfast week 22-28 th Jan -Cook a special breakfast and hit home to the media the importance of nutrition and a good breakfast.	Christmas card recycling -Resident activity - could be making gift tags to sell for charity or simply collect to add to a local recycling effort.	Chinese New Year -The focus could be food and culture, cook a special Chinese meal or embrace cultural references such as Buddha.
February	Pancake Day -Make pancakes, involve the residents, sample with different toppings – maybe a resident has a unique suggestion for this?	St Valentine's Day -Fill the home with romance. Spoil the female residents with red roses and a glass of pink champagne. Maybe a resident was married on Valentine's Day – a great topic to associate the day with.	Oxford/Cambridge boat race -this could be good fun, put it on the TV, organise a sweepstake and see who wins – any money raised could be for a local charity.	National Chip Week -Use the good old chip as a story focus. Maybe organise a mobile fish & chip van to visit the home?
March	St Patrick's Day	Red Nose Day	Mother's Day	Crufts
April	April Fool's Day	St George's Day	Grand National	Easter Sunday
May	VE Day	Eurovision song contest	Chelsea Flower Show	Local community History Month
June	Father's Day	British Armed Forces Day	Care Home Open Day	Volunteer Week
July	Wimbledon	International air show Farnborough	Apricot season	Sit out and enjoy the garden
August	Summer holidays	Seaside at the home	Vintage music festival	Notting Hill carnival
September	Heritage Open Days	World Alzheimer's Day	British Food Fortnight	Last night of the Proms
October	The Big Draw (drawing event)	World Smile Day	National Curry Week	Harvest festival
November	Remembrance Sunday	St Andrew's Day	Bonfire Night	Stir up Sunday
December	Tree Dressing Day	Start of Advent	Carol singing	Christmas

PR Calendar Checklist:

You have your PR Calendar now all you have to do is think about developing a story. So long as you remember to focus on the story on residents, employees or the care home you will stay on the right track.

To help you decide how to create a PR opportunity out of the suggested topics think about how it could look in a picture. It's much easier to choose an event when you can visualise it. Just ask yourself 'Will this make a good photograph?'

Don't put yourself under pressure, not all events will be appropriate for print or broadcast media. They will still be appropriate for your website and newsletter though, so ensure you maintain the flow of communication here.

Important note:

Do not send a story to the same media list every week!

Once or twice a month is more than enough.

Why?

Journalists will not feature a story about the same organisation every week. This would compromise editorial policy, their status as unbiased, and their need to be recognised as independent – you will simply become a pest.

However, if you do have a story every week, use them for your website news page, your social media and your newsletter. Look at the different communication channels you have and continually promote your stories through them.

Newspapers, radio, TV, newsletters, Facebook, Twitter and your own website are all great communication channels which enable you to stay in touch with your community, prospective customers, existing customers and their families. It's a win, win situation.

How to create the perfect news story

Use this simple news story checklist and you are guaranteed to see your story in the media.

Before creating your news story tick the boxes below to confirm you have chosen an appropriate news item.

- ☐ Resident participation/achievement
- ☐ Employee activity/achievement
- ☐ Corporate/care home activity/achievement

Choose one of the above three subjects only

- ☐ Ensure it isn't re-packaged sales. Is it a news story?
- ☐ Is it topical or timely?
- ☐ Is it relevant (to the media, readers, viewers or listeners)
- ☐ Is there human interest?
- ☐ Have you a good photograph to complement the story?

Important to remember:

Always include a good photograph to illustrate the event, activity or task.

Pictures sell stories!

Move on to the next page to start creating your story...

Template press release

To news editors:

Press release for immediate release (always include to indicate the story can be used)

Date: (add the date of distribution)

TITLE (Should be short but attention grabbing)

First paragraph – Tell the whole story in this paragraph. Explain Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

Second paragraph – Expand upon the introduction in more detail

Third paragraph – Provide a quote from your company spokesperson

Fourth paragraph – Explain what your company does

Caption – Only add here when you are including a photo with the story

Ends –

Indicate the story has ended

For further information – Add the contact name, email address and telephone number of one person who is able to deal with media enquiries.

Notes to Editors: - add technical explanations and evidence here.

Press release crib sheet

- Create a short and catchy title in bold type- you don't have to have worked for the Sun Newspaper - just ensure it is brief and means something in relation to the full story.
- Use the Who, What, Where, When, Why rule in the 1st paragraph. This is to allow the journalist to understand the story immediately. If the story doesn't fulfill this requirement the journalist will simply 'spike' your story – file it in the bin!!
- Expand upon your introduction in the 2nd paragraph by going into more detail and explaining the facts. Do not repeat yourself; it is an explanatory paragraph not a re-hash of the introduction.
- Provide a comment from a company spokesperson in the 3rd paragraph. This saves the journalist time- they don't have to ask for one and is another good reason to use your story. Ensure the comment humanises the story and is genuine.
- Conclude your story in the 4th paragraph with a bit about your company and what you do. Don't use it to sell, simply sum up who you are, where you are based and what you do.
- Add '**Ends**' in bold type centralised on the page under your last paragraph; this simply indicates to the journalist the story has finished.
- Include a caption if you have a photograph illustrating the story. This should be marked in bold and clearly state the full names of the individuals pictured and their position on the photo i.e. (left-right, back row etc.) Always position this after '**Ends**'.
- Always include 'For further information' at the bottom of a news story. This should provide the name, email address and telephone number of the person most able and available to talk to the media.
- Ensure technical information and explanations are placed within the section titled: Notes to Editors: Place this after 'For further information'.

Important to remember:

Keep it short; one side of A4, keep to the facts, use simple language, no waffle or industry jargon and present the information within an email; not as an attachment.

Care home Press Release templates

The three templates included cover the essential topics I have mentioned previously: Residents, Employees and Care home.

Use this template format every time you create news. Regardless of distributing to the media or not, this format is tried and tested and is just as appropriate for your website and newsletters too.

Take care to fill in your event specific details where you see the brackets and don't forget to delete the brackets!

Remember:

- Add the date of distribution, not the date you create the story
- Type the title in bold capitals
- Type 'Ends' to indicate the end of the story
- Include the name and contact details of the person the media can contact

A little something just for you:

I know you must be wondering 'how do I know if I'm on the right track', so I'm offering the chance for you to benefit from my feedback. Redeem the voucher below up to three times by emailing me at colette@chewpr.com and I'll feedback via email to ensure you stay on the right PR track.

FREE press release feedback consultation voucher

Simply redeem your **FREE** press release consultation by emailing colette@chewpr.com and quoting **PRCOUPON** in the subject field, attach your press release and be sure to indicate who you are and which care home you represent.

Your feedback will be emailed back to you within 24 hours.

This coupon cannot be transferred to another company and cannot be used more than three times.

Template 1:

To news editors:

Press release for immediate release

Date: *(add today's date)*

CARE HOME EVENT MARKS *(add event from calendar)*

One of the town's better known care homes, *(add your home name)*, marked *(add event)* by treating its residents to a fun packed *(add the activity)*.

(Add number of residents) residents from the care home were involved in *(detail the actual activity and what it involves, include any special aspects from the event)* which was thoroughly enjoyed by all involved.

(Add the full name and title of company representative) says: "Our elderly residents and our very caring team enjoyed the event that brought much chat and laughter to the day." *(Ensure the quote captures how the event made people feel)*

***(Add your care home name)* are based in *(add location)* and provide *(add what type of care you provide)* from their *(add number of beds)* bed specialist accommodation.** They employ a *(add the number of full and part-time staff)* strong care team and have been graded as *(add CQC rating)* by the CQC *(Quality Care Commission)*.

CAPTION: *(Include post event picture of residents and employees having fun)*
Pictured (Left to right) *(add the full names of people illustrated)* enjoying the event fun held on the *(add what day, date and event)*

Ends

For further information please contact *(add name of contact)* on telephone number *(add landline and mobile)* or email on *(add email address)*.

Template 2:

To news editors:

Press release for immediate release

Date: *(add today's date)*

CARE HOME EMPLOYEES APPEAL FOR CHARITY *(connect to calendar event)*

Care professionals from *(add your home name)*, will be *(add what you'll be doing)* in aid of *(add charity event)* during *(add the day/date)* in the hope of raising *(add figure)* in valuable funds to support the good work of the charity.

The team have signed up for *(detail the actual activity and what it involves, include any special aspects from the event)*

(Add the full name and title of company representative) says: “We’re working hard in the hope of raising *(add figure)* for the charity appeal *(add name of charity)*. We can all appreciate the good work this charity does and we’re looking for as much support as possible to achieve our goal.”

(Add your care home name) are based in *(add location)* and provide *(add what type of care you provide)* from their *(add number of beds)* bed specialist accommodation. They employ a *(add the number of full and part-time staff)* strong care team and have been graded as *(add CQC rating)* by the CQC (*Quality Care Commission*).

CAPTION *(include a picture of employees training):* Pictured (Left to right) *(add the full names of people illustrated)* enjoying the event fun held on the *(add what day, date and event)*

Ends

For further information please contact *(add name of contact)* on telephone number *(add landline and mobile)* or email on *(add email address)*.

Template 3:

To news editors:

Press release for immediate release

Date: *(add today's date)*

CARE HOME OPENS ITS DOORS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY *(connect to calendar event)*

(add your home name), will be opening its doors during *(add event detail)* to the local community this *(add date)* to encourage local people to learn about how care homes operate and the valuable service they provide.

The care home will be hosting a *(detail activity and what it involves, include any special aspects from the event)* and all from the local community are invited to take part.

(Add the full name and title of company representative) says: **“We’re really looking forward to welcoming the community into our home and sharing the work we do – hopefully we’ll make a few friends too.”**

***(Add your care home name)* are based in *(add location)* and provide *(add what type of care you provide)* from their *(add number of beds)* bed specialist accommodation. They employ a *(add the number of full and part-time staff)* strong care team and have been graded as *(add CQC rating)* by the CQC *(Quality Care Commission)*.**

(There is no need to send a photograph with this story but you will have an opportunity to share a post event photo and update story!)

Ends

For further information please contact *(add name of contact)* on telephone number *(add landline and mobile)* or email on *(add email address)*.

How to create a media distribution list

There are many ways to distribute a press release but the BEST way is to email the story directly to a named journalist.

The steps below show you how:

1. Buy your local newspaper, listen and watch your local broadcast media and see which journalists report about the topics and subjects you are creating news about.
2. Most email addresses can now be found within the newspaper or broadcast media websites. In fact most have press release submission pages for you to use. If you can't find this information simply call them and ask for it. They are usually very helpful.
3. If all else fails you can research journalist names on Google – all the information you need can usually be found there.
4. If you are looking for much wider media distribution use the FREE and easy to use resources listed below:
 - The Newspaper Society www.newspapersoc.org.uk is a free resource and provides lists of local UK newspapers and their contact details.
 - Hold the Front Page www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk has a UK media directory providing details for daily and weekly titles.
 - Media UK www.mediauk.com provides the websites, telephones numbers and emails of the online media, including radio stations, television channels, newspapers and magazines.
 - Radio Centre www.radiocentre.org is the industry body for UK commercial radio. A full list of all UK commercial radio stations can be found under their 'membership' section.
 - BBC Radio Stations www.bbc.co.uk/radio/stations provides background and contact information for national and local stations.

Important to remember:

Local and regional media is very parochial. Keep your distribution list simple and relevant. A newspaper, radio station or TV channel out of your town and region will NOT use your story.

Now focus your mind to SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and gain results on a search for your care home name on Google.

It's important to do this because online media is essentially immortalised – your story will always be there. Even better you'll build your profile online and make it much easier for customers to find and reach you through the Internet.

Below are my recommended FREE and paid for online media sites you should place your news with:

www.PRLog.org – Provides free distribution to Google News and other search engines. Not many free distribution sites offer this. Many of my stories have been found on Google through this site.

www.Free-Press-Release.com – Easy to use and features more than some for free and guarantees search engine indexing.

I-Newswire.com - Allows for free distribution to sites and search engines, premium membership is paid for and offers distribution reports.

www.PRBuzz.com - Completely free distribution to search engines, news sites, and blogs.

www.NewswireToday.com and www.PR-Inside.com - Offer free press release upload.

www.24-7PressRelease.com <http://www.24-7pressrelease.com/> - Free press release distribution but not guarantee of it being uploaded. You can pay for distribution which secures a guarantee.

www.1888PressRelease.com - Free distribution but no guarantee, the paid services provide better placement, distribution to Google News and permanent archiving.

www.ClickPress.com - Paid for only, but the site is crawled by some of the world's major search engines. This means your content is more likely to turn up in a search engine.

www.PR.com - Not only will they distribute your press releases but you can set up a full company profile which will aid your SEO further.

www.PressMethod.com - Free press release distribution no matter what.

www.PRLeap.com - Fee based distribution to search engines, newswires, and RSS feeds.

www.TheOpenPress.com - Gives free distribution for plain formatted releases but charges for HTML-coded releases.

www.prfire.co.uk - Offers free press release distribution on their news wire and paid for distribution services to focused media lists.

www.uk.prweb.com - Paid for news distribution service linking your news to search engines, journalists and bloggers.

Important to remember:

Don't forget to place your news on your own website and social media sites if you have them. This joins-up all your hard work and ensures your message is consistent across all formats to the largest audience possible.

Public Relations

Create your positioning and message to market

Along with creating press releases consider your overall public relations strategy. You need to take control of your home's image and actively promote it the way that you want within your local community to build up that vital good reputation.

Here are a few questions to get you started along the right lines.

Positioning

Where are you in the marketplace? (Private only, council?)

Which customers do you serve best? (Be honest, don't be all things to all men)

Where are you based? (City, town, country?)

What do you do well? (Activities, meals?)

What do you offer? (Residential, day care, specialist care?)

Do you have a unique value? (The only one to offer...specially trained staff in...? Excellent CQC report)

Where is the value for the customer? (Is it 24/7 care, peace of mind, the communication between the family and care provider?)

Messages

What is your company mission? (Is it to be outstanding, responsive, the best in the area?)

What do your customers think of you and your services? (What feedback have you had lately?)

How do you want to be perceived by your clients and customers? (Part of the family?)

What is important to your audience? (Do they just want to know their relatives will be cared for adequately?)

What influences them? (Fee?)

Important to remember:

It isn't about being 'THE' one in a million that offers 'A' one in million service. Be realistic, but be open and find the hook that will attract customers!

Create more customers through PR

If you like what you've seen, have recognised the benefit, but don't have time to do it yourself, why not let our dedicated team of experts handle your care PR for you.

And because we are so appreciative of your custom so far we are exclusively offering a HUGE 30% off our PR services.

We can hit the road running with the minimum of fuss so don't wait. Let us take care of your reputation and move it in the direction you want right away.

30% off care PR services with this voucher

Because we are so appreciative of your custom so far we are exclusively offering a **HUGE 30% off** our care PR services.

If you'd like an expert pair of hands to handle your PR, simply redeem your **DISCOUNT** by emailing colette@chewpr.com and quoting **30COUPON** in the subject field, attach your query and be sure to indicate who you are and which care home you represent. We will contact you within 24 hours to discuss your needs.

This coupon cannot be transferred to another company and cannot be used more than once.