

If you want to have an impact on people and raise maximum funds, you need to plan your media campaign very carefully. There are three main outcomes to aim for. Firstly, you want to increase understanding about the needs of the people you aim to help. Then, you want to generate interest and commitment from local leaders and politicians. And finally, you need to mobilize people to either give money and/or their time to the campaign. So, it's really important to develop a key message to achieve these aims. You have to spend research time collecting information in order to build a strong case for your work in the community. The key message has to do two things. Firstly, it has to state the size and effects of the problem. Let's say ... the effects of living alone on a very low income ... like many of the people we care for.

What's more, you also need to show people how they can make a difference by telling success stories, showing the difference visits can make or how we can sometimes pay unpaid bills, for example. You know, human interest stories. Then, of course, you have to prepare a news release. You see, if you get media coverage, it will be based on the news releases you send to local radio, television or newspapers. It's quite a difficult task but I find it helps to ask yourself the following questions:

- Will the story interest my intended audience? This is so important today as people get so many appeals for help and, therefore, to succeed, yours has to catch their attention.
- If published, will it advance my ... our objectives? Basically, if not, why are you doing it?
- And are all the facts and figures in the story 100 per cent accurate? Because, if you exaggerate or make false claims it will only generate bad publicity for your charity, and this will do more harm than good in the long run.