

## Promoting Your Involvement

However you decide to become involved with Jewelers for Children, it's important that you make all of your stakeholders aware of your involvement. Statistics show that today's consumer is much more concerned about the social impact a company they are doing business with has. Your stakeholders would include your employees, your customers, prospective customers and your neighbors and peers in your community.

By following some of the suggestions in this section Promoting Your Involvement, we have provided some suggestions developed from what other supporters have found successful. This includes tips for dealing with the media and promoting your charitable efforts.

JFC has built this reference document with input from companies that support our organization. If you try something and that you find works very well, or does not work well, please share your experience with us. Together we will continue to make a difference in the lives of children in need.

JFC is excited to assist in gaining local, positive publicity for your store. While the press release template that we've created is a valuable resource—for you and for the media—it is important to supplement this with a personalized “pitch.” We know that you have great stories to tell, and we want to help you share those stories with the community. If you're planning a charitable event or promotion, let people know about it. Better yet, let the media spread the word for you. To that end, we are providing the following suggestions to help you effectively communicate with members of the media and successfully solicit coverage in your area.

**Establish a context:** In other words, find a hook. Your first conversation or correspondence with the media may be your only opportunity to sell your story. Each reporter is searching for a compelling story angle, and you must be prepared to lead him/her along that path. This can be accomplished by establishing a connection between your charitable program and a larger trend or particular need in your community.

**Localize a national story:** JFC serves as the ultimate liaison, connecting local jewelers to local chapters of national charities, such as Make-A-Wish and CASA. By leveraging JFC's national resources, you can attach your store to a national movement. This could make your story seem more impressive to the local media, who always appreciate a local angle to their stories. For example, if your store is hosting an event for the local chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the media will see that you are partnering with a national organization.

**Get to the point:** Media members are barraged with phone calls and emails. The best way to ensure that they read/listen to your pitch is to quickly and directly state your main idea. As a general guideline, try to convince the reporter that your story is newsworthy within two sentences.

**Give them the fact:** Think of a surprising fact that will support your pitch and elicit a reaction from reporters. Essentially, you want to grab their interest by telling them something they don't know.

**Timing is everything:** This is true on multiple levels. Pitches themselves should be timely and relevant to a current or seasonal story, such as a major holiday or the summer wedding season. Moreover, knowing when to speak to a reporter is as important as knowing how to speak to a reporter. In general, television and newspaper reporters are under heavy deadline pressure in the late afternoon. During these times, they are likely to be distracted—and potentially annoyed—when speaking on the phone.

Now that you have taken the initiative, the reporter will decide if he/she would like to move forward with a story about your store. If, indeed, the media express interest in your store's initiative, they likely will ask you for an interview. While an interview request is a very positive development, the interview process itself can feel a bit unnatural or intimidating. That said, there are a few things to keep in mind when talking to the media. In most cases, the cardinal rule for interviewing with TV, radio, and newspaper reporters is: "Be yourself." But here are some additional tips, many of which are simple, common sense reminders, to help you feel more comfortable in this forum.

### **General Interview Tips and Guidelines**

There are universal guidelines to follow during any interview, regardless of the media format or topic. Your goal is to direct and set the tone of the interview, while expressing your main points. Prior to the interview, it is important to review your central communication objective for the interview. When possible, try to bridge your answers back to this objective during the interview.

#### **During the Interview:**

- In normal conversation, people tend to build up to a logical conclusion. Since time is precious on TV (and editors like pithy sound bites), make your point first. Then you can present supporting information.
- If you have a series of points to make, say: "There are three reasons I feel that way. I..." This way, the reporter is compelled to let you get the complete message out. If you have been cut off, you can easily pick up the message where you left off ("I do want to get back to that third point, which is...").
- Nothing is ever "off the record"—if a reporter hears it, it's free for the quoting, so do not say anything you do not wish to have reported.
- Use everyday language that is easy to understand. You're really talking to the audience/reader, not just the reporter.
- Avoid saying "no comment." Instead, indicate why you cannot respond. For example, to a question about revenue or spending, you can respond, "Well, I can't discuss that. However, I can tell you that..."
- Treat the interviewer like a respected peer. Don't say "sir" or "ma'am," but use first names sparingly, if at all.
- Avoid patronizing remarks, such as "that's a good question" or "I'm glad you asked that, Bill."
- Be friendly, animated, and natural. Be yourself.
- You are really speaking to a large audience—listeners, readers, and viewers—so use humor cautiously. A joke could be taken the wrong way.
- Always make eye contact with the reporter. On Television, never look into the camera. Always address your answers to the person asking the question.

#### **Body Language and Appearance:**

- If you are asked to appear as a guest for an in-studio interview, you should lean forward in your chair to show involvement and interest. This stance creates an eye-to-eye equality between you and the interviewer. It also allows for a tighter shot, since you will

be closer together. Sit up straight, in the front of the chair. Sitting back in the chair causes you to slouch.

- Do not fidget. Ring twisting, finger tapping, and thumb twiddling distract the reporter and the audience.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer. You'll appear alert and interested if you do.
- Always remember that, even when the interviewer is talking, the camera may be on you. Anything you do, any expression you make, could get picked up and seen by thousands of viewers.
- Wear pleasant, professional-looking clothing in solid bright or dark colors that flatters your skin color and physique.