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# A Quick Guide to Media Relations

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American Academy of  
Cosmetic Dentistry

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## **Introduction**

The AACD knows that you're busy—but that you also want publicity for the hard work you're doing!

The **AACD Quick Guide to Media Relations** will provide you with some quick facts about media relations, along with some sample press release templates and copy that you can use to promote your work, whether it's your dental practice or laboratory, and the AACD.

But first, here are some frequently asked questions about media relations:

1. **Why should I engage in media relations?** Pitching a story to your local media about the work your practice is doing, an event you're hosting, or even your attendance at an AACD annual meeting is a great way to build your reputation in the community. It can increase your visibility—and attract new patients.
2. **What does it mean when I 'pitch' a story to the media?** Pitching is simply the process of suggesting a story idea to a media outlet. Pitching can be done in the form of a press release and a pitch letter (most common), or through a simple phone call to see if the newspaper, TV station, radio station, or magazine would be interested in your story.
3. **How do I pitch my story to the media?** A press release with a pitch letter is the easiest way to get your story noticed. Most reporters prefer that press releases are e-mailed to them. You can copy and paste the release directly into the body of the email (often, attachments trigger reporters' spam filters).
4. **Who do I send the release or information to?** A good way to find press contacts is to simply browse the newspaper or station's website for the local news editor and send the release to that individual. If you are hosting an event, a community calendar might be a good fit also.
5. **What if I don't hear back after I pitch a story?** Reporters are very busy, and are working on deadlines every day. If you sent a release and haven't heard back in a week or two, chances are they don't have space for the story—or it does not fit into their needs.
6. **I didn't hear back from a reporter and I REALLY want my story to be publicized. What can I do?** If you haven't heard back, you can send another email. Reporters are inundated with hundreds of releases every day, and there's a good chance they may not have seen it, or it's been buried. A phone call to the news desk never hurts, either.

7. **What kinds of stories do media outlets usually pick up?** The AACD has experienced great success with consumer-oriented stories about health and beauty. Think seasonally: For example, summer is a great time to promote teeth whitening for weddings. Media outlets also love to cover events, such as free dental days or charitable causes. For a list of story ideas, see below.
  
8. **I have a story idea but I need some expert resources.** Not to worry—the AACD has tons of resources available on its website, [www.aacd.com](http://www.aacd.com), and in the media room. Feel free to use this information—just be sure to cite that it’s from the AACD.

## **Story Ideas: How Do I Get A Reporter's Attention?**

The AACD Media Room ([www.aacd.com/mediaroom](http://www.aacd.com/mediaroom)) is full of relevant, interesting press releases that you can customize and send to local media.

Here are some great smile topics to get you started (click on the links):

[The Smile: The Secret to Attractiveness at Any Age](#)

[Spring Cleaning Tips for a Healthy Mouth](#)

[Recipes for a Healthier Smile](#)

[How to Be Kissable While Kicking the Habit](#)

[Wanted: Whiter, Brighter Teeth](#)

All of these topics have press releases in the AACD Media Room that you can customize to help promote your own practice and your work.

In addition to these topics, the AACD has conducted tons of great research to help underscore why a great smile is so important.

Research Topics

[A Picture Perfect Smile: The Secret to Attractiveness at Any Age](#)

[2012 Aging and Beauty Study](#)

[2012 Whitening Survey](#)

You can also publicize your attendance at AACD's annual scientific sessions, to show your commitment to continuing education in cosmetic dentistry.

## **Sample Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Your Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

### **Local Dentist to Attend AACD 2013**

MADISON, Wis. (4/24/13)—Dr. XXX, of XX will be attending the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry's (AACD) annual meeting in Seattle, Wash., to further enhance her cosmetic dentistry skills.

The conference, AACD 2013, which takes place April 24-27 in Seattle at the Washington State Convention Center, will offer hands-on workshops and lectures and give attendees the opportunity to earn up to 24 certified continuing education credits. The conference is cosmetic dentistry's premier event educational event.

"By attending AACD 2013, Dr. XXX is not only showing her commitment to education and the cosmetic dentistry field, but to his/her patients," said Dr. Ron Goodlin, AACD president. "The education she will receive in Seattle will help her provide the best care to those he/she cares about the most."

Headliners at this year's meeting include Drs. Frank Spear, John Kois, Newton Fahl, David Garber, Maurice Salama, Betsy Bakeman, Jacinthe Paquette and Cherilyn Sheets.

(Insert biographical paragraph about Dr. XXX and practice).

For more information, please visit <http://www.aacdconference.com>.

### **About the AACD**

The AACD is the world's largest non-profit member organization dedicated to advancing excellence in comprehensive oral care that combines art and science to optimally improve dental health, esthetics, and function. Comprised of more than 6,400 cosmetic dental professionals in 70 countries worldwide, the AACD fulfills its mission by offering superior educational opportunities, promoting and supporting a respected Accreditation credential, serving as a user-friendly and inviting forum for the creative exchange of knowledge and ideas, and providing accurate and useful information to the public and the profession.

To arrange an interview with a leading cosmetic dental professional or obtain media credentials, e-mail [pr@aacd.com](mailto:pr@aacd.com).

## **Sample Pitch Letter**

A pitch letter accompanies a press release when contacting a reporter. The letter helps get the reporter's attention and helps you explain why this topic is so important. It also gives you a chance to state why you'd be an excellent resource for the story.

Dear (Insert Name):

According to a recent survey conducted by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD), 92% of Americans agree that an attractive smile is an important social asset.

The survey also indicated that while 74% believe an unattractive smile can hurt a person's chances for career success, only 50% of those surveyed said they are actually satisfied with their smiles!

These survey results are pretty fascinating—and I'm confident that they would be of significant interest to your audience.

I'm enclosing a press release with more information about this research in hopes that you might be interested in doing a story. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I've been practicing dentistry for more than XX years, and I have some great insight to share.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Your Name

## **Tips for Being Interviewed By Media**

After successfully pitching your local media, you might be asked to do an interview, whether it's over the phone with a reporter, on television, or even on the radio. Here are some quick tips for completing an interview with ease.

1. **Always be prepared.** It's always a good idea to rehearse before going into an interview. Have a trusted friend or colleague ask you some practice questions. Write down your key messages ahead of time so that you can practice communicating them. Record your performance so that you can use the results to improve your interviewing skills.
2. **Shape your message.** When you shape your message, you can answer the reporter's questions while also communicating your key messages. You can break the ice with reporters by asking something about them — where they grew up, what their interests are, or talking about a particular story they have covered. Showing an interest in the media team makes you more likable. After you've broken the ice, you can create a "visual story" with some concrete examples (perhaps some successes you've had treating patients in your practice) to help reinforce the point you are trying to make. Try to limit your key messages to no more than three.
3. **Remember to mention AACD!** There are a number of ways you can insert AACD into an interview. By mentioning AACD, you are building an even stronger reputation for yourself and your fellow members. Feel free to mention any of the AACD's recent research studies, which are located in the Media Room on [www.aacd.com](http://www.aacd.com). Reporters love statistics!

Here are a few phrases:

**"As an AACD Member Dentist, I would recommend..."**

**"My expertise includes membership in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, a professional organization dedicated to esthetic excellence."**

**"Like many AACD Member Dentists, I offer the following services in my practice..."**

**"For more information about cosmetic dentistry, visit [www.myaacddentist.com](http://www.myaacddentist.com)."**

**"According to recent research by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, the smile is one's most important social asset."**

**"A great smile is the secret to looking young, and a recent study by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry indicates that people are more willing to spend money on their teeth than on losing weight."**

**“According to recent research by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, the smile is the first thing a person remembers upon meeting someone.”**

**3. Set goals for every appearance.** You should always have some goals in mind for your appearance—whether it be to get across a certain key message, or to improve your on-air presence. When interviewed for TV or radio, keep your messages short—about 30 seconds if possible.

**4. Nothing is 100% off the record.** Whatever you say—at any time and in any place—can follow you, even if you tell the reporter, “This is off the record.” If you are asked a question you don’t have the answer to, simply say so. Then, you can research the answer and get back to the reporter later on.

**5. Watch your body language.** Even in relaxed interview situations, interviewees sometimes look tense or stiff, which can negatively impact their credibility. Try to relax before the interview, even if it means walking around or stretching beforehand.

**6. Stay on track with your message.** Answer the questions you are asked without drifting onto another subject. If your interview goes off track, or the reporter is asking you questions you aren’t comfortable answering, you can stop the interview by asking for a bathroom break or a glass of water. Then, you can continue the interview with a fresh start.

**7. Learn how to "bridge."** This technique allows you to deflect any attempts to derail your message. "Bridging" creates a transition so that you can move from one subject to the message you want to communicate. First answer the direct question, then transition to your message.

- "Before we get off that topic, let me just add..."
- "Let me put that in perspective."
- "It's important to remember that..."

**8. Prepare take-aways.** Always plan the points or facts you want the reporter and, by extension, the audience to walk away thinking about. You might identify these points as the building blocks of your presentation. If someone else prepares your material, discuss the take-away points first. Narrow the focus, then to get listeners to remember you, deliver those points passionately and succinctly through analogies and re-creating experiences.

Finally, it's not over when it's over. Make sure to track the results and get reviews of your performance. Ask pals and peers how well your message went over. Be smart and brave enough to make the necessary improvements, so you do even better next time.

## **You've Got Some Press...Now Publicize It!**

Be sure to let everyone know (including AACD—email [pr@aacd.com](mailto:pr@aacd.com)) that you gained media attention. If you were interviewed for an article, get the online link and share on your practice website or through social media.

If it's a video clip, post to Facebook or Twitter. The more interviews you do, the more attention you'll get—reporters love working with people who have prior media experience!

Also, keep track of your media contacts. If you worked with a certain reporter at a newspaper or TV station, keep that individual's contact information on file. That way, if you have another story idea or news item to contribute, you can contact that person directly.

**One final note:** Generally, the interviews AACD members conduct with reporters are positive experiences. Reporters are always looking for the latest trends, statistics, and information about techniques that can improve people's appearances—like cosmetic dentistry. While most media experiences tend to be positive, there can be instances in which the reporter is looking for information deemed as more controversial. By following these tips and tricks, you can ensure that you'll always go into an interview prepared, which will make your experience much smoother.