**5 Ways to Position Yourself as an Expert in the Media**

**1. Prepare for the spotlight**

Identify one or more spokespeople that will be the external face or voice of your message and get them trained to best interface with the media and the public. Media training is best conducted by a PR/Media Relations professional and should encompass both traditional and nontraditional media engagement.

**2. Build your informational and asset toolkit**

a. Create a toolkit of facts, figures, research, quotes and spokespeople that can be easily and quickly referenced and deployed to press within 24-48 hours.

b. Track media coverage to identify trends and hot topics.

c. Use the hot topics document provided to create relevant messaging.

d. Tap into the resources at the NATA office. Contact the PR team.

**3. Establish and grow media relationships**

a. Identify key press and reporters in your media market that cover your areas of interest. Consider this group your “VIP” press.

b. Research and get to know what they like to cover. When pitching stories, customize your pitch with the intended reporter/outlet in mind. The more targeted the pitch, the more likely it is to get covered.

c. Build a relationship with key press by providing a steady stream of intentional and thoughtful content. Don’t SPAM a reporter but do leverage opportunities to position yourself as a valuable resource.

**4. Engage on social media**

a. While press releases are still a common way for press to get information. More than 60% of journalists use Twitter as a resource to find stories and receive pitches.

b. Follow your “VIP” press and engage when appropriate. Be ready to engage in the conversation if you can provide thoughtful insight that positions athletic trainers as undisputed health care professionals.

**5. Provide your professional opinion**

**a.** If you have a passionate or strong evidenced-based argument about a topic, an Op-Ed (or Opinion-Editorial) may be the way to go. Op-ed is an article – usually written by a guest contributor that is not affiliated with the publication – that expresses the opinion of the author. You would pen the article and submit it to the publication.

**b.** The first step is to identify the outlet to which you want to contribute. Research their op-ed guidelines prior to writing or submitting an editorial.

**c.** The topics almost always focus on a public issue or news story. It can be a very powerful vehicle for communicating your or your organization’s point of view or advocating for change. However, remember your goal is to position athletic trainers as undisputed health care professionals. Therefore, be sure your topic and content align with this goal.
**d.** The PR team has guidelines and examples that can be shared.