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Series: PROMOTING YOUR PRACTICE THROUGH LOCAL PUBLICITY

Part One: Identify your media targets

Getting your practice in the press is a powerful, no-cost way to build awareness. Unlike paid-for advertising, publicity is information considered newsworthy by your local newspaper or TV/radio station. Local media will pick up your story only if it gets the attention of the editor or news director who is looking for audience appeal without self-promotion. The first step: determine which media are most likely to use your type of news. *Who you contact will vary based on the type of story.*

1. Identify/prioritize media outlets in your service area.

List those you know and search for more at free media directories like www.mondotimes.com. Include pet-related publications and websites, local newspapers and radio/TV news, and business/chamber newsletters. Become familiar with their content and their circulation or broadcast area. The more local a media outlet's coverage area, the more likely it will be to cover a local story.

2. For each media outlet, identify specific contacts.

Start by considering the types of stories you will be placing:

- ❖ Pet care: health and wellbeing, seasonal tips, diet and nutrition
- ❖ Business news: practice growth, new location, new staff, accolades, awards
- ❖ Technology: new equipment, new diagnostics, lifesaving advances
- ❖ Human interest: happy ending, extraordinary pets

These types of stories will most likely be of interest to editors and reporters covering pets, health, families, features, business, news, technology and possibly other areas. Go to each outlet's website to obtain these names, email addresses and phone numbers. While media lists can be purchased from a variety of sources, this method works great for shorter local lists.

3. Build your database.

Assemble your contact information into a database format (such as Excel or Access) that can be easily updated and sorted by topic area.

4. Keep your database current.

Media staff change frequently. Check your list about every six months to make sure that information is still accurate. Plus, you will also want to add new ones.

Next: Part Two: What is news?