

Nonprofit Earned Media Plan Template

What is earned media?

To put it in simple terms, earned media is getting someone else to talk about your organization. Paid media is advertising, and owned media is your website, social media channels, etc. Marketing is saying you're good, but public relations, or earned media, is getting someone else to say you're good. Ideally, a comprehensive marketing strategy would leverage all three of these areas though.

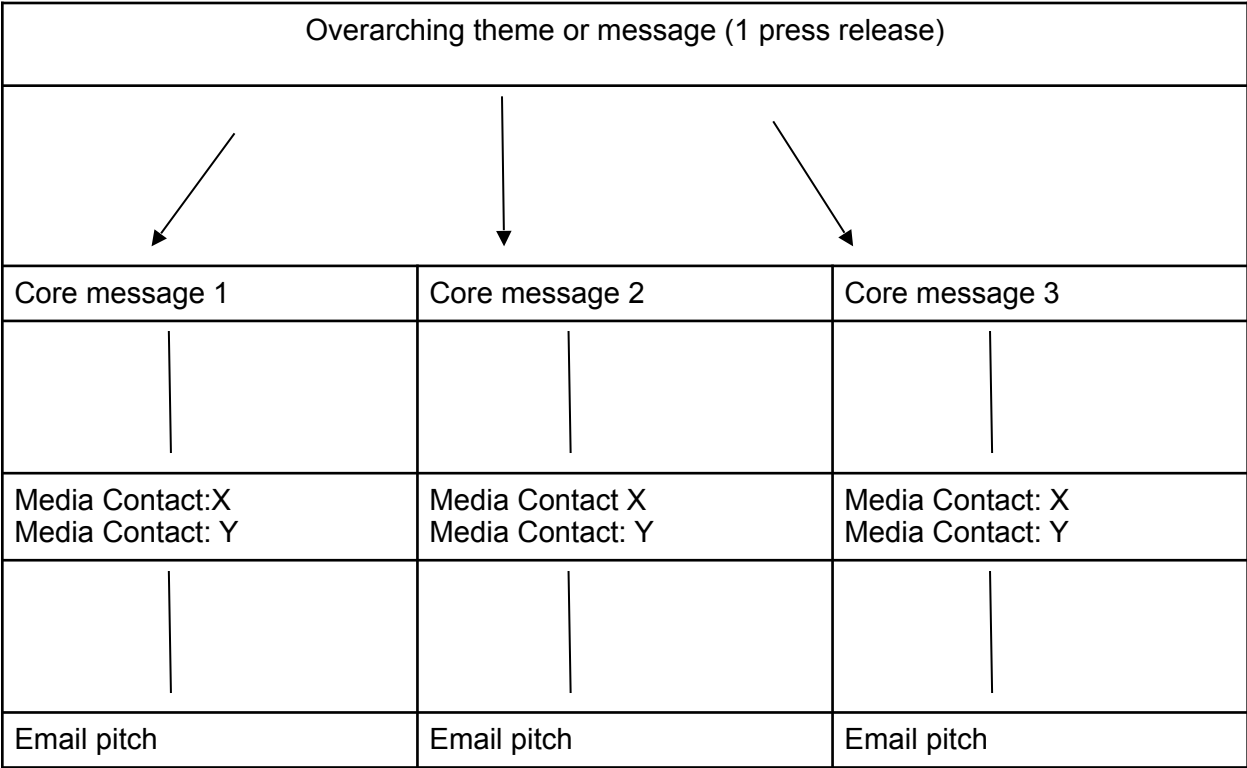
Media relations, press releases, pitches or public relations in general may not seem like something your nonprofit should spend a lot of time on. But with the right tools and resources, you don't have to spend a *ton* of time on it and still reap the benefits. Use this template to map out an execution plan for your nonprofit's press releases, and public relations strategy as a whole.

Template:

Overarching theme or message (1 press release)		
Core message 1	Core message 2	Core message 3
Media Contact: X Media Contact: Y	Media Contact X Media Contact: Y	Media Contact: X Media Contact: Y

Email pitch	Email pitch	Email pitch
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Flow of the Template:



Example using the template:

Org name: People against Human Trafficking

<p style="text-align: center;">Title: Recognizing the Signs of Human Trafficking is Everyone’s Job Press release will focus on equipping the public with information and things to look for to recognize and take action against human trafficking</p>		
<p>Core message: What is human trafficking and why is this information important?</p>	<p>Core message: Signs to look for to recognize human trafficking and tips to prevent it from happening.</p>	<p>Core message: What you should do if you suspect someone is in trouble?</p>
<p>Find a media contact that would resonate with community news or your nonprofit’s mission. This could also be someone who’s picked up a piece about your nonprofit before.</p>	<p>Find a media contact that would resonate with investigative journalism.</p>	<p>Find a media contact that would resonate with sharing important public information</p>
<p>Email pitch: Focus on the importance of keeping the community informed and up-to-date on your nonprofit’s mission.</p>	<p>Email pitch: Focus on how you’ve uncovered these tips and preventative measures that need to be shared. Show the research behind it.</p>	<p>Email pitch: Focusing on the urgency and public interest of this information. Angle the press release like a public service announcement.</p>

What is happening in the example plan:

- Step 1: determine what your need is for sending out a press release
- Step 2: set and define your overarching message for the press release
- Step 3: pull out 2 - 3 core messages (included in your press release) that you want to hone in on. These core messages will be derived from your main, overarching message.
- Step 4: research and find 1 - 5 media contacts that have to do with each of the core messages. It’s possible that you have the same media contact for all core messages depending on the topic of the press release, the size of your community, or the similarity of the core messages.
- Step 5: craft and send your email pitches to the determined media contacts, based on each core message. At the end of the day you have one press release with several different email pitch angles that might resonate with/capture the attention of different media contacts. Check out these additional resources to help you [perfect your pitch or press release](#), [master public relations](#), or [become a media relations expert](#).

Other things to think about when writing and organizing your earned media plan:

Don’t think about how you will format your press release, what you will write about, or what channels you will promote it on without first thinking of your audience and the strategy behind writing a press release. What’s the purpose? Answer that question first and then you can start diving into execution-level tactics.

Try to get out of your own head when writing a press release or a pitch. Your earned media plan should help you think about why your “news” is actually newsworthy. Think like a journalist and make sure the purpose of the press release is unique and not self-serving.

A few other pitching tips to get you going:

- Do your research. Show journalists that you've put time into researching them and the topic you're writing about. When you're researching media contacts to put in your nonprofit earned media plan, make sure you look for contacts that have written about similar topics, or who you think your piece would resonate with. The more you can tailor and customize your email, the better.
- Spend time thinking about the subject line. This is what will capture their attention first so originality is important. Try to avoid using words like "press release," "Fwd," or "re" in your subject line. Craft your email subject line to read like the headline of a news article.
- No journalist has time to read a lengthy pitch email. Get to the point and show value. What is it and why is it important?
- If you can, offer exclusivity. If you have research you're sharing in a press release, denote that it is exclusive research conducted by your nonprofit.
- Avoid adding attachments to your email. Oftentimes it annoys journalists, and your emails are more likely to go to spam. You can send the actual press release after a journalist has responded to your email and expressed interest. Sell them on the topic first.

Earned media is a great tool for your arsenal. But at the end of the day, you can generate the most reach by integrating earned media into your greater marketing and communications strategy.