



Using News Releases to Help Build Your Business

Advertising and public relations are ways to increase awareness of your company and its services in your community. While advertising is “paid for” space in the media, public relations is based on news and relationships with local editors and reporters.

As a Certified Sentricon Specialist® you have numerous opportunities to reach out to media with news of interest. You might take for granted all you know about termites and how the Sentricon® System eliminates termites, but it can be interesting information to reporters and consumers. Termites are a huge threat to homes — the biggest asset owned by most people.

To help you get started, Dow AgroSciences has several news releases that provide relevant, credible and newsworthy information. You can use them by inserting your company information where indicated and distribute them to local publications and media outlets, or you can use them as the starting point to develop a more customized news release.

- The best place to begin is by reading your local daily and weekly newspapers to find out which editor might be most interested in your news release. It could be the news editor, the features editor, the community editor or the home and garden section editor. See if other service businesses are getting covered in the newspaper and then send your information to the person responsible for the section with coverage. If that is not possible, send it to the news editor.
- Send the news release to local media contacts via email. It will allow your information to be seen in a more timely manner. Include a brief introduction explaining why the news you have to share is relevant to the local community and timely, and be sure to personalize the information (e.g., Joe Smith, News Editor, XYZ Times).
- Follow up with a phone call to ensure the editor received your release and ask if he or she is interested in the information.
- Be aware: Editors work under very tight deadlines, so you may not be able to reach them directly. Leave a brief message asking if they received the release and providing your contact number for additional information. When you do reach editors, keep it short and to the point to make the most of their time.
- If your particular story is a visual one (e.g., local home with bad termite problem that has active termites and visible damage), consider contacting a television station. The best way to reach them is to fax and email a brief cover letter to the news assignment editor. Make sure to tell them the visual aspects of the story. Morning and noon news broadcasts may be more likely to be interested in stories about termites.

Please remember: Sending a news release and following up with an editor does not automatically guarantee your story will appear. Just don't give up! Keep in contact with your local editors from time to time. Suggest relevant, newsworthy information about your company and pest management issues

throughout the year. The long-term benefit of reaching out to editors is that they get to know your name, so you have a better chance of being contacted if they want to talk to an expert about a pest situation.

A few ways to make yourself of interest to local media:

- Donate your services to a well-known site can attract the media's attention for a community service story. This can include services performed at historical landmarks and newsworthy sites such as museums, zoos, schools and daycare centers.
- Discuss seasonal pest problems, such as termite swarm seasons, bed bug problems, rodents in the fall, etc.
- Provide stories on health issues, like rabies, ticks and mosquito outbreaks.
- Offer to take a reporter along to show him or her how you solve problems for customers and the public.
- Send visuals of live termites and visible termite damage to show media outlet audiences the compelling destruction caused by termites.

The main way to get positive coverage for your company is to be committed to the effort — watching what others do and learning from your failures and successes. The investment is minimal, and the credibility factor of earning coverage for your company makes it worthwhile.

And don't forget to make the most of positive coverage by telling your employees to share the news and by putting the article on your office wall, on your website, on Facebook and on other social media. Being in the news is newsworthy itself!

Getting Comfortable with Media Outreach

Why Media Relations are important:

- Opportunity to get your message out in a credible way
- Puts a face on your company
- Increases awareness and interest in your company and the Sentricon System brand
- Helps position you as a local pest management expert
- Reinforces preference for your company with current customers

What the media want and why:

- Support for your story – they especially like analogies and real-life examples to better relate to the audience
- Information/visual story that interests/grows their audience; they are not interested in promoting your company or product
- A lead for their story (an interesting angle) to capture audience attention
- A quote from you as an expert on a news story

Media are generally interested in three aspects of a story:

1. Conflict and controversy (problem and solution)

2. "News you can use" – how the audience can improve its quality of life
3. Innovation – what's new?

Here are five press releases to help you get you started earning media coverage:

- Local pest control company joins elite group of professionals
- Better bait means better termite control
- Swarmer alert! Termites are swarming in [insert state]
- Termites pose big trouble for homeowners
- The top 10 termite mistakes

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