



Confront polluters. Seed solutions.



WORKSHOP
MEDIA EVENTS

MEDIA EVENTS WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP GOAL

To plan a successful media event, share principles of working with the media, and develop an effective message.

AGENDA

Welcome, Agenda Check,
Introductions

Principles of Media Events

Steps to Planning a Media Event

Step 1: Campaign Strategy
and Media Event Goals

Step 2: Media Hooks

Step 3: Priority Audience

Step 4: Message and Practice

Step 5: Outlets

Step 6: Event Details
and Media Advisory

Step 7: Plan

Practice

Evaluation and Next Workshops

APPENDICES

Media Event Planning Timeline

Sample Media Advisory

Sample Media Release

Sample Letter to the Editor

Sample Op-Ed

Sample Editorial

PRINCIPLES OF MEDIA EVENTS

1. Develop Relationships With Reporters

You want to develop good relationships with reporters. Call to invite them to your events, follow up with them to thank them for their coverage, and stay in touch even if you're not asking them to do something. Remember that reporters work in a fast-paced environment, so it's important to be ready to call them back immediately. You may also need to be persistent to get their attention.

2. Keep It Simple and Repeat Your Message

Remember that everything you say to the press, no matter what the circumstances, is on the record and can be quoted. Lead with a message that is compelling, concise, consistent, and controls the issue. You're most likely to get a good quote if you stick to your message and keep it short and simple.

3. Respond to Reporter Questions with Your Message

You can control the issue! No matter what question a reporter asks you, you can always respond by bringing it back to your message by saying things like, "The real question is..." Repeating your main point is more powerful than saying "yes" or "no" to their questions.

4. Use "Hooks" to Make It Newsworthy

Be strategic about making sure your story gets told. You want to have a theory about why a reporter would want to cover the story and use that to make your pitch. Reporters typically cover stories that include "hooks," or angles that make your story especially newsworthy, like conflict, visuals, new information, unlikely allies coming together, or a personal viewpoint to the story.

PRINCIPLES OF MEDIA EVENTS

5. Go Beyond Your Event

You work hard for media attention, so when you get a media hit, use it! Go beyond your media event by holding an editorial meeting, writing letters to the editor, and building relationships with reporters before and after your event. Build towards long term recognition and people power to ensure that your story is told over time. Go beyond organizing the media to organizing your community—think about how media attention will help you build long-term people power.

6. Have Spokespeople

Reporters are going to pick a “face” for the campaign, so make sure the right people are front and center by deciding on spokespeople who will speak to the reporters and share your message. If you’re a spokesperson, consider using your own personal story to back up your message and talk about the consequences for the health of your family, because that’s often what is most compelling.

7. Have a Good Soundbite

A soundbite is what you want reporters to quote you saying. Make your soundbite something you’d say out loud in conversation, and also make sure you think about it ahead of time, write it down, and practice. Your soundbite has to be on message, and the best ones are also personal, emotional, always real, and have some zing. Use what works!

STEPS TO PLANNING A MEDIA EVENT

STEP 1: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND MEDIA EVENT GOALS

Strategy Fill-in-the-Blank

Fill in your strategy, your theory for how you will win. Do a gut check to see if you need to make any changes.

_____ has the power to _____
PRIORITY DECISION-MAKER NAME[S] GOAL

by _____
PROCESS

We believe we can get _____
DECISION-MAKER NAME[S]

to do the right thing if we show support from _____
INFLUENCES AND TACTICS

We will build people power by organizing in _____
OTHER PROCESSES

Media Event Goals

Clarify your goals for the media event by using this chart:

Potential Media Event Goals	This is very important	This is somewhat important	This is less important
Influence the Decision-Maker(s)			
Build Your Group			
Educate the Public			
Other:			

In order to hit your media event goal(s), what outlets do you most need to cover your story?

STEP 3: FIGURE OUT YOUR PRIORITY AUDIENCE

Determine your priority audience. Your priority audience is the group of people you need to organize to have the people power you need to influence the decision maker. Who must be moved into action in order to achieve your goals?

STEP 4: MESSAGE AND PRACTICE

If you have already developed a campaign message, update it for your media event.

Brainstorm words that help and hurt your cause. From that brainstorm, create the message.

Words that help your cause

(words to use)

Words that hurt your cause

(words to avoid)

STEP 4: MESSAGE AND PRACTICE CONTINUED

The key parts of any good campaign message are: problem, solution, and action.

Problem

Paint a picture of the threat.

Solution

Name your goals, your demands, or the ideal outcome.

Action

Call on the decision-maker to use their power to do the right thing.
Remember your strategy to hit the right tone.

Message

Bring all the pieces together. Using the **compelling** words that **control** your message, create a **concise** version you can **consistently** say to the public, elected officials, and the media. This is the short response you would give to the basic question: "What is your campaign about?"

Messengers

Who will be the speakers at your event? Brainstorm possible speakers and decide on your top choices.

Headline

Brainstorm potential headlines and choose one for your event.

STEP 4: MESSAGE AND PRACTICE CONTINUED

Draft Your Soundbite

A soundbite is what you want reporters to quote you saying. Make your soundbite something you'd say out loud in conversation, and also make sure you think about it ahead of time, write it down, and practice. Your soundbite has to be on message, and the best ones are also personal, emotional, always real, and have some zing. Use what works!

Examples of Memorable Soundbites:

"This is just the tip of the toxic iceberg."

"Nothing we use for five minutes should pollute our water for hundreds of years."

Visuals that Complement Your Message

What do you want to come to someone's mind when they think about this campaign?

STEP 5: OUTLETS

Identify specific media outlets that reach your priority audience.

Type	Outlet
Daily Print	
Weekly Print	
Television	
Radio	
Online Media / Blog	
Other	

STEP 6: EVENT DETAILS AND MEDIA ADVISORY

The media advisory is an invitation for reporters. It has all the information about your event. It follows this standard format:

Headline:

What: What is your event?

> *Who will write the news advisory?*

Who: Who will be your speakers at the event?

> *Who will invite/confirm speakers?*

Where: Where will your event take place?

> *Who will secure a location?*

When: Date and time of your event?

> *Who will contact media?*

Visuals: What will create a compelling picture?

Signs?

Props?

Costumes?

Background?

> *Who will coordinate visuals?*

STEP 7: PLAN

Media Tactic	Who	Date	Date
Speakers			
Visuals			
Recruitment			
Media Advisory & Release			
Logistics			
Media Outreach			
Social Media			
Media Follow Up			

Date	Date	Goals

PRACTICE

Sample Reporter Pitch

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling with _____
NAME

_____. How are you?
GROUP NAME

Do you have a moment or are you on deadline? I saw the story you covered on _____

_____.
RECENT STORY ON RELATED TOPIC

I wanted to let you know about our upcoming event _____

_____.
DESCRIBE EVENT, WHY IT IS NEWSWORTHY, SPEAKERS, VISUALS

I thought you'd be interested because _____

_____.
REASON THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED

I'll send you the advisory. Do you think you can cover this?

What's your email address?

Practice the Following

1. Call a reporter to ask them to cover your event.
2. Call a community leader, a coalition partner, a supportive elected official, or another spokesperson to ask if they will speak at the event.
3. Respond to the following reporter questions:
 - "What are you most concerned about?"
 - "What will this cost?"
 - "Why should people care about this issue?"
 - "What can people do to get involved?"
 - "Do you have anything else to add?"

EVALUATION AND NEXT WORKSHOPS

What went well about this workshop?

What can change about this workshop?

Do you need workshops for things like:

- Campaign Planning
- Messaging
- Group Building
- Fundraising
- Winning a Community Vote
- Planning for an Upcoming Hearing
- Re-evaluating Your Campaign Plan

Do you need training on other campaign skills:

- Knocking on doors
- Starting an online petition
- Holding your own meetings
- Using social media
- Recruiting supporters online
- Public speaking
- Other: _____

Next Workshop: _____

Appendix 1: Media Event Planning Timeline

Two Weeks Ahead

- Decide what makes the event newsworthy.
- Choose the message and plan the event details.
- Schedule editorial board meetings.

One Week Ahead

- Prepare visuals.
- Get quotes from speakers.
- Write the media advisory and the media release.

Four Days Ahead

- Email advisory. Send embargoed release to weekly papers if the event is after their deadline.

Three Days Ahead

- Go through the presentation with speakers.
- Role-play the event, including questions from reporters.

Two Days Ahead

- Call reporters to “pitch” the story. Re-send advisory if necessary.
- Write your radio feed—your soundbite recorded by radio stations over the phone, done in conjunction with sending them your release.

One Day Ahead

- Call reporters again. Re-send advisory if necessary.
- Reconfirm speakers.
- Make media packets (release, fact sheet, other important information).

Day of Event

- Arrive 45-60 minutes before to get set up.
- Have someone greet the media with packets and a sign-in sheet.
- Hold a great media event!
- Take photos.
- Email or share media release and photos to absent reporters.
- Call reporters who did not attend.
- Do radio feeds (call stations and have them record your soundbite).
- Debrief the event to evaluate how it went.

Day After Event

- Thank speakers.
- Thank reporters.
- Clip articles from newspapers.
- Send letters to the editor to newspapers.
- Share your media hits with your community.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Holyoke Groups Announce Coalition of Local Businesses

Call for Retirement and Redevelopment of Mt. Tom Coal-burning Power Plant

For Immediate Release

August 13th, 2012

Contact

Claire Müller, Community Action Works
617-747-4362

WHAT: On Wednesday, August 15th, local business owners and Action for a Healthy Holyoke! will announce a list of more than 50 local businesses endorsing the campaign to retire the Mt. Tom coal-burning power plant, redevelop the property and ensure a just transition.

WHO: Claire Müller, Lead Organizer, Community Action Works
Carlos Rodriguez, Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts

WHEN: Wednesday, August 15th 11:00 AM

WHERE: Local Business, TBA

VISUAL: A blown up full list of the endorsing businesses.

WHY: The Mt. Tom coal plant, which is located on the Connecticut River in Ward 7 in Holyoke, has been in operation since 1960. The plant is owned by GDF-Suez, the world's largest utility, headquartered in Paris, France. Coal plants of similar size and age have been retiring across the country in recent years.

Action for a Healthy Holyoke! (AHH!) is a diverse coalition whose mission is to hasten the retirement of the Mt. Tom coal plant, assure the clean-up of the site, and attract healthy, good jobs to the community. AHH! is comprised of concerned citizens from Holyoke's seven wards (representing diverse racial, ethnic, class, and professional backgrounds), two community-based organizations (Neighbor to Neighbor and Nuestras Raíces), two regional environmental and public health groups (Conservation Law Foundation and Community Action Works), and a national environmental organization (Sierra Club).

MEDIA RELEASE

40 Holyoke Businesses lend name to retire coal plant and boost economy

For Immediate Release

August 15th, 2012

Contact

Claire Müller, Community Action Works
617-747-4362

Holyoke—Wednesday morning, local business owners and concerned residents unveiled a list of over 40 Holyoke businesses endorsing the coal-free campaign. The group gathered in front of Mo's Market's shop front on Main Street to boast of the support.

"Clean air is good business in my mind," said Wanda Sanchez, "How can we have a healthy economy if we don't have healthy children, elderly and families? This effort is about clean air and a good economy, what more could I want?"

The Mt. Tom coal plant, which is located on the Connecticut River in Ward 7 in Holyoke, has been in operation since 1960. The plant is owned by GDF-Suez, the world's largest utility, headquartered in Paris, France. Coal plants of similar size and age have been retiring across the country in recent years.

"We know that coal smokestacks mean pollution for our children and our elderly," said Teddy Jones. "We're calling on GDF-Suez's CEO Zin Smati to retire the coal plant and work with the city to redevelop that property."

Forty businesses were listed from around Holyoke, almost entirely mom and pop shops such as pizza joints, barbershops and restaurants.

"It's time for Holyoke to reboot the economy, and I can't see a better place to start than with that old coal plant," said Angel Diaz. "I'd like to see some new industry in that riverfront spot—and something without a smokestack."

"We are fully committed to keeping Holyoke a whole community and coming out better after retirement," said Virgenmina Perez, board member for Neighbor to Neighbor. "Just transition for workers, new good jobs, we're serious about an economy that doesn't have smokestacks."

She cited a new report from the Labor Network for Sustainability that states a dollar invested in energy efficiency and alternative energy creates more than twice as many jobs as the same dollar invested in coal or gas.

Action for a Healthy Holyoke! emphasized the need for education in the community, and its members have been doing outreach in and around Holyoke.

"Coal-burning is known to cause cancer, heart issues and act as a trigger for any respiratory disease like asthma. It is absurd that GDF-Suez is burning coal in this day and age," said Claire Müller, organizer with Community Action Works.

The group says its outreach is not over, and any business in the area is welcome to join.

Action for a Healthy Holyoke! (AHH!) is a diverse coalition whose mission is to hasten the retirement of the Mt. Tom coal plant, assure the clean-up of the site, and attract healthy, good jobs to the community. AHH! is comprised of concerned citizens from Holyoke's seven wards (representing diverse racial, ethnic, class, and professional backgrounds), two community-based organizations (Neighbor to Neighbor and Nuestras Raíces), two regional environmental and public health groups (Conservation Law Foundation and Community Action Works), and a national environmental organization (Sierra Club).

The Republican.

Letter to the Editor: Time to retire Mt. Tom coal plant

Posted Jun 11, 2013

I am writing in response to a May 31 article in The Republican about the issues that the city of Holyoke is facing with regards to the Mt. Tom coal plant. The plant concerns me as a resident of Holyoke, and as a community activist for three reasons: our health, jobs, and the coal plant site.

First, we're talking about 80 acres of land and we don't know how contaminated it is. Second, we have to think about the workers in the plant and their future. And third, speaking of the impact of the plant on the health of the

community, all of my family suffers from respiratory problems and we can see these health problems throughout the city.

The plant has done its job—it is 50 years old—and it's time to move on to something sustainable for our environment and for future generations. I would like to see a date for the retirement of the plant. And, at the same time, I'm calling on our local officials to plan for the future—for a just transition for the workers, and a plan to clean up the site and to bring jobs to the city.

– *Carlos Rodriguez, Holyoke*

The Herald News

Your View - The closure of Brayton Point and the difficult road forward

June 2, 2017 Publication: Standard Times, The (New Bedford, MA) Page: A5 Word Count: 596

Brayton Point Power Station in Somerset ceased operating May 31. This power plant, operating primarily on coal-fired power with additional, smaller capacity of both oil and gas-fired power, will be the second of two power plants in our small community to close since 2010. This closure is both a loss and an opportunity for our region, but residents and community leaders will have to engage diligently with the landowner, Dynegy, to make the opportunities of the plant closure apparent.

Assets coming out of these plant closures include the nearly 12 miles of New England waterfront property that are up for redevelopment—12 miles! When has that or will it ever happen again? Residents may be able to access parts of the waterfront that have

been off limits or hazardous for decades. Air quality for nearby residents and neighbors will improve measurably upon the elimination of air pollution from Brayton's stacks. In recent years, studies estimate these emissions cost the region \$120 million to \$294 million each year in unrecognized, un-reimbursed health care and mortality impacts. As one of the largest single sources of carbon dioxide emissions in the state, Brayton's closure will also help the commonwealth reach toward some of the mandates set by the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act.

In addition, the Brayton Point and Montaup Stations retain important energy transmission inlets to the New England electric grid. This could be a critical moment for Somerset to gain a strong foothold in the clean energy

economy, which is growing in leaps and bounds globally. Making this transition would offer cash benefits to the community for activities such as bringing offshore wind power onshore and into the operating grid.

However, the losses are significant too. Nearly 200 workers will lose their jobs and benefits. These are skilled, high-paying positions that are not easily re-created, and due to a former owner's (PG&E) raid of retiring workers' health benefits funds, the current Brayton Point workforce will be struggling on their own to provide health insurance for themselves and their families. It is the responsibility of our community and state leaders to ensure the burden of the plant closure does not fall solely onto these diligent workers, but to leverage every possible benefit, grant, retraining, or re-employment opportunity for these individuals and families.

Ultimately, the single most important players in determining the future of these sites are the owning companies. I ask that they be good neighbors within their host community and region. Please, meet with our residents and local business owners. Find out what Somerset wants for Somerset, and please seriously consider our needs in this transition

away from coal burning.

According to Acadia Center—a nonprofit, research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the clean energy future—and their comprehensive analysis EnergyVision 2030, Massachusetts, along with other Northeast states, can spur use of market-ready technologies that empower consumers, control energy costs and advance economic growth while lowering carbon pollution.

But it is up to all of us to ensure that this vision becomes a reality, and that a just transition for the plant workers and the community moves forward on the path to a 21st century electric system.

That is why we call on the owners of these two facilities and sites to meet with us and work alongside us in a transparent manner. Let us be good neighbors and build toward a healthy and profitable future for our town, our families, and our region. Join me in bringing these ideas forward so that our vision for a next chapter in our community can start today.

- Jane Doe, Somerset Selectboard Member



Editorial: Clean energy future may dawn for shuttered Holyoke coal plant

Last modified: Tuesday, December 22, 2015

Owners of the former Mount Tom coal power plant should embrace a recently completed study on reuse of the site, which closed in 2014. If they do, the Route 5 property in Holyoke could see a future that includes solar energy production and public access to the Connecticut River.

That outcome isn't pie in the sky, it's power from the sky.

It would be a rare case in which the wishes of a multinational corporation and local residents find common ground. Renewable energy generation would be an appropriate afterlife for a facility with a bad environmental record.

So far, officials with Paris-based Engie—formerly GDF Suez—have voiced support for the options presented in a reuse study commissioned by the city of Holyoke and

completed by Ninigret Partners. The study incorporated suggestions from over 200 community members gleaned during eight months of meetings, surveys and workshops. It suggests three possibilities for the 128-acre site near the borders of Easthampton and Northampton.

All three options include a photovoltaic solar farm. One reduces the size of the solar array and adds a 1.5-mile biking and hiking trail and a boat launch for canoes and kayaks; another adds an anaerobic digester and greenhouse agriculture to the solar array and public recreation components.

“We're pretty much in agreement with the findings,” John P. Shue, the company's vice president of operations for New England, said following the recent presentation at

Holyoke City Hall. Shue said option three—with a solar array, public recreation and the anaerobic digester—is the one the company is most likely to pursue.

Good to know—and good to have this company on record supporting a green future for this dirty piece of land.

The plant opened in 1960 and was converted to burn oil in 1970, according to a document filed with the Environmental Protection Agency. It returned to burning coal in 1981 with supposedly better pollution controls. But even with upgrades, the plant earned a reputation as a significant polluter.

Community Action Works (formerly Toxics Action Center) bestowed one of its annual “Dirty Dozen” awards, a dubious distinction that recognizes “egregious polluters and toxic threats in New England.” And the facility repeatedly ran afoul of state and federal regulators. The plant violated the Clean Water Act 100 times over several years and yet paid no fines. The EPA eventually reached a \$40,814 settlement with the Mt. Tom Generating Co. in 2011, noting the company violated a federal permit over five months by discharging potentially contaminated water from construction work into the Connecticut River.

Later in 2011, after the company invested

\$55 million in pollution controls, state records show that the plant owners—then Mt. Tom Generating Company and GDF Suez subsidiary FirstLight Power Resources—reached an agreement with the office of the state Attorney General and the Department of Environmental Protection to make amends for “thousands” of Clean Air Act violations from 2005 to 2010. For that, the company paid a \$25,000 penalty and agreed to contribute \$70,000 to a program to encourage local owners of wood stoves and wood-fired boilers to meet federal emissions standards. Again, the company dodged any meaningful penalty.

In the end, the biggest financial penalty was self-imposed by a company whose crystal ball proved cloudy. Just a few years after investing tens of millions of dollars to reduce pollution, GDF Suez announced the plant would close.

That legacy of pollution remains. Following through on a reuse plan that incorporates renewable energy won't erase it.

But harnessing renewable energy through solar panels and opening public access to the Connecticut River—perhaps the Valley's greatest recreational and environmental asset—would build goodwill and serve as an example of the power of public participation.

At Community Action Works, we believe that environmental threats are big, but the power of well-organized community groups is bigger.

That's why we work side by side with everyday people to confront those who are polluting and harming the health of our communities. We partner with the people who are most impacted by environmental problems—which are Black, Indigenous, People of Color and poor communities—training them with the know-how anyone would need to make change in their own backyard.

Because when you and your neighbors know how to make change, you can build the power to transform our world.

WORKSHOPS WE OFFER

Campaign Planning

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Public Hearings

Messaging

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communityactionworks.org

action@communityactionworks.org

 facebook.com/comactionworks

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