



Center for Progressive Leadership Action Network National Media Impact Training – Thursday, Jan 17th

Guest Packet

Thank you for signing up to participate in the National Media Impact Training hosted by the Center for Progressive Leadership Action Network. This **Guest Packet** includes everything you'll need to successfully participate in the training, including:

- An overview of the goals for the evening
- Your sample Earned Media Scenarios
- An Interactive Activity Guide

The goal of the Media Impact Training is to help progressive activists develop a solid grounding in the skills necessary to gain media coverage for their political events. Skills to be covered include assessing your resources; coming up with a plan for your event; localizing and personalizing a broader political effort; pitching your event; and following up to expand coverage.

The training will **not** be about broader topics, such as how to develop a media strategy or how to create a compelling message (however, additional information on media strategy, as well as additional resources, are available online at www.cplaction.org.)

When the training is over, please visit our website, www.cplaction.org, where you will have access to additional resources that we hope will prove useful as you take the skills you learn at our training and apply them in your own community.

Of course, a major part of any Center for Progressive Leadership Action Network program is the chance for progressives to meet new people and develop new connections, so we encourage you to take the time to get to know your fellow participants.

Sincerely,
The CPL Action Network Team

SAMPLE MEDIA SCENARIOS

During the interactive portion of the evening, you're going to practice localizing and personalizing national campaigns and also pitching reporters to cover your story. In order to make the exercise realistic, we encourage you to choose from among the four scenarios below as a basis for the exercise. If there is an issue in your community that you are familiar with and feel strongly about, you are welcome to use that issue instead.

Choice One: The Cost of Iraq - Press Conference

All over the country, activists are organizing press conferences in local communities to highlight the costs of the war in Iraq. The press conferences are taking place on Tuesday, August 1 at 2:00 pm, when Congress is scheduled to be debating the Defense Appropriations bill. The press conference in your community is happening on the steps of the main public library.

Choice Two: High Cost of Gas and Energy Independence – Rally

As the price of a barrel of oil recently topped \$100 for the first time, environmental organizers are organizing a series of rallies at gas stations across the country to promote solutions to the high cost of gas. You are helping coordinate a local rally in your community to bring attention to the need for a more sensible national energy policy and more federal investment in renewable energy. The rally is taking place on Friday, January 25 at a local gas station. You are in charge of trying to get coverage in your local media for the event in your community.

Choice Three: Health Care Coverage for Veterans – March

A national veteran's organization has just won a significant legislative battle to increase health care coverage for veterans and they are asking local activists to organize marches in order to celebrate the victory. To help them get the story into the media, local organizers are putting together a march that will begin at a city park and end at City Hall on Sunday, January 27. You expect between 100 and 150 people to attend.

Choice Four: Real Government Ethics Reform - Protest

Your state legislature has taken a series of actions recently that has called their integrity into question, and they are now working on passing comprehensive ethics reform. There are two bills before the legislature – one that accomplishes real reform, and one that won't make any real difference. Your elected official is a critical swing vote to get real reform passed, but so far appears to be supporting the other bill. Your local progressive community organization is organizing a protest outside his local district office on Wednesday, February 6 to encourage him to support real reform.

Additional Choice: *If you are already working on a campaign or issue, you are welcome to use that scenario as the basis for this exercise.*

PRACTICE SKILLS SESSION

The practice skills session is designed to prepare you to effectively localize and personalize a national campaign and to pitch reporters to cover your earned media events. You will be preparing a pitch based on one of the scenarios you received before the conference call, and delivering it to another participant who will be acting as a print, radio or TV reporter.

Preparation (10 minutes)

Individually read through the Earned Media Scenario you chose for yourself. Reflecting on the tips just presented by the experts in the video and conference call, take 10 minutes to plan how to make your event news-worthy and how to successfully pitch it to a reporter. Think about the following things and write down your ideas:

1. How are you going to make your event news-worthy?
 - a. How is your event going to **localize** and **personalize** a broader story or issue?

 - b. Who are your **spokespeople** going to be?

2. What are the key talking points in **your pitch**?
 - a. **Introduction** of yourself and any organization you represent
 - b. **When** is the event taking place?
 - c. **Where** is the event taking place?
 - d. **Who** is going to be there?
 - e. **What** is the purpose of the event?
 - f. **Why** is this event important, and why should the reporter cover this event?
 - g. Don't forget to finish your conversation by asking **if you can send additional information** or follow up with the reporter.

Interactive Instructions

After 10 minutes of preparing, form a group with 2-3 other participants in the training (3-4 people per group). You are going to practice pitching a reporter to cover your story or event using the techniques we introduced in the video and the conference call.

a. In each of your groups, select who will be the initial “organizer,” the “reporter” and the “timekeeper.” The group should change roles until every participant has played each role at least once. **Try to make the roles as specific as possible.** For instance, the “reporter” might be a specific local newspaper columnist that you know or a radio reporter that you’ve heard of.

b. The “organizer” goes first and practices pitching their story to the “reporter.” The “timekeeper” is responsible for limiting each conversation to 2 minutes. **Try to make the situation as real as possible.** Ask real questions if you are the reporter and provide concrete answers if you are the organizer. And the timekeeper has the most important job...keep the interactive going and on-time!

c. Following the first practice pitch, the other participants should provide **3 minutes** of feedback about their pitch. In providing feedback, focus on giving concrete and constructive comments to the other participants. You can ask yourself:

- i. What were the **best parts** of their pitch?
- ii. What areas could they **improve**?
- iii. Did they hit all of the **key points**?
- iv. Did they effectively **personalize** and **localize** the issue?
- v. Do you have **any suggestions** for how they could have hit any of the points they missed?

e. After one person goes, switch roles and repeat the activity. Your house party host will advise you when the time for this activity is up.