PUBLIC RELATIONS: A "How-To" Guide for SNMMI Chapters
The Importance of Public Relations

Public relations is about managing perceptions and making a good impression. It’s about storytelling, and our job is to make sure that the story of SNMMI and its chapters is compelling.

Public relations can be used to share good news about the society—our member benefits, research, events, awards. By constantly monitoring the news, we can see when nuclear medicine and molecular imaging are portrayed in a positive light. When they’re not, we can be quick to respond to negative stories and set the record straight.

Public relations is also important to help SNMMI stay relevant. If no one is talking about you, that isn’t necessarily a good thing. We need to keep our activities and successes highlighted within the media to make sure people understand the value of what the society does. At the end of the day, we want to be a source that the media and other audiences know they can trust.

This guide will share with you several ways in which you can utilize public relations within your chapter.
SETTING A GOAL

Before embarking on any type of public relations outreach, it’s important to set a goal. This will help guide you in determining your audience, messages and tactics.

Goals should align with your chapter’s overarching strategies and activities. Are you looking to increase member involvement? Influence local policymakers? Generate interest in chapter events? You may have several goals for your public relations outreach.

Although many people think about measurement as a final step in the public relations process, now is the time to decide what success looks like. Success could mean an increase in visits to a website, phone calls to the chapter or media placements in local papers. Identifying your evaluation mechanism at the outset ensures that you will have a way to measure the effectiveness of your public relations outreach.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding your audience is a key part of any public relations effort. This includes knowing their level of understanding and general acceptance of the topic. There are multiple potential audiences for public relations outreach on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. These may include:

- Chapter members
- Local referring physicians
- Local government officials
- Members of local communities

When you have identified your audience, you can then determine the right message and communication vehicle to accomplish your public relations goals.
Message development can often be overlooked. While you most likely have a general idea of what information you want to get across, writing down your messages is a good idea to make sure they are accurately and clearly stated. SNMMI’s general message map can be referenced in Appendix A.

You should start with a main message and then craft supporting points.

**Example:** Membership in the ABC Chapter of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging is beneficial to one’s career, offering education, networking and volunteer opportunities.

- ABC Chapter offers multiple education events throughout the year with for physicians to earn CME credits and technologists to earn VOICE credits.
- Networking with ABC Chapter members during meetings and social events puts you in contact with others in the field from whom you can learn and share ideas.
- Volunteering with ABC Chapter allows members to enhance their leadership skills while at the same time giving back to the profession.

It is important to tailor your message to your audience. For example, the way you would describe nuclear medicine and molecular imaging will most likely differ when you are talking to a consumer as opposed to a referring physician.
Below is a listing of several commonly used public relations tactics. However, the realm of possibility in public relations is endless. If another tactic would better achieve your goal, you should implement it.

**Fact Sheets**

Fact sheets provide a brief overview on a single topic. A chapter fact sheet should include information on how old your chapter is, its mission, what benefits you offer, key leadership and contact information. You may want to include the number of members and relevant program information as well. The fact sheet should be in bulleted form and no longer than two pages.

You may also want to have a fact sheet on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging on file. SNMMI has facts sheets on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging—as well as specific disease areas—that chapters are free to utilize. SNMMI’s fact sheets can be found at http://interactive.snm.org/index.cfm?PageID=11121.

**Press Releases**

A press release is a document sent to the media to inform them of your chapter’s recent news—an event, an award, etc.—or new information on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

The following components should be included in your press release:

- **Contact information:** The contact information should appear at the top of the release and include your public relations contact, their phone number and e-mail address.
- **Headline:** The headline should get the point of the release across in a direct manner and should stand out from the body copy.
- **Lead:** The lead of the press release should include the main news you would like to share. You should aim to answer “who, what, when, where and why” in the first paragraph.
- **Body copy:** The body copy contains further details on your news. Keep your paragraphs brief and back up your statements with facts. Put all opinions or editorial comments in quotes from a chapter spokesperson.
- **Chapter boilerplate:** A brief overview (two to three sentences) of your chapter should appear at the end of the press release.

When writing a press release, keep in mind your ultimate audience (i.e., the readers of the publications you are contacting), as well as what messages you would like your audience to take away. Remember, hundreds of press releases end up on reporters’ desks every day, so make sure your headline and lead also capture the attention of the reporter.

Once you have written your press release, you will need to distribute it to the media. The first step is to create a list of media contacts to whom you would like to send the press release. You should determine what outlets are important to you (large newspapers, community newspapers, local television, etc.) and secure the contact information for the appropriate reporters or editors.
Next, you should distribute your press release to the media contacts. This is typically done by e-mail, but the release can also be faxed or sent by mail. After issuing the press release, make follow-up phone calls to reporters to ensure receipt of the press release and to answer any questions.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Contact Name
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
Email: name@company.com

HEADLINE

City, State (Date) - Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin sed dui quam. Nulla posuere, nunc id interdum tristique, arcu dolor accumsan velit, id euismod tellus augue a augue. Proin scelerisque volutpat sem, vel varius quam mollis quis. Donec ligula lacin, fringilla id mollis at, feugiat quis leo.


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BOILERPLATE
Press Kit

A press kit is a packet of information that can be supplied to the media or distributed at events to give a complete overview of your chapter. A press kit typically includes the following materials:

- Fact sheets (chapter-specific and general nuclear medicine and molecular imaging)
- Biographies leadership: Biographies of leadership should be brief. Each biography should include name, title, education, professional affiliations, awards, specific expertise and community involvement. Age and family information are optional.
- Current press releases: Press releases that are of interest to your audience should be included in the press kit. These can be updated to customize press kits for certain reporters, events, etc.
- Images (CD or photos): Including images that are related to nuclear medicine and molecular imaging can help to tell your chapter’s story. Images should be high resolution and should include captions or credit information for editorial use. For general nuclear medicine and molecular imaging photos, please contact Susan Martonik, associate director of public relations, at smartonik@snmmi.org.
- Article reprints: If you have been fortunate enough to have newspaper or magazine articles written about your chapter or about nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, include reprints in the press kit. These articles lend credibility to your chapter.

Once you have all the materials, place them in an attractive folder or another form of creative packaging with your chapter logo on the cover. Pick a color that goes well with your logo and makes it immediately noticeable.

Social Media

Social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and others, can be used as an effective way to share your message and other information, particularly with your members. To start, you should determine what social media network is most used by your members. You can then create a page on the appropriate social media site(s) and encourage your members to follow or like the page.

Social media sites should be updated frequently with posts, photos, videos, etc. Examples of posts include:

- Upcoming meetings/events
- New research
- Notable accomplishments of members
- Photos from meetings or national events
- Policy/government relations news

In addition to gaining likes or followers to your page, you should aim to encourage interaction among social media participants. This includes liking, sharing, re-tweeting or responding to a post.
PUBLIC RELATIONS TACTICS

Expert Spokesperson

Your chapter probably includes a number of members who can be considered experts. These people can serve as spokespeople for the chapter and can be utilized to educate the public, referring physicians and policymakers on the value of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

Opportunities for spokespeople include suggesting an “Ask to Expert” chat or column focusing on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. This could be in a local newspaper, TV station, radio station, hospital newsletter or other communication channel. When contacting the editor or reporter, be sure to explain to them why nuclear medicine and molecular imaging are important and examples of potential questions.

Special Events

Participating in local events is a beneficial way to educate the general public about nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. This could be a community health fair, a hospital open house or another venue.

Once you have confirmed your participation with the event organizer, you should determine what materials will be needed for the event. These could include:

- Fact sheets or brochures
- Local hospital/facility information
- Interactive game
- Giveaways

You can also promote that you will be attending an event to the media, at local hospitals or other facilities and to other audiences.

EVALUATION

As mentioned previously, having a measurement tool in place is important to evaluating the success of your public relations efforts. After your public relations outreach has begun, be sure to monitor your efforts—whether it be by tracking website visits, calls to the chapter, media placements, letters to a local official, etc.
Creating a public relations plan offers a way to clearly state your goals, audience, tactics and evaluation method. For additional guidance and consultation in creating your plan, feel free to get in touch with any of the SNMMI public relations contacts listed at the end of this guide.

**Example: SNMMI Social Media Efforts**

**Goal**
Increase the number of users on SNMMI’s social networking sites to have an effect on the action of the imaging community, specifically to increase utilization of benefits and opportunities and support of SNMMI.

**Audience**
Imaging community

**Justification**
As an increasing number of Americans use social networking sites, it is important for SNMMI to maintain a presence on these sites. Sharing SNMMI news and research through social media will promote SNMMI as a leader in nuclear and molecular imaging and therapy. It will also serve to advance the field as a whole.

**Description**
SNMMI will update and monitor its social networking sites following the SNMMI social networking site guidelines. In addition, SNMMI will:

- Develop a new plan and update goals for the year.
- Create a schedule of post ideas for the year.
- Undertake a Twitter follow campaign focusing on patient advocacy groups and other medical societies.
- Develop a plan to supplement existing YouTube video content. New content could include interviews with leadership, Annual Meeting speakers, meetings, etc.
- Explore other social networking sites to help further SNMMI’s goals.

**Evaluation**
The number of fans/followers/members will be measured to determine the success of SNMMI’s social media outreach.
For more information about how to best utilize public relations for your chapter, please feel free to contact any member of the SNMMI public relations team.

**Susan Martonik**  
Associate Director of Public Relations  
(703) 652-6773  
smartonik@snmmi.org

**Rebecca Maxey**  
Communications Director  
(703) 652-6772  
rmaxey@snmmi.org
Elevate nuclear medicine and molecular imaging as essential components of the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders.

Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging are vital elements of today’s medical practice, adding an additional dimension to diagnosis that can change the way common and devastating diseases are understood and treated. SNMMI is dedicated to increasing understanding and sound practice of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging among the medical community, consumers and policymakers.

SNMMI Leadership
SNMMI sets the standard for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging by creating practice guidelines, sharing advanced research through its peer-reviewed journal and at meetings, and leading advocacy efforts on key issues that affect imaging research and practice.

- SNMMI serves as the voice of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging by working with the U.S. government to implement legislation and regulations that encourage the development of new nuclear medicine and molecular imaging technologies and ensure access for patients.
- SNMMI members are developing innovative, new nuclear medicine and molecular imaging procedures and therapies, and refining current ones, to help broaden their usefulness and increase understanding of how they can best be used to deliver excellent patient care.
- SNMMI provides education and resources for physicians, technologists, physicists, pharmacists, scientists, laboratory professionals and more to enhance their careers while meeting certification and CE requirements.
- SNMMI raise awareness about nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in order to ensure that patients have access to the best health care possible for treating cancer, heart disease or neurological conditions.

Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging
Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging enable physicians to visualize the molecular processes through which the body functions. Unlike other tests, they provide physicians with molecular level—not only anatomical or structural level—data that can help personalize treatment.

- Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging provides a rich portrait of what’s going on in a patient’s body, providing wealth of useful information to help shape a treatment plan.
- Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging can eliminate the need for exploratory surgery, providing a painless and safe alternative for diagnosing and treating patients.
- Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging can help physicians to diagnose, stage and stage disease in order to target treatment to meet the needs of each individual’s condition and deliver therapy only to the affected areas.
- With nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, physicians can assess nearly in real-time the effectiveness of a treatment, allowing them to offer patients highly-targeted therapies and to ensure that higher doses of medicine are directed more precisely at problem areas.

Banner Initiatives
SNMMI focuses on topics that are most relevant to nuclear medicine and molecular imaging—including new tracers, new modalities, new therapies, and quality and value—to advance progress within the field.

- Amyloid imaging with flutetapir—approved by the FDA in 2012—has the potential to help in the diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease. SNMMI supports further development of this test through appropriate use criteria and education.
- Optical imaging has become an important molecular imaging research tool positioned on the threshold of clinical application. SNMMI serves as a resource for optical imaging professionals, offering education, compiling information and forging partnerships with like-minded organizations.
- One of several promising new therapies is a radioactive isotope—radium 223—that targets bone metastases from prostate cancer and has been shown to improve patient survival. SNMMI is actively working to support its approval by the FDA and to educate private payers, referring physicians and advocacy groups.
- SNMMI is taking steps to ensure that radiation dose for a nuclear medicine and molecular imaging procedures is optimized so that the patient receives the smallest possible amount of radiopharmaceutical that will provide the appropriate diagnostic information.

Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs
For nuclear medicine and molecular imaging to continue to flourish, legislation and regulations that support these innovative techniques are needed in the United States.

- In order for patients to have access to nuclear and molecular imaging procedures, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid must appropriately reimburse the procedures and radiopharmaceuticals.
- Today, there is no U.S. producer of the isotopes needed for medical tests used in treating breast cancer, heart disease and other widespread and deadly conditions. Congress needs to act to ensure American physicians, researchers and patients have a reliable domestic supply of these vital isotopes.
- As new radiotracers are developed, the US Food and Drug Administration should carefully consider the approval of these agents which have the potential to more efficiently and cost-effectively image diseases.
- Nuclear medicine is safe and provides valuable information when performed by trained and qualified medical professionals. Regulations on radiation exposure should be developed with evidence-based research to ensure the safety of medical professionals, patients and their families.