

# BLACK BELT **PUBLICITY**

POWERFUL PUBLICITY STRATEGIES FOR THE OWNER AND INSTRUCTOR



## How to Obtain Publicity for Your School on Local TV News

By *Bob Sillick, NAPMA senior writer/editor*

The purpose of this Black Belt Report is to guide you through the process of obtaining publicity for your school on local television news.

Many NAPMA members have learned how to use publicity as part of their marketing programs, and have benefited from the exposure. Not only is publicity “free,” but also, more importantly, you and your school gain a significant amount of trust and integrity because the public “believes” what it reads in the newspapers and sees on television, especially television news.

### Step #1: Education

Before presenting the “how tos” of this kind of publicity, let’s review a few of the “know hows.”

- Publicizing your event on local television news should probably not be your first publicity experience. Writing and submitting press releases to your local metropolitan or suburban newspapers will prepare you for the more involved process of TV news publicity.

- Because publicity is “free,” your story can easily be “bumped” from a TV news program because of important news events or a heavy volume of news that day.
- Create a distribution list of the local TV stations and their news programs. Look in your weekly TV listings magazine, distributed in your newspaper, for that information.
  - ✧ Most metropolitan areas will have four primary TV stations that are the local affiliates of NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox.
  - ✧ There may also be a local 24-hour TV news station and/or other local TV stations that are affiliates for WB, UPN, PAX, etc. with local newscasts.



Rebecca Barnett (right) poses with a local television journalist



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- ✧ Include TV stations on your distribution list that serve specific audiences, such as Spanish-speaking stations, especially if your target audience watches them.
- The local TV news producer has approximately 22 or 23 minutes available for content. Some of it must be reserved for weather and sports; the remainder is the “news,” with maybe two “soft” news slots where your story could appear.
- If your community has a 24-hour television news station, then it must fill those same 23 minutes nearly 50 times a day, which significantly increases the opportunities for your story.

### **Step #2: Preparation**

- Be patient. You want to choose the one event of the year with all of the right ingredients that will maximize the interest of news producers. Those ingredients include, but are not limited to:
  - ✧ A large, enthusiastic crowd that includes parents.
  - ✧ An important message, such as safety or child abduction, presented as part of a program or event.
  - ✧ An endorsement and/or an appearance by the mayor or other government officials; partnerships with local community organizations or major area businesses.
- Plan and organize your event as you always have, keeping in mind the points below.
  - ✧ Select and plan an event that will provide excellent visuals, such as a presentation by a dignitary; a large number of children, participating in a safety or other learning activity that involves motion and action; and/or an event area that is decorated with signs and other colorful elements.
  - ✧ Your event area should also accommodate the needs of shooting video. There should be as

much as 10 or 15 feet of space in front of the focal point of your event. If the event is taking place inside, then ceilings of 10 feet or more are preferred. Don’t “stage” your event in front of mirrors or glass windows that admit large amounts of sunlight. Position your event so there is easy access to electrical outlets for video production lights.



- Once you’ve created your distribution list and educated yourself about your local TV news programs, then you’re ready to call your local TV stations and ask to talk with the news producers or assignment desks.
  - ✧ Introduce yourself.
  - ✧ Describe your event briefly, emphasizing the community involvement element, such as fundraising, child safety, etc.
  - ✧ Ask if they’ll accept video footage for possible news coverage or whether the station would be able to send a video crew to shoot footage of your event.
  - ✧ Ask them what video format they prefer.
  - ✧ Ask them for their submission deadlines, to whom the materials should be addressed and where you should deliver them.

- You will probably find it helpful to write a standard press release for your event as a first step. You'll want to distribute one to your local newspaper, anyway.
- Create a list of possible visuals, as suggested throughout this report, that you think will best portray your event and its message.
- You will then have the materials the video crew will need to shoot your event efficiently and effectively and the facts the producer will need to create the final story.

### **Step #3: Production**

- In television news parlance, the video footage you shoot and distribute is called a "B-roll." That is because when it is aired, it is often introduced by a reporter on camera, who then speaks "voice-over" the footage of your story. The reporter portion of the segment is considered the "A-roll."
- The potential opportunity for television news coverage of your event is not, I repeat, NOT, an opportunity for one of your instructors or your cousin to use his new video camera. Any video you provide a TV news producer must be professionally shot. Nothing will negate all of your planning and the results you expect from your event more than unprofessional video. To the public, an excellent message presented in a poor manner is the same as a poor message.

**Read this carefully!** If you are not willing to hire professionals to shoot video footage of your event, then use another publicity tactic.

- Contact a professional videographer or video studio. The TV stations' assignment desks will probably be able to provide you with some referrals.

- Contact the video production service to discuss what you want to shoot, the date and time, etc. The video company will want to know if your event is inside, so the crew will be equipped with lighting. Tell him a microphone will be needed, if you plan to record interviews. The video service may also want to send a producer to visit your event location in advance.
- Work with the video production service to create a detailed shot list, based on the types of shots described below. You want to use the crew's time efficiently, since you will probably be charged by the hour. The more you plan generally the less it will cost you.

**Establishing shot:** This is usually 10 seconds of video that shows a wide view of your event location. It may also be an exterior shot of your school, a school sign and/or an event banner. Typically, no sound is recorded during an establishing shot.

**Subject shots:** You'll want approximately three minutes of people actively participating in your event. As mentioned above, you want action and motion, so make sure your subject shots strongly identify the message of your event, and that the participants are enjoying themselves, having fun, with smiles on their faces. Subject shots can include sound, but it should just be the natural, or spontaneous, sound at the event.

**Testimonial/Interview shots:** Be aware that most TV news producers rarely use interviews unless conducted by a reporter. However, it makes sense to shoot interviews because you're already paying the videographer to be there, they don't take long to shoot, and you may have other uses for those interviews in your marketing and/or public relations program.



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You will more likely want to shoot “testimonial” footage, instead of real interviews. Remember to record short statements of 5 to 10 seconds maximum. Include students, their parents, other visitors and especially any dignitaries who are present.

Make sure you “interview” yourself. Record a SHORT statement on camera about the event, its purpose and the results: an amount of money raised or the number of kids and parents who participated in your safety program, for example. Remember, that you represent both your school and everyone affiliated with it, so make sure you are properly dressed, groomed and have prepared some comments in advance.

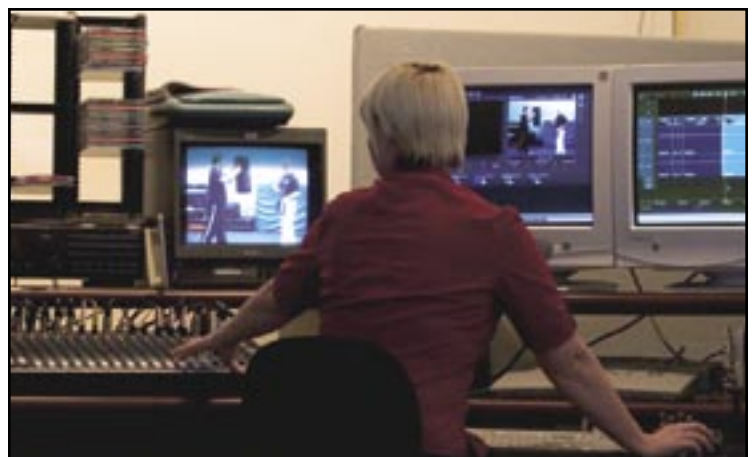
**Cutaway shots:** Cutaways are defined often as a reaction shot. For instance, you shoot a subject shot of a child participating in your safety program. You then edit in a very quick shot of the child’s parent reacting, before returning to the continuation of the subject shot of the child.

**Still shots:** Shoot a few 5-to-10-second close-ups of any items that help to identify your story or message; for example, your logo, materials or kits distributed to participants, the citation presented by a government official, etc.

- Your entire B-roll video should be no more than 5 minutes. If it’s longer, then create a shot log, listing each shot and its specific time count on the video. Include the shot log with the B-roll and script that you distribute to the TV stations. (See page 16.)
- Schedule time with the video production company to review the raw footage of your event and to create the B-roll master. Before the editing session, create a list of any text you want superimposed over the video: the name of your school, the names of those being interviewed, etc.

- Ask the video production company to make enough copies from the master for each station to which you plan to submit your tape. Remember, to hand-deliver the B-roll video and script to the TV stations prior to their deadlines.
- The script that accompanies your B-roll video should be brief and describe all the key points on the footage. It is written similarly to a standard press release, answering those six basic questions again: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. Always include your name and a phone number where you can be reached.

Publicity on local TV news is a much larger undertaking than writing and submitting a press release to your local newspaper, but the increased exposure and benefits you’ll derive are certainly worth the effort. Once the local TV news producers recognize the quality of your school and its programs and your expertise, you are likely to become their expert source for information about the martial arts—and that is a priceless advantage.



## A sample B-roll script

### **Mayor honors local martial arts school for teaching important children safety tips to Haunted Halloween House visitors**

Mayor John Jones attended the annual Haunted Halloween House at Smith's Karate Academy last Friday, where hundreds of children and their parents learned important safety tips and enjoyed the Haunted House's scary fun during October. The mayor presented Bill Smith, the owner of Smith's Karate Academy, with a citation for the school's community leadership.

The Haunted Halloween House is just one of a number of events at the school throughout the year that promotes involvement of parents and the greater community with childhood safety issues. The programs are designed to be fun and instructional. Children are taught self-defense and anti-abduction techniques as well as concentration skills to help them be more aware of their surroundings and the people who may want to do them harm. The safety programs also include video presentation; visits from local police, fire and emergency officers; and education packets distributed to children and parents.

For more information, please contact:

Bill Smith  
Smith's Karate Academy  
XXX-XXX-XXXX  
(Optional email address)

## A sample shot list or log

Shot No.	Time Code	Shot Type (Establishing, subject, etc.)	Brief Shot Description
1	00:10	Establishing	Exterior wide shot of school entry with sign
2	00:30	Establishing	Interior wide shot of haunted house with visitors
3	00:55	Subject	Two children participating in the safety program
4	01:45	Subject	Parent and child participating in the safety program
5	02:40	Testimonial/Interview	Mayor presenting citation to Bill Smith with accompanying audio

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*Bob Sillick has more than 30 years in marketing, advertising and corporate communications, which includes 10 years of writing and producing TV commercials and buying TV advertising time as well as another 10 years as a scriptwriter for major corporations' sales, training and product video programs.*

