

## How to Organize a Press Conference

A press conference (news conference, media conference) is called when an organization has something newsworthy to tell to the media, and when more in-depth approach and discussion is needed than it is possible to provide by sending out a press release.

Press conference gives reporters a possibility to ask questions, get explanations, quotes, and photo opportunity.

- \* An invitation to the conference should be sent to reporters and desk editors a week ahead of it. Closer to the date – a day or two before it – a phone call can be made to remind the reporters on the event.
- \* You should organize press conference between 9 – 11 morning. Later than that is not good - reporters will not have time to file a story for the next day newspaper issue.
- \* Ideally, the conference will have several persons participating: the press officer who knows the reporters will open and facilitate it. One or two prominent persons should be present, who will give a 10-min statement each on the issue (project, release, donation, opening, or similar), after which the facilitator will give floor to the reporters to ask questions. All in all, ideally it will be finished in 45 min. After that individual interviews can be given.
- \* A —press kit is usually distributed at a conference, containing a press release, backgrounders, report, research results, fact sheets, list of experts, etc.
- \* Sometimes even filmed material or photo material is distributed. After the conference you should send the press kit by a messenger to those media outlets that have not had a representative at the conference.
- \* Reporters like to say that —A press conference should scream for a headline – meaning there should be breaking news released on them. If a conference is called and there is no such news, journalists will not forget it - there is a chance that next time, even if you have breaking news, nobody will show up at the event.
- \* Exactly because of the proliferation of press conferences, media outlets often send beginners to cover them.
- \* If possible, media events should be organized instead of press conference. Yet, if one decides to organize a press conference, there are a number of technical details to be taken care of. Here they are:

### Press Conference Check List

Location

Accessible by public transportation

Available parking space

Exact address, phone and email

Registration desk at the entrance, with a person greeting the reporters

Translation booth if foreign reporters expected

Site

Are there enough electricity plugs for TV crews?

Are the fuses strong enough?

How many people can attend?

Tables and chairs – number and position

Platform for camera and photographers behind the reporters

Check the light, heating

Is there a photocopy machine available?

A desk with press kits

Table for the participants – seating arrangements

Glasses with water on the participants' table

Where do the participants enter from and where do they leave?

Is there a separate room for individual interviews?

Where is the toilet?

Audio-Visuals

Dropdown with the organization-action logo above the participants

Projectors – transparencies, video, LCD,

Computers, laptops, monitors - platform – Windows or other?

Microphones for participants, and portable microphone for floor questions

Loudspeakers

Recording – audio, video, photographer?