

Rise for Climate

Traditional Media & Communications Guide

The Power of Media and Communications

Stories move us, spring us into action, cause us to reflect on how things are, reckon with how they need to change, and so much more. When we tell our stories in a strategic way, we make our movement visible, and catch the attention of the media and the general public.

The [Global Climate Action Summit](#) takes place in California on 12-14 September 2018. It is a meeting being convened by the Governor of California, Jerry Brown for non-state actors such as local institutions, cities, civil society groups and businesses. Its goal is to demonstrate how the tide has turned in the race against climate change, showcase climate action taking place around the world, and inspire deeper climate commitments.

We are facing the urgency to avert devastating impacts of climate change, which makes this Summit ever more relevant. GCAS offers the climate movement a unique opportunity to organise a global mobilisation of distributed actions in our towns and cities, universities, places of worship and community spaces around the world to drive climate action within our communities - while boosting the power and visibility of the climate movement.

Telling stories through the media allows you to reach audiences in your own geographies, bring new people into your campaign, increase public support, and grow the movement at scale with what the crisis requires.

This media toolkit walks through how we use the news to communicate our power, campaigns and movement with the world. Let's get to work!

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[Narrative - A narrative, quite simply, is the broad framework within which you will tell your campaign stories: imagine it as a storyline that has many 'plot points', one that allows many different characters to emerge, and progresses towards a climax or conclusion that your audience is rooting for!](#)

[Talking Points: Once you've got a sense of your overarching narrative, themes and plot points will emerge. These can be shaped into talking points to guide all your media interactions, in person and through public materials.](#)

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Mapping Out Your Communications Strategy

Mapping out your campaign's communications strategy allows you to have one plan with all communications resources in one place! Start with a communications strategy that spans the **timeframe of the next year**. As time goes on, you'll likely create **specific communications plans** for individual actions, events, and mobilizations.

It is in our Communications Strategy that we introduce **concrete goals, timeframes, press materials and action items**. The following is the skeleton of what your Communications Strategy should include.

I. Objectives: Think through the top-line objectives for communicating your campaign:

- What do we want to achieve? (*These are your Campaign Goals.*)
- Who has the power to make this change? (*The main stakeholders you're addressing.*)
- What message do they need to hear, and from whom, in order to be compelled to drive the change we want? (*Campaign messages, and key target audiences; through the subsequent exercises, you will find yourself attaching your main messages to specific spokespeople and target audiences.*)

II. Goals

- The first thing we want to do is set 4-5 *quantitative* and *narrative* goals to strive toward in the given timeframe.
 - *Quantitative goals* can include the number of local press hits to work towards; number of opinion pieces, letters to the editor or blogs we will write and publish; number of press statements you want to send out, etc.
 - *Narrative goals* can include the overarching story you want to tell; new ideas or connections you want to draw through the media, etc.

III. Narrative

- INSERT YOUR NARRATIVE HERE

IV. Talking Points

- INSERT YOUR TALKING POINTS HERE

V. Resources

- Here you can link in additional resources and plans that might inform our communications strategy. This includes any campaign, digital, or organizing plans.

VI. Timeline

- **The timeline of our communications strategy is a valuable calendar.**
- Breaking it down, first month-by-month and then week-by-week, use your timeline to note scheduled events, indicate the press materials and content you'll put out, the individual or groups of reporters you'll reach out to, and resources you will create.

Remember, your Communications Strategy should be a live document - one that you keep returning to, reviewing and refreshing it as your campaign progresses.

Developing Your Story

Before digging into your narrative, make sure you've explored [the tools and frameworks](#) to best communicate your story.

→ **Narrative** - A narrative, quite simply, is the broad framework within which you will tell your campaign stories: imagine it as a storyline that has many 'plot points', one that allows many different characters to emerge, and progresses towards a climax or conclusion that your audience is rooting for!

The Rise narrative (*see the snapshot presented below as an example*) can serve as a resource and framework for you to adapt, pull from, align with, and craft your specific fights and connect to Rise mobilisations around the world .

We are at a tipping point. What we've seen in 20 years of governments leading climate negotiations, even with scientists pressing the urgency, hasn't been nearly enough. With climate impacts escalating we don't have the luxury to wait to see what bureaucratic negotiations have to offer. The Global Climate Action Summit summit is a moment to applaud true climate leaders and call out the ones who are keeping us back - and make it clear where the line is. Together we can build a groundswell of support for climate leadership, and create the right momentum to secure a fast and just transition to a sustainable and equitable world.

In order to achieve this, communities worldwide will lead the transition to secure a fast and just transition to 100% renewable energy for all, while also stopping and banning all new fossil fuel projects from being built. By mobilising in our in our towns and cities, universities, places of worship and community spaces around the world we will drive climate action within our communities - sending a clear message to governments about what the will of the people really is and that they are not going to get any blank cheques from us.

→ **Talking Points:** Once you've got a sense of your overarching narrative, themes and plot points will emerge. These can be shaped into talking points to guide all your media interactions, in person and through public materials.

◆ **Click here for [Global Talking Points on the Rise Mobilisation](#)**

When we explain a campaign or a movement to the press, you have to be sharp, quick and to the point. **Talking points are a resource to speak to top messaging of your campaign.**

- Climate change is all around us: intensifying storms, hurricanes, heatwaves and wildfires, as well as slow-burning disasters like drought and famine - all of which hit vulnerable communities the worst. There's no time to lose in the fight for climate justice.
- The Global Climate Action Summit takes place in California on 12-14 September. Hosted by Governor Jerry Brown it aims to demonstrate how the tide has turned in the race against climate change, showcase climate action taking place around the world, and inspire deeper commitments from each other and from national governments.
- This moment is a unique opportunity to organise a global mobilisation of distributed actions in our towns and cities, universities, places of worship and community spaces around the world to drive climate action within our communities. Together, we will create a roaring upswell of public support for the ambitious climate solutions we need at all levels of government worldwide.
- We are not starting from scratch. By building broad community support, we will further strengthen our powerful and networked coalitions. Dozens of cities all over the world have already committed to 100% clean energy. This demand is necessary and realistic, now it requires the community power to build political will.

→ Creating a 1-pager

To ensure your talking points are sharp and to the point, and that everyone on your team is on (literally) the same page, you can make a copy of the talking points above, add some of your own local stories, and create a 1-pager with your campaign's talking points.

Roles and Spokespeople

Now that we've developed our overall narrative and elements of our story, we need to figure out who from our teams will be responsible for the work of sharing it through the media. We'll get into **how** we do that later on. For now, let's start with the **who**.

→ Choose your communications lead

- ◆ Your Communications Lead or Team is:
 - Responsible for creating and applying your campaign's media plan and strategy, and tracking delivery to it
 - Point on press outreach, answering background questions, and connecting reporters to your spokespeople
 - Responsible for crafting and disseminating all press materials
 - Tracks and shares press hits
 - Coordinating with social media & digital point person
- ◆ Your Communications Lead is not
 - Necessarily a spokesperson or giving interviews to the press
 - Necessarily lead on social media & digital communications

→ Digital communications & coordination

While your Communications Lead is *not* necessarily in charge of digital communications, it is crucial for these two roles to be closely coordinated. This can happen through individual check-ins and alignment around your narrative and talking points. Make sure to closely align timing for disseminating your press materials and press outreach with your schedule for email blasts, social media posts, and more. **Here is a [Digital Recruitment Toolkit](#) that includes:**

- Style-guide
- Draft visuals
- Template blasts
- Info to recruit supporters via ActionNetwork and the riseforclimate.org website.

More digital resources are on their way.

→ Identifying your spokespeople

Spokespeople are the people from your campaign and/or coalition with the role of speaking publicly on behalf of your campaign.

When choosing spokespeople, keep in mind:

- ◆ **Diversity:** as much as possible, consider a diverse range of voices to tell the Fossil Free story, including diversity of race, age, gender, community representation, and more.

- ◆ **Personal stories:** in addition to a diversity of story, choose spokespeople who have powerful and relatable personal stories to share around why they're in this fight

- Examples: a mother fighting for 100% renewables in her City to protect her child's future; a labor union member who sees climate justice tied to economic justice; a faith leader fighting to protect Earth against fossil fuel destruction.

→ **Preparing spokespeople to talk to the media**

[Check out this training on spokesperson training activities.](#)

Press Outreach and Pitching

Once you have a grasp on the story you want to tell, who's going to tell it, and how you want to get it out in the world, you can start the work of reaching out and connecting with the press. This direct outreach is the initial step needed insert our story into the current conversation.

→ **Press List**

As is true with organizing and movement work, **relationship building** is top priority when working with reporters and the press.

At the onset of your campaign, focus on quality over quantity of press relationships. While we want strive to get our stories across, it's also key to find out what stories the reporter is actually interested in! This can be done through one-on-one conversations, meetings over coffee or a meal, as well as simply passing along additional information.

Ideally, you want to have a symbiotic relationship with reporters where you are providing stories they can cover, and they are covering the stories you want to tell! [Learn more about understanding journalists here.](#)

Focus on a range of mediums, including print, online, TV, radio, blogs, and more! You want to build relationships with journalists across a range of platforms to reach the widest audience.

Find contact information by going to the news outlet website, search for twitter accounts, or simply calling up the newsdesk to ask who the best climate reporter is.

Track your press contacts in a spreadsheet, with information including:

| First Name | Last Name | Outlet | Role | Email | Phone | Social Media | Notes |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Dale | Ellis | Town News | Local News | dale.ellis@town.com | Cell: ## Work: ## | twitter.com/dale | Personal stories |

[Here are more tips & tricks for building relationships with the press.](#)

→ Pitching

When pitching to a reporter, be sharp, quick and to the point. Ahead of reaching out to the press, it's useful to outline or draft your ideal **30 second** pitch. **I-P-S-U-A** is a great tool in helping craft a press pitch:

- **Introduction:** 1 sentence; who you are, what group you're with, why you're reaching out;
- **Problem:** 1-2 sentences; the problem we're faced with, fossil fuel billionaires, devastating climate impacts;
- **Solution:** 1-2 sentences; the solutions we have, people power, Fossil Free, just and fast transition to no new fossil fuels 100% renewables for all;
- **Urgency:** 1 sentence; explains the timeliness and urgency of climate change, worsening impacts;
- **Action:** 1 sentence; join a global movement for a fossil free future.

Press Materials

→ Media advisory

Media advisories alert press of an upcoming event, whether it's a march, a rally or a press briefing. Think of it as an invitation. The goal of an advisory is to grab the reader's interest and make them want to come. Ask yourself: *What's the hook that makes it a do-not-miss event?*

Don't get caught up in long descriptions; **keep it to one page, this is more of a teaser.**

Send about a week before your event. Follow up with phone calls to really sell your event a few of days beforehand to be sure journalists have enough time to include it in their schedule.

It should include:

- **Who** is organising the event/activity, including what makes them interesting
- **What the event or activity is, including your hook** (i.e. A nonviolent direct action! Street theatre! Students and elderly people riding bikes together! interesting visuals or sounds!)
- **Where the event is:** name and address
- **When it is:** date and time
- **Why it's newsworthy:** re-state hook, why it matters, brief background & why it's happening now

→ Media Advisory Template

MEDIA ADVISORY

DATE

Contact: [NAME], [POSITION], [EMAIL], [PHONE]

TITLE: [Groups/Participants] to bolster major climate mobilisation

Sub-title: [Offer topline details and overview specific to your *Rise for Climate* action]

CITY, STATE -- On [Add date] [Name groups/participants] will be [describe activity] as part of the global *Rise for Climate* mobilisation. Tens of thousands of people around the world, representing faith, youth, justice and cities will be joining the *Rise for Climate* mobilisation on or around September 8 to drive climate action and send a clear message to governments about what the will of the people really is ahead of the Global Climate Action Summit hosted by the Governor of California Jerry Brown that is taking place on September 12-14. **Note: Do not include quotes in this release**

WHAT: Add a short one-phrase description of the *Rise for Climate* event

WHEN: Add date and time of the event, in the following format: Day of the Week, Month, Day, Time (specify time zone)

WHERE: Add the location of the event

WHO: Add names/groups (and titles, if applicable) of those carrying out the event followed by an explanation/description of those involved.

WHY: Mobilizing globally will send a powerful and necessary message that communities are rising up everywhere to stop fossil fuels and demand true climate action at the Summit and beyond.

[Add a sentence explaining why this event is important highlighting local/regional issues of relevance currently at play.]

VISUALS: Describe what eye-catching elements might be present (i.e. banners, chants, songs, street theater, etc).

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For more information, visit: [campaign website]

Press releases are what your ideal article for an event would look like. The goal is to give reporters all the information they would need to write a story, even if they didn't show up.

Aim to keep your press release to one page.

Once it's written, send the press release individually – or make sure to use “bcc”! When sending out the press release to your contacts via email, the subject line is your headline. Copy and paste the rest of your release into the body of the email, and bring print copies to your event to give to members of the press who attend.

Usually, your press release goes out immediately after your event.

→ **Press release template:**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

Contact: [name], [role/organization], [email address], [phone number]

Title: Ideal headline describing what happened at your *Rise for Climate* mobilisation

Subtitle: [Name participants] joined tens of thousands of people in a global mobilisation to showcase real climate leadership and step up pressure on governments ahead of the Global Climate Action Summit in September.

[INSERT FEATURED IMAGE IF RELEVANT]

CITY, STATE -- On [add date] [name participants/groups] took part in [describe activity] as part of the global *Rise for Climate* mobilisation. [Add sentence on local/regional focus of the mobilisation and the outcomes in a local/regional context]. Together with tens of thousands of people around the world representing faith, youth, justice, cities and more our actions demonstrate what real climate leadership looks like and challenge governments to accelerate progress towards a just and equitable transition to 100% renewable energy for all while stopping all new fossil fuel projects.

“[Add quote 1] This quote should be from a community member or spokesperson who had a role in organizing the *Rise for Climate* activity. This quote should give background information about what happened at the action, and some reflections into what the organizing looked like.” explains XXX.

Add general background information on the organizations behind the local/regional *Rise for Climate* action - explain who participated and role they had. This was part of a global mobilisation of distributed actions in towns, institutions, cities and states around the world supported and in some cases organised by groups including 350.org, Climate Action Network, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, GreenFaith, and HOMEf.

“[Add quote 2] This quote should be from another (if possible) organizer of your action. It could speak to the hard work put in by organizers. This quote should summarize the purpose, impact and importance the mobilisation had at a local/regional level.” recounts XXX.

Through these actions we are collectively demanding even more from local and national governments across the world at this critical juncture where people's livelihoods are at stake due to the growing impacts of the climate crisis.

This mobilisation is part of a larger wave of global mobilisations unfolding this year - together these actions will help to build a groundswell of support for real climate leadership, pile the pressure on national leaders that are falling short of their commitments, and create the right momentum to secure a fast and just transition to an equitable world by 2020.

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[You can find more on the purpose, distribution timing and examples of press materials here.](#)

Op-eds, Letters to the Editor

Opinion-Editorials (op-eds) and Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are great ways for us to create our own content and tell our stories in the media.

News outlets publish them as a venue for public debate or to discuss issues missed by the regular news. They need to be written with a clear opinion and are published at the editor's discretion.

→ Before you begin writing

- **Pay attention to submission requirements** (word length, how to submit). You can find this information on the news outlets' website.
- **Read other opinion/LTEs** in that news outlet to get a sense of the pieces they publish and the criteria they use.
- If you have a relationship, **call or discuss the opinion piece with the editor** before submitting. For example, sometimes editors feel a story or particular angle has been exhausted and may indicate the need for a fresh angle (See [How to Build a Positive Relationship with Press](#)).

→ How to write an attractive letter to the editor/op-ed

- **Connect it with something that is already happening in the news.** Reference a former article that the newspaper wrote, or an event that happened in the community. Then link it to what you want to talk about (See [Framing Climate Change as News: Lessons from The Guardian](#)).
- **Keep your key message at the top.** This allows readers to understand your position early on, and sometimes editors may cut out the last part of your letter.
- **Make sure each sentence has its own purpose.** Since we don't have all the space in the world to explain ourselves, make sure every sentence makes its own statement and avoids being repetitive.
- **Make sure you know your message**, what you want to say, and use clear and simple language—short words and sentences go a long way!
- **If you have a strong personal story, include it!** A compelling human story helps to hook editors and readers.
- **Proofread!**

→ Letters To the Editor (LTEs)

- Typically short piece (< 300 words); can be used as a comment on a piece the outlet already published.
- Examples:
 - [Letter: Divesting from fossil fuels is morally right](#), Albany Times Union, 4 Nov 2017
 - [Act Locally for climate solutions](#), Kitsap Sun, 14 Nov 2017

→ Opinion-editorials (op-eds):

- Might be longer than an LTE, 800 - 1200 words
- Examples
 - [Church of England should lead on climate change by divesting from ExxonMobil](#), The Guardian, 7 Nov 2017
 - [Devastated by Hurricanes Sandy and Maria: It's Time for Action](#), HuffPost, 11 Oct 2017

[You can find additional op-ed and LTE templates, tips, tricks & more resources here](#)

Action Media Checklist

All of the above resources and tools map out what you'll need for the your overall Fossil Free campaign. Below, find action items to consider for a specific action or event:

- Press List Finalized
- Write Media Advisory
- Write Press Release
- Send Media Advisory
- Make Press Calls
- Assign Day-Of Media Wranglers
- Prepare Your Spokespeople
- Send Press Release
- Gather and Share Press Hits

[Further details on this checklist and tasks can be found here.](#)

[Explore more tips & tricks on making your action NEWS-worthy.](#)

Additional trainings and resources

Explore more **media & communications resources** on the [350.org Trainings Page](#), including spokesperson training exercises, TV interview tips and tricks, spokespeople training, interview prep, and more!

For resource and tools for **digital communications & social media**, explore this toolkit.