

UNDERSTAND ABOUT PRESS CONFERENCES



Press Conference

Its also called a **News Conference** or **Media Conference**. Press conference is a setting where reporters/ journalists from various media houses meet with a particular company/ organization for a significant news to announce and news that will attract media attention and public interest. There are appropriate motives to why organizations conduct press conferences;-

- A matter of public concern e.g. diseases like COVID-19, EBOLA.
- An announcement that is really important to a large number of people such as general elections, world cup, Olympic games, awards
- Journalists have requested access to an individual and its important to give all media equal access to the person e.g. public figures, artists, musicians, footballers, basketballers, politicians, ministers
- Launching a new product/ service or an invention of public interest is to be unveiled, demonstrated and explained to the media e.g. launching of electronic cars, smart phones, smart applications.
- A person of importance is coming to town and there are many media requests for interviews.
- A complex issue, rumors, situation that needs clarification and announced, and the media needs access to he one who will answer questions.

LIVE REPORT



Press Conference

There are two major reasons for having a news conference, to give all media an opportunity to hear the announcement at the same time and to provide a setting where reporters can ask follow up questions.

Announcements like research breakthroughs, major corporate decisions, crises raise numerous questions as reporters seek information on all aspects of an issue.

As a PR professional, one has to determine when and if a news conference is needed. Most of the times, executives in organization, usually want to call a press conference to stir up publicity and make routine announcements that can just be handled with a press release.



Press Conference

A press conference is prepared by the communications department or public relations officer. Preparations are done before, during and after the press conference.

► Before the press conference

Scheduling a news conference

News conference should be scheduled at a convenient time, date and day for reporters. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings are the best for dailies and broadcast media, because this allows them to get stories for tomorrow newspapers and for 7pm and 9pm news. Avoid Saturdays and Sunday and holidays as reporters are usually occupied. News conferences should begin around 9am/ 10am to 12pm/ 7pm. Press conference should take place on a day that there are no other major announcements or news events.



Press Conference

► Selecting a location

The location must be convenient for invited media and relatively close to their places of work. The selected room should accommodate traditional and online media.

Organizations use hotels/ conference centers and corporate headquarters for news conferences. Electrical outlets are important for the room. The room is usually set near the entrance for mobile communications. The set up is sometimes done 1 or 2 hours before the conference. An organization should have it's own audio and video crew that will collect the conference's outlet and share them to media houses that couldn't attend the conference.



Press Conference

► Invitation

The invitation list should include all reporters and even influential bloggers, who might be interested in the announcement. Its better to invite too many than omit some who may feel slighted. Invitations take various forms depends with public relations officer creativity. Invitation can be delivered via email, messenger, phone calls, a press statement through social media. Invitations throughout graphical posters can also be used. If the news conference will be broadcasted live via satellite to reporters in various cities, a satellite distribution firm will send a media advisory. Print or fax invitations should be sent 10 – 14 days and should be marked RSVP so that you can make appropriate decisions regarding the size of the meeting room, the number of media kits needed and what special equipment's will be required.



Press Conference



- **During the news conference**

Handling the conference a conference must be short, organized and punctual because its not a seminar or a symposium. A news conference should run not more than 1 hour, and statements by the spokespeople should be relatively brief, allowing journalists to ask questions.

PRO should brief the executive/ clients on what they are going to say, how they are going to say it and what visual aids will be used to illustrate their announcements. Reporters should receive copies of the text for each speech and other key materials such as slides, presentations, chats executive bios and background materials. Establish ground rules for the conduct of the conference.

Press Conference

Brief opening statements are made followed by Q& A session. If there are many attendees then follow a format of one question and follow up per person.

Keep track of the conference, as journalists usually take an opportunity to ask oddball questions that distract the stated purpose and objective of the conference.

Refreshments like juice and coffee can be served prior to the opening of a morning news conference.

Avoid serving luncheon or cocktails to reporters, they have deadline and other assignments and don't have time to socialize.



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► After the Conference

At the conclusion of the conference the spokesperson should remain in the room and available for any reporters who need one on one interviews. The interview can be done in a quiet corner or in a room adjacent to the site.

Public Relations officer should be accessible during the day in case reporters need more info or think of other questions as they prepare their stories. You should know where the spokespeople are during the day and how they can be reached in case a reporter needs to check a quote.

However, PRO has to contact reporters who expressed interests but were unable to attend. You can email the conference recorded details such as publicity photos. One can also arrange a one to one interview with the spokesperson



Assignment

With examples', demonstrate the rise of social media in the world and explain the pros and cons of social media in Tanzania. (10 marks)