



NIKE The official publication of New York State Women, Inc.

VOL. 74 ■ ISSUE 4 ■ MAY/JUNE 2025



Our Mission

To connect and build women personally, professionally, and politically.

Our Vision

To empower women to use their voices to create positive change.

Dated Material – Deliver Promptly

Are YOU a member of NYS Women, Inc. yet?
Time to check us out at nyswomeninc.org

Living Links in Our Continuous Chain – New York State Women, Inc.

“May each who carries responsibility for our organization in the future, take the torch from those who have gone before and carry it high.”

Marjorie C. Smith
President, 1948-1950

Business and Professional Women’s
Club of New York State

NYS Women, Inc. – The State of the State



Looking forward to seeing you at conference!

-Robin Bridson, NYS Women, Inc. President, 2024/2025

Dear Members,

There's so much to look forward to in June! We will be celebrating at our Annual Conference from June 20th to 22nd in Binghamton. All the information can be found on our website: <https://www.nyswomeninc.org/Conference> In addition to the obligatory business sessions and voting for officers, we will be having workshops, Youth Leadership through the CDO (Career Development Opportunities, Inc.), PPD (Personal and Professional Development) competitions, vendors, musical entertainment, a memorial service for the members we've lost this past year, and plenty of fun and food!

This has been a hard year for me with family and health issues and I apologize for not being as hands on as I wanted to be. I truly appreciate all of your support and well wishes. I promise to you that "I'm back!" and look forward to an exciting 2025/2026 year. The strategic planning committee has been meeting this year and is excited to present the new plan to you at Conference. Additionally, CDO will be sharing their "HERStory" submissions to honor women we love, respect, and look up to.

Actress Helen Hayes said, "*If you Rest, you Rust!*" and that will be our motto for the coming year! Let's get moving and make some positive change for our organization, our local chapters, our communities, and ourselves. Are you ready? I am! 🐾

Warm regards,
Robin Bridson

Call to Conference

CALL TO: 16th Annual Conference

DATE: June 20-22, 2025

LOCATION: Holiday Inn, Binghamton, NY

TO: Executive committee, members of the board of directors, and all members of New York State Women, Inc.

NOTICE is hereby given that the 16th Annual Conference of New York State Women, Inc. will be held Friday, June 20 – Sunday, June 22, 2025 at the Holiday Inn, Binghamton, NY. Members are encouraged to register online <https://www.nyswomeninc.org/Conference> by Saturday, June 1, 2024.

Advance registration due by Sunday, May 25, 2025.

Regular registration is due by Sunday, June 8, 2025.

The business session will begin on Friday, June 20, 2025, at 6:00 PM. The weekend schedule will include workshops, youth leadership, PPD competition, election of state officers, installation banquet, Saturday vendors, and musical entertainment. All members who are in good standing and present are eligible to vote.

Board reports will NOT be verbal. All board reports should be sent to the website <https://www.nyswomeninc.org/Members/Program-Book-Report> by Saturday, June 7th. If you cannot handle the form, you must email your report to Robin Bridson RLB8963@gmail.com by Saturday, June 7th. Please let her know that you will be emailing your report. Executive committee, standing committee chairs and region directors are required to submit reports. Reports should be a brief list of goals and accomplishments for the year to date. Updates to the reports can be made during the business sessions.

A celebration of life memorial service will be held on Sunday. Please submit information by Sunday, June 8th. You will find the paper form and online form online at the conference site.

The agenda and workshop information will appear on the NYS Women, Inc. website and in future editions of the Communicator.

Looking forward to seeing everyone again and meeting in Binghamton!

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Bridson, President
New York State Women, Inc.

2025

MONTHLY
5 Communicator deadline

JUN
20-22 Annual Conference
Holiday Inn
Binghamton NY

JUL
15 SEPTEMBER NIKE
submissions deadline

We connect
and build
women
personally,
professionally
and politically.

NIKE Submissions

All contributed articles must be original work; all previously published works must be accompanied by the publisher's authorization to reprint. *NIKE* reserves the right to edit contributed articles for clarity and length, and reserves the right to refuse to publish any contributed article.

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From the Editor

Yes, WE are living links...

THIS JUNE ISSUE OF *NIKE* PICKS UP ON A theme from Claire Knowles' article in March for Women in History Month: "Living Links in Our Continuous Chain." Here we contemplate the words written by some of our past NYS Women, Inc. presidents and *NIKE* editors about the future of our organization, and what this means for us in this conference issue.

We *have* been handed the torch by those who came before us; we *are* creating the future for NYS Women, Inc.; and we *plan* this future at our conference.

Interested in recruiting new members for your chapter? We have several articles ranging from networking tips to effective press releases, as well as ideas on how best to treat those volunteers in your chapter who give so generously of their help; all these are worth a read: "A Connecting Cheat Sheet: 10 Easy Hints to Help You Move Beyond "Surface" Networking and Make Deep Connections" by Nancy D. O'Reilly on page 8; "Tips for networking at your chapter events & meetings" by Amy Bath on page 9; "Writing effective press releases for your chapter" by Natalie Canavor and Claire Meiowitz on page 11; and finally, from associate editor, Katharine Smith, "Treating your volunteers with R-E-S-P-E-C-T" on page 15. 🐾



Image ©Tara Bazilian Chang

-Joyce DeLong

The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams.

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

SEPTEMBER 2025 ISSUE DEADLINE: JULY 15, 2025. Add *NIKE* in your email subject line and send to the attention of Joyce DeLong, *NIKE* editor (joycedelong55@yahoo.com) or Katharine Smith, associate editor (ksmith@whiterabbitdesign.com) at PR@NYSWomeninc.org. Previously published material must be accompanied by a letter from the publisher with permission to republish and credit line to be included with the article.

Living Links in Our Continuous Chain: New York Women, Inc.

"May each who carries responsibility for our organization in the future, take the torch from those who have gone before and carry it high." -Marjorie C. Smith, president from 1948-1950, Business and Professional Women's Club of New York State.

We are indeed, living links to BPW/NYS, and as we approach our organization's annual conference, those words from a past president ring as true today as they did in 1950. In this issue of *NIKE* we're looking at sage words from wise women to help us forge a future for NYS Women, Inc. – to connect and build women, personally, professionally, and politically.

Where BPW Visions Become Reality...

by Helen Rico, BPW/NYS past president 2005/2006

As I write my last message to the membership of BPW/NYS, I conclude with the remarks I made after being installed at our 86th Conference in Waterloo, NY in May 2005, by Past National and Past New York State President Joyce Hart. I vividly remember that moment; I was awestruck with the tremendous responsibility and honor that was bestowed on me.

I have been asked if leadership can be taught or if you are born with it. I believe it can be either. It all depends on one's passion as to what one will achieve. These are the eleven leadership principles that I live by. They have been adapted to fit BPW's culture.

1. Remember it's not a popularity contest – BPW leaders need to lead and make decisions. BPW is a business.

2. Analog leadership: The most important tenet of leadership is listening to what people (members and non-members) have to say.

3. Don't get stuck in the details: A leader needs to understand the organization and let the experts do the work. Delegation is vital to your success.

4. It's all about working together: You are only as good as the sum of all your parts.

5. Never, never, never forget who is the customer: Our customers are BPW members and potential members. Everything we do impacts our customers.

6. Strive for meaningful change: Accept change that is necessary and move forward.


7. Seek the advice of others. . . And occasionally use it: always listen for multiple sides of the issue and make your own informed decision.

8. Maintain situational awareness: it helps cut down on surprises. Talk with people
Continued on page 6

From the Editor At the Crossroads

BPW is entering the time of transition – a time at the crossroads. At least 50% of our locals will be installing new presidents and many new officers and committee chairs. Fifty percent of our districts will be installing new leadership at the state conference in June. Helen Rico will pin Linda Winston as the 2006-07 state president and at the BPW/USA National Conference, a new national president will be installed.

First we need to celebrate a successful year of learning from each other. Celebrate the work of a creative, hard-working executive committee and board. We'll come together in Cooperstown to celebrate "Where BPW Visions Become Reality." Local presidents and other officers will learn about their jobs. Members will have an opportunity to learn about the strategic plan for BPW/NYS, will hear our Young Careerists, Career Recognition candidates, and IDP representatives from across the state. We'll join in the excitement of accomplishments of our sisters across New York State.

Read this issue of *NIKE* to learn about conference program, items of business and challenges ahead. Be a participant in how we achieve our vision and mission as BPW. 

-Cay Raycroft, editor (2006)

From the Editor

Let Our Voices Rise Up

The BPW/NYS annual conference usually signifies the close of another year of BPW activity. Next month, BPW/NYS will hold its 90th conference with women from across the state coming together to celebrate our mission and vision. There will be elections of state officers and bylaws and budgets to consider. It will be a time to renew old acquaintances and meet new people. It will be a time to reconnect and remind ourselves that what we stand for today is just as vital as it was in 1919 when a small group of women banded together to create our organization.

After July 1st, our organization may, or may not, carry the name of Business and Professional Women, but what it will carry are the hearts and souls of women who help and support each other to achieve and succeed. Our voices will continue to be heard and this magazine will continue to be a conduit of information for our membership. On behalf of the *NIKE* team, I would like to thank all who contributed to make this year's *NIKE* a success.

The dynamics of change empower us to build upon our legacy and reinvent ourselves to meet requirements of working women in the 21st century. Whoever, or whatever we will be, our voices are needed now more than ever. Nothing could be more important. 🐾

-Linda Przepasniak, editor (2019)

Where BPW Visions Become Reality...

Continued from page 5

and listen to what they are NOT saying to determine the pulse of the organization.

9. Don't leave your membership guessing. . . Keep them informed. Communication is vital to any organization. Always, always keep people informed.

10. Don't forget to praise in public: always, always say thanks for a job well done.

11. Have fun: life is too short to sweat the small stuff.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "We all create the person we become by our choices as we go through life. In a very real sense we are the sum total of the choices we made." 🐾

[Originally published in 2006.]

From the Editor

YOU are the role model for NYS Women, Inc.

The first year of an infant's life is one of challenge and change. Those initial twelve months are filled with trials and tribulations for both the baby and its parents. Days are overflowing with expectations and excitement. From the moment of birth, parents watch as their offspring struggle to learn and grow... two steps forward, one step back; a smile, a tear; a laugh and a tantrum. It takes determination and courage for a baby to get through its first year and it takes determination and courage for the parents to fulfill their responsibilities as nurturers and caregivers. But the job doesn't end after twelve months. Parents continue to make a commitment to their children, teaching and encouraging them to become productive and responsible adults. It takes time and money, but most of all love, especially love, during those times when hardships hit home.

New York State Women, Inc. is celebrating its "first" birthday and it's not without struggles and challenges. Like parents, we need to nurture and care for our "infant," and it's the love for our legacy and what we stand for that will carry us forward to produce a productive and responsible organization. We need to be role models. We need to make the tough decisions and to intervene when necessary. But we also need to let go and let our organization develop its own personality and future. We can honor our BPW legacy, but it's time to let our baby take its first steps. Let's trust in ourselves that we will take more steps forward and fewer steps backward.

It's time for Conference 2010! It's not too late to make your plans to come to Grand Island. President Mary Ellen Morgan and District VIII have a great weekend planned with exciting speakers on Friday and Saturday. Come early on Thursday and take in the sites of Western New York and Niagara Falls. Make new friends or become acquainted with old ones and join us in celebrating our first year as New York State Women, Inc.

I'd like to extend my thanks to the members of the *NIKE* team and those who contributed to making the magazine a success this year. Members' input is vital and important to us and we look forward to hearing your opinions, stories and achievements. Together Everyone Achieves More! 🐾

-Linda Przepasniak, editor (2010)

We all create the person we become by our choices as we go through life. In a very real sense we are the sum total of the choices we made. -ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

From the Editor

If the members of an organization are its heartbeat, then the volunteers are its heart.

I've been involved in a number organizations over the years and have always volunteered my time. Why wouldn't I give of myself if I really believe in that group?

One of those organizations is comprised of women business owners and I remember fondly a wise woman – the late Gretchen Stringer – who was also a member. Gretchen actually worked with nonprofits, training their volunteers and boards of directors. And she had keen insights into keeping an organization focused and on encouraging committed volunteers. I call those insights “Gretchen’s Rules for Treating Your Volunteers.”

- **Respect your volunteers.** They have many other causes they could focus on, and time they could spend with their family and friends, and instead they've chosen to give their precious time and energy to *your* organization.

- **Express your thanks.** You truly cannot say “thank you” enough!

- **Don't micromanage them.** They're not your employees, they don't work for you... They're *giving* you their time.

- **Listen to them.** Your volunteers come from all walks of life and bring experiences and knowledge that can only help your organization. And they wouldn't be there if they didn't want to help.

That's it. Pretty simple when you come down to it... 


-Katharine Smith, editor (2014)

Why Volunteer?

by Amy Kellogg

Volunteer – The commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. It is undertaken freely and by choice without concern for financial gain.

TOP 10 REASONS TO VOLUNTEER

10. Volunteering is a valuable way to gain new skills and develop talents.
9. It will help you build confidence and improve your self esteem.
8. It will expand your network and allow you to meet new people.
7. It will get you to leave your comfort zone to better understand the world around you.
6. It allows you to explore potential new career interests and may lead to new career opportunities.
5. It will enable you to learn more about yourself by learning your own strengths and weaknesses.
4. It will make you feel good to help others.
3. It is fun.
2. You may need help yourself someday.
1. There is no good reason not to! 

[Originally published in 2014.]

A Connecting Cheat Sheet: 10 Easy Hints to Help You Move Beyond “Surface” Networking and Make Deep Connections

Excerpted from Leading Women: 20 Influential Women Share Their Secrets to Leadership, Business, and Life (Adams Media, 2015, drnancyoreilly.com), by Nancy D. O'Reilly.

If you want to join the women-helping-women movement, you're already looking for opportunities to make deeper, more meaningful connections, support each other, and make the world a better place. But just going to the conference or fundraiser or team meeting isn't enough. You have to know what comes next – what to say or do to connect with other women in ways that yield real relationships and change lives (including yours) for the better. Here, Dr. Nancy D. O'Reilly offers 10 tips to help you supercharge your new connections:

- **Make the mental shift from “What can I get from you?” to “What can we create together?”** Simple as it sounds, this really is the first step and the key to successful connections. When we think of networking as a self-serving exercise, we really don't want to do it. It feels bad. But when we infuse sharing and giving into the process, suddenly it feels good. And it works.

- **Go to functions alone.** This will force you to meet people rather than spending the whole time chatting with friends and colleagues. At first, it's really hard for some women to do this (probably most of us), but we are hardwired to connect. When you get over your initial anxiety, you will see

how natural (and fun) it feels.

- **Sit beside a woman you don't know.** Like showing up alone (though perhaps a bit less scary), this will force you to get to know someone new. Be friendly: Introduce yourself, introduce her to others, find something in common.

- **Have three or four good “go-to” questions in the bag.** This will be a huge help in case a conversation grinds to a halt. (Awkward!) It doesn't matter what the questions are, but you might consider thought-provokers like “If time and money were no object, what would you be doing right now?” or “What is one goal you'd like to accomplish before you die?” or “What have you done lately that was fun?”

- **Practice being interested rather than interesting.** The old style of networking involved a lot of “selling” your skills and showcasing your knowledge. Resist the urge. Instead, when you're talking to someone new, ask her about herself and really listen to her answers.

- **Probe for people's passions.** Then stick to that topic for a while. You can tell when someone is excited about a subject. Her eyes light up. Her voice gets animated. When this happens – whether it happens when she mentions snow skiing, Civil War history, or helping African women support their villages – keep the conversation going along these lines. Passion is a powerful energy source for making connections.

- **Read three relevant articles before the event.** If you are at, say, a business convention, you might want to scour the trades for new trends, products, and processes. This gives you fodder for discussion. The idea isn't to use it to “show off” or impress the other person but to bolster your own confidence, which makes you comfortable enough to connect.

- **Gravitate toward women who are smarter than you.** Don't make the mistake of thinking you have to be the smartest, most interesting, most successful person in the group. Try not to feel threatened by other amazing women – instead, ask yourself what you can learn from them.

- **Ask, “What can I do to help you?”** (Then follow through.) This may catch people off guard. They probably expect you to ask for an interview or a chance to pitch your product. When you ask a woman if you can, say, introduce her to an influential colleague or bring your therapy dog to the children's hospital she runs, she will be delighted.

- **Be real.** Avoid phoniness at all costs. Don't hide or downplay your true nature or your beliefs to fit in or to make sure the person you're connecting with likes you. Healthy relationships are built on transparency, and people respect this . . . even if you don't agree on everything. ➤

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Feature: Professional Development

Schmoozing has been around since Biblical days. On the surface, this may seem like a bizarre observation, but consider the story of a man named Joseph. Probably everyone, religious or not, knows the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors. After Joseph landed in prison, he began to interpret the dreams of his fellow inmates, a butler and a baker.

At some point later on, the butler ended up working for the Pharaoh. When the Pharaoh started having bad dreams, the butler of course recommended that his ex-cellmate, Joseph, be called in to help. Joseph was very subtle and while he was giving his dream interpretations,

he threw in a little advice about the need for a new position in the kingdom. It all paid off when the Pharaoh gave Joseph a really good job and continued to use him as an advisor. And now many playwrights get to use the story – so everyone benefited.



Tips for networking at your chapter events & meetings

by Amy Bath

It's important to note here that Joseph gave before he knew if he would get anything in return. This is the point that is stressed over and over when studying networking. It's almost like "keeping the faith" is part of the process that makes it successful. My guess is that the people who keep the faith also have other qualities that lend themselves to networking successfully. Qualities like a positive attitude and the ability to be friendly and cooperative even in the face of rough times.

While we all network to get business, there are some other reasons, too. First, networking gives some people social connection. Many people who are in sole proprietor businesses only get to talk to customers and clients. It can be very beneficial to network with other business owners in order to have contact with people who will listen and understand. Another good reason for networking is health. Studies have shown that people who have social lives and support in several areas live longer and are less likely to get sick. Finally, there are the

professional services that are made available to us through the connections we make.

Have a clear understanding of what your chapter does and why, for whom, and what makes it special. What makes you different from other organizations doing the same thing? In order to gain members, you must first have a clear understanding of what you do that you can easily articulate to others. In other words, make sure that you have done your "defining statement" homework. Having a defining statement can be wonderful for your chapter, and the process of developing it can be life changing.

Brand your chapter with a slogan. Print a slogan on your business card, handout, or signs that answers questions like, "What makes you different from everyone else?" We all remember catchy television ads and jingles for years, even after they are no longer on. That's called branding.

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Networking is about being genuine and authentic. Take the time to build trust and relationships, and see how you can help others.

Ask yourself what your goals are in participating in networking meetings. This way you will pick groups that will help you get what you are looking for. Some meetings are based more on learning, making contacts, and/or volunteering rather than on strictly making business connections.

Become active. It is much better to be active in one professional association than to periodically attend meetings of five or ten. Once you become active, people in the association get to know who you are and what you do. It takes time for people to recognize you, view you as a colleague rather than a stranger, and trust you.

Become a good listener. This ability to remember what others say and value is critical to fostering good relationships. It also gives introverts an advantage over chatty, extroverted networkers. Make appropriate gestures such as leaning forward toward the speaker and facing her directly. Use minimal attending responses, such as head nods, “Uh-huh” and “Oh, really?” Ask targeted follow-up questions that show you have understood the speaker, such as, “So do I hear you saying that you only like to work with flying purple people eaters?” And remember that a great deal of communication is non-verbal.

Listen with both of your ears for opportunities. Pay attention to conversations for problems that you can solve. Follow up with the solution during business hours.

Ask questions. Instead of worrying about what you will say to others about yourself and your business, focus instead on asking questions. There is no greater compliment you can bestow on someone than to ask them about themselves. Simple open-ended questions are best. This means questions that ask who, what, where, when, and how as opposed to those

that can be answered with a simple yes or no. This form of questioning opens up the discussion and shows listeners that you are interested in them. Ask thought-provoking questions. “How did you get started?” or “What do you enjoy most about what you do?” But the very best questions are specific to the person you’re interacting with and will arise in response to your initial conversation. Ask “feel good” questions. People love to talk about themselves. A great conversation starter is to ask what they like to do when they’re not at work. Ask unusual questions. Try something like “Tell me something your friends would be surprised to learn about you.” “Where did you go on your last vacation?” “What’s the last book you read/movie you saw?” You’re more likely to remember people who have been induced to give you some unusual information, and they are more likely to remember you. Be an interesting person to talk to. Do your homework. Plan some casual topics to bring up that you like to talk about. Being prepared will also help to build your confidence.

Diversity. The old boys’ network is alive and well, but so are many others. In the financial community, a diversified portfolio is preferable. The same is true with your network.

Check out how you feel. If you’re feeling nervous, you’re thinking too much about yourself. This is all about making the other person feel important.

Get feedback on your networking style. Everybody needs a coach in her life. Someone who will say, “This is how you’re coming across and it’s not helping your cause.” People are reticent to do give such straightforward feedback, so make it clear to your inner circle that you really appreciate this and that it will not hurt your feelings. Ask them to tell you the truth especially about subtleties you yourself may not notice. Often style or behavior can be changed, resulting in more effective networking.

Be fully present. Be fully engaged

and fully aware of the people you interact with. You can break this down into smaller, somewhat mechanical pieces, such as listen well, respond promptly, maintain eye contact, etc, but if you are truly present in the moment, those things will happen naturally. Many people seem to be only “half there”, so being fully engaged helps you stand out.

Set goals for each event. Decide before you arrive at an event how many people you will talk to and what information you hope to learn. You’ll be amazed at how much more information you’ll learn when you’ve set some targets.

Bring new members to your chapter. Nothing will make the existing leadership happy faster than your infusion of new members. An additional benefit is that it is easier to start a conversation with someone you know only marginally if you can go up to them and introduce someone new who is interested in the group. You don’t even have to know the existing member’s name. Just walk up and say, while shaking their hand, “Hi. I would like you to meet a potential new member.” Your target will introduce herself and then you will know her name.

Write on the back of business cards. This way you will remember what the person had to say and what the connection between the two of you might be. Follow up the next day with an email or a telephone call.

When asking for something, use the word “because.” Research shows that asking for something with a “reasonable” reason boosts the chances of getting what you want about forty percent. Ask for advice. It is one of the highest forms of flattery.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE – Have fun. Think of the event not as work but as a great time to get to know others and establish valuable relationships. People like to be with people who are happy. 🍷

Amy Bath, CARC, CRPA is the owner of Walk The Talk Living. For more info: amybathcoaching.com.

Writing effective press releases for your chapter and other events

by Natalie Canavor and Claire Meirowitz

Here's something that most business and professional women have in common: the need to communicate, whether by writing, speaking, or online. We're here to help you get your ideas across effectively!

The game plan.

All writing starts with a plan. Here are the steps that apply to everything you write.

- Be clear on why you're writing. What are you trying to accomplish? What do you want your readers to do – buy something? Ask for more information? Come to a meeting? Contribute ideas to a project? When you know what you want, it's easier to figure out how to get it.

- Visualize your audience. Whom are you writing for? Your boss? Your colleagues? Potential chapter members? What are they like?

- Determine the format. Sometimes the format is decided for you – you may be writing a newsletter article, for example. But if you need to choose, say between writing a brochure or a letter to attract potential members, you'll need to make a considered decision.

- Set the tone. Are you writing a light, frothy email to your friends? Or a serious project report? Will your potential chapter members respond better to a professional tone or to a less formal one?

- Sketch a short outline of your ideas.

- Organize your ideas based on your answers to the previous steps in an order that makes sense.

- Begin with a strong first sentence or two. The object is to pull in your readers so they'll read the rest of the piece. Often, your "call to action" should be up front – the first thing people see (and the last).



- Write the middle of the piece, using your idea outline.

- Create your ending. It should be powerful and pull your ideas together for the reader – and often, should clearly state what you want.

- Read the piece in its entirety and

evaluate the whole to see whether your meaning got across as well as possible.

- Review, tighten your sentences, proofread and check to be sure the piece is accurate, spelled correctly and is grammatical.

Must I do this for everything?

We can hear you saying: But, I'm only writing an email or a short report; do I really need to do all this for something so simple? Well, only if you care about coming across professionally and effectively! Of course, you can do some of these things in your head, and many of us do just that. But if you learn to analyze your thinking based on these steps, you'll find that all your communication works better and gives you a real advantage.

Writing effective press releases: how, what, and why

You might have to write a press release occasionally – perhaps for your employer, your business, an organization (NYS Women, Inc.), or a cause you belong to. Or maybe for yourself. If you're a consultant, or your business is a solo act, don't overlook opportunities to blow your own horn. Failing to do so means missed opportunities, and it's a mistake women tend to make more than men.

Whether you're announcing an upcoming meeting, a new product, spreading the word about an award, or holding a fundraiser, it's important to write your press release in a way that'll accomplish your goals.

Here are some tips drawn from our experience both as writers of releases and as editors who receive them (and

Continued on page 12

Writing effective press releases for your chapter and other events

often wince):

- Be clear on what you want to achieve. Are you trying to move people to action, e.g., to make a donation or attend an event? Are you trying to get a reporter to come meet the president of your company? Are you announcing a fundraiser for your chapter? What you want to achieve should be front and center in your mind and in the release.

- Know your story. What's interesting, valuable, relevant to the people you want to reach? If you or your employer has invented a new gizmo, that's not the news. But what your gizmo will do for people – that's what matters to the editor who reads your release.

- Know the media you're targeting and its angles. Study the newspaper or other media before you start writing so you can understand the publication and what it needs.

- Tailor your release to the different kinds of media. If it's TV: What's visual? Exactly when will it happen? Who can be interviewed on camera? If it's for the local weeklies: What's the local angle? If it's for radio: Will there be quotable people around? Can this event be described to listeners so they'll get the idea? If it's for print: What's the deadline? Can you send the release on a slow news day so the paper will be more likely to slot in your news?

- Keep it simple. Don't use a lot of adjectives, adverbs, clichés, jargon and empty rhetoric.

- Don't use quotes for the obvious. If you quote your chapter president, for example, make sure that quote sounds genuine and conversational. Ask good questions to get the right quote: Why does this matter to you? What will this conference accomplish? How will our chapter help women in the community?

- Write for clear and quick reading: Headlines provide news in a nutshell. Short paragraphs, words, and sentences. Active voice. Be succinct. Don't use too many details.

- Don't forget the essentials: Put complete contact information – including your cell phone number and email address – at the top. For a reporter, not being able

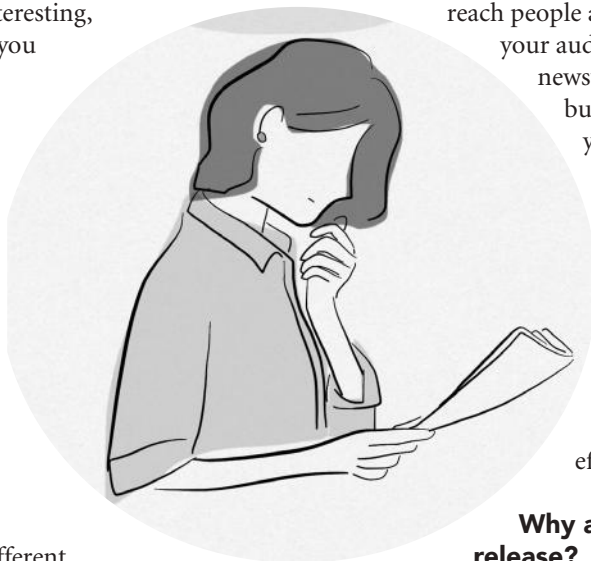
to reach someone for more information – or being called back two days later – can be maddening.

At the end, add a brief statement about what your organization or company does or produces. Include the website address. If you're trying to get a reporter to cover the event, include a street address and brief directions. Make it easy for them to find you.

The bottom line: Preparing an effective news release is worth your time because it gives you the ability to reach people and tell your story in media your audience trusts. And, creating newsworthy, timely releases can build credibility for both you and your organization like no other avenue does.

Creating powerful press releases.

We've provided some tips for writing effective press releases. Now we want to give you some specific ideas for using your releases to greater effect.



Why are you writing this press release?

The reasons vary according to your organization's nature, but they fall into two main categories: hard news and soft news. Many people think that press releases should be sent out only when something important has happened. But, in fact, virtually every business or organization has an ongoing story to tell, and interesting things happen all the time. It's important to recognize what the press would consider news and to know the difference between hard news and soft news. There's a place for each, and different ways of approaching the media for each.

- Hard news announces a new product or service, a new or revamped program or structure, major appointments or promotions, a significant business success, an upcoming event or conference, major awards, investor news and the like. Hard news can also be defined as telling the company side of a breaking story to help control damage. This type of information is best covered with a standard release telling the media what has occurred or what will happen.

- Soft news, on the other hand, lends itself to inviting a reporter to see for their self what the story is. Examples of this type of story include focusing attention on the organization via historical milestones or special achievements; giving the organization a human face,

Make sure that your release answers the reporter's eternal questions: "Who, what, where, when, and how?"

such as publicizing good deeds by your chapter, business, or employees (food drives, toy collections, work in food pantries, scholarships, etc.); or developing programs to attract volunteers or donors. For news of that sort, you'd do better to issue an invitation to the press, either via a press conference or an individual meeting with one or more reporters, to come to your place of business and see what's happening.

The underlying agenda of your news releases is always to portray your organization as an innovative, savvy, active, up-to-the-minute, responsive, honest, human, credible, winning nonprofit. Don't forget to add your organization's core message, commonly called "boilerplate," which tells the world what your business is all about (and to which your releases should relate).

How's your "lead"?

The editors of the *Lewis Letter on News Writing*, told us that "news releases are increasingly wordy and disorganized. Leads – the introductory paragraphs that 'lead' the reader into the material – are much too long and jargon is prevalent." Here's a lead that the *Lewis Letter* editors recall as one of the worst they'd seen:

Chairstuff Inc., the leading online furniture retailer, today declared bankruptcy.

The editors commented: "The writer used a standard phrase without considering how inappropriate it was in this context. It typifies how mindlessly clichés get tossed into news releases."

When you're writing your lead, be brief, concise and interesting. Put yourself in your reader's shoes: Would the lead draw you in to read the rest? If not, what would work? Is the lead appropriate for the release? Have you thought through what the reader would expect?

Go for credibility.

- Capitalize on credibility from third-party sources: If your widget has been named the "Best New Product of the Year" by a credible organization, put that into your lead. It's the best advertising there is. But if it hasn't been recognized by an objective third party, don't make up for that by throwing in a bunch of adjectives, such as, "Our outstanding, powerful, 10-speed widget is many times better than the competition and will allow users' computers to soar to new heights." Who'd believe that anyway?

- Make sure that your release answers the reporter's eternal questions: "Who, what, where, when, and how?" And, if you can sneak "why" into the mix, so much the better. A reporter we know mentioned that he didn't use a company release because it didn't include the location of the charity to which the company had made a big donation. If a reporter on deadline has to make phone calls to complete the information you've sent, chances are that your release won't get used. 📞

Natalie Canavor and Claire Meirowitz are the authors of The Truth About the New Rules of Business Writing. Canavor is an author, journalist, and consultant. Meirowitz formerly owned C&M Business Writing Services.

Chapter News

Buffalo Niagara Chapter – Region 8

- submitted by Katharine Smith

The Buffalo Niagara Chapter will honor its "2024/2025 Women in Leadership" at its June 4th dinner

meeting. They include **Lisa Freeman**, executive director of Compass House, an emergency shelter and resource center for runaway and homeless youth in WNY; **Kristin Heltman-Weiss**, executive director of Providence Farm Collective, a nonprofit which cultivates farmer-led and community-rooted agriculture and food systems for under-resourced refugees and immigrants; **Denise Neamon**, regional director & managing partner, WNY



Region for the accounting firm, Bonadio Group; and **Charlene Thomas**, the founder of Haircuts For Those In Need which provides free haircuts to homeless and disadvantaged people in the City of Buffalo.

This program which started in 2011, honors the accomplishments of Buffalo Niagara women who are successful in their fields and give back to the community. These "unsung heroines" inspire others to follow in their path.

The evening will also include installation of the chapter's 2025/2026 officers and an auction benefiting its "Women Helping Women" partner, the **Family Justice Center**, which provides services and support to individuals in unhealthy relationships, and the education the community needs to break larger cycles of relationship abuse.



NIKE All Stars

The 2024-2025 *NIKE* All Star Campaign is in full swing and thank you to our loyal supporters who have already sent their listings in.

Members will have an opportunity to contribute at our annual conference, and chapters, regions and friends of NYS Women, Inc. can send contributions anytime to the *NIKE* Business Manager. Information on contributing can be found on our website.

Publication July 15th/Sept. issue Oct. 15th/Dec. issue
Deadlines: Feb. 1st/March issue May 15th/June issue

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NIKE ADVERTISING PAGE RATES

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Inside Front Cover	1 issue: \$400	4 issues: \$1400
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Half Page	1 issue: \$150	4 issues: \$500
Quarter Page	1 issue: \$75	4 issues: \$250
Eighth Page	1 issue: \$37.50	4 issues: \$125

How to submit your ad.

Email (in PDF format) to: ksmith@whiterabbitdesign.com.

How to pay for your ad.

Make check payable to NYS Women, Inc. (memo: *NIKE* ad) and mail to: Sue Mager, *NIKE* Business Mgr.
3406 McKinley Pkwy, Apt C-11, Blasdell NY 14219

NIKE ad sizes

Half Page 6.65" wide x 4.75" tall	
Quarter Page 3.25" wide 4.75" tall	8th Page 3.25" wide 2.25" tall



Treating your volunteers with R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

by Katharine Smith

My nephew Keith took part in a “Creative Problem-Solving Day” at a local church several years ago; members of his SUNY Buffalo State Creative Studies class gathered in groups to help businesses and nonprofits solve some of their thorniest problems.

These 20-somethings brainstormed to conquer some pretty difficult issues. I was impressed when Keith’s peers suggested a resolution for a nonprofit that couldn’t seem to engage their volunteers in a project.

The group’s proposed solution gave the nonprofit’s volunteers some skin in the game: the VOLUNTEERS would formulate the game plan and set the goals for their volunteer efforts. Simple really, but a world away from the organization’s from-the-top-down dictates to a group of people who were giving of their own time freely! A common issue as you can see from the tips below:

How *NOT* To Treat Volunteers

Micromanage them. If your volunteer coordinators are good, your volunteers will be matched with tasks within their expertise and experience. If not, a little instruction is good. But if the volunteer knows what they are doing, let them get on with the job.

Tell them how to do their job. If you’re an expert in

the field, you could make suggestions. But you’re not doing the work. Let go of how it is done and focus on results. And if you aren’t an expert in the field, don’t offer advice at all, particularly if someone is volunteering services they perform as their primary job.

Take them for granted. Everyone likes to hear thank you. Make sure to say thank you for tasks, both expected and extra, and when the volunteer leaves the position.

Condescend. We’re talking adult volunteers here. Don’t be condescending to them, belittle them or humiliate them. They are giving a gift: their time and effort. Be grateful for the gift you are receiving.

Waste their time. Volunteers are giving you a very precious resource: their time. Don’t use it in frivolous ways by requiring them to sit in on meetings that have no bearing on what they do. 🐇

Katharine Smith is a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter and associate editor of NIKE. Owner of White Rabbit Design, a graphic design agency, she’s always curious about the world around us!

[Source: www.selfgrowth.com/articles/10_things_you_should_never_do_to_volunteers by Laura Earnest]



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