

Share your adventure:

Ensure your Active Aging Week events get the attention they deserve



Do you wish more older adults would attend your Active Aging Week activities, or your events were featured on the local news? Gain attention with a promotional strategy that focuses on three key areas

by Jeff Bell

In the world of business, deadlines are a part of life. We create and meet deadlines every week and, chances are, you've been working with your share of dead-

lines as Active Aging Week® approaches. The act of organizing the upcoming week can be stressful, but organization isn't necessarily where it stops. An event this significant and unique deserves promotion. It deserves news coverage. And yet, there's that deadline creeping ever closer. What do you do?

The first step is to relax. You've got this. It's just a question of putting a few things into the right place to solve the puzzle, because, let's face it, knowing

Continued on page 24



Share your adventure: Ensure your Active Aging Week events get the attention they deserve *Continued from page 22*



how to get coverage for something like Active Aging Week can start out as a bit of a puzzle. Solve it incorrectly, and you'll be less than thrilled with the results.

As with any project, putting together the right sort of plan starts with setting some goals. Those goals will help make the puzzle pieces fit together a bit more easily.

The first goal that should be put in place involves media relations. If you're going to promote Active Aging Week, you'll need the media.

Goal number two involves using what you've already got. Do you have a Facebook page? What about a YouTube account? In a sense, these sites allow you to become the media. It's all about knowing what to share and what to say.

Finally, goal number three is to make this about more than just the activities themselves. It's about the greater community, and finding ways to use business partnerships and other community

connections to make your Active Aging Week events bigger and better.

With your goals in place, you can begin to move forward.

Goal one: media relations

Media relations is the first step. In a nutshell, that means sending news releases or media pitches to the right organizations in your area announcing your Active Aging Week events. Thirty years ago, it meant newspaper, television and radio. The game, as you might know, has changed a bit since then. Social media and digital technology have altered the way we consume news. Today, a media list won't just include the print and broadcast journalists in your area. It's also bound to include bloggers, writers for web-only publications, and others. How's your media compass? Do you have a list of all the important media publications and corresponding contacts near your location? That's a critical first step in the process.

Once you've found your contacts, it's important to influence the message the best

way you can. When writing a news release, put it together in a way that ensures coverage for your community or center, not just your event. The last thing you want is for someone to cover your unique Active Aging Week story and fail to mention your organization's name in the article or broadcast. Influence the message by doing everything you can to make the story say what you want it to say.

Continued on page 26

Campaign snapshot

Active Aging Week® 2015:
Live Your Adventure
September 27–October 3, 2015

Website: www.activeagingweek.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActiveAgingWeek

Twitter: [@activeagingweek](https://twitter.com/activeagingweek),
[@AAW_ICAA](https://twitter.com/AAW_ICAA)

Share your adventure: Ensure your Active Aging Week events get the attention they deserve

Continued from page 24

A good example might be if you have some residents or members who juggle. Maybe they've got a juggling group that will perform as part of Active Aging Week. That's a great photo/video opportunity for a reporter. The story, however, isn't just about juggling. It's about the role your organization is playing in the event and week. Influence the message. It's a key component of good media relations.

Goal two: technology

The next goal, once you've sent out your news releases and pitches, is to understand and use what you've already got right in front of you. Thanks to recent changes and advances in digital technology, social media has become just as relevant as traditional media. This means if you're not sharing stories on Facebook and posting videos on your YouTube page, you're missing out on easy and inexpensive media opportunities. Think of "Likes" on your Facebook page as being similar to readers of a newspaper or viewers of a television news program. The same goes for views of a YouTube video, or of a video you post on your website.

The point is, there was a time when a business looking to gain coverage for an event had to rely heavily on the media. While media coverage is still vital to the process, social media has added another arm, if you will, to an organization's arsenal for promoting these Active Aging Week events. It's a big arm. Use it.

Goal three: community partners

The third, and final, goal involves community relations. While media relations involves outreach to reporters and editors, community relations is all about outreach to the surrounding community. It's about relationships and finding partners who can benefit your business and vice versa.

Good community relations begins the same way good media relations begins:

You'll need to make a list of the organizations in the area with whom you'd like to partner in some capacity. Since, in this case, we're talking about Active Aging Week, these could be health-related business partners, nonprofit partners, or anyone else with an interest in promoting something like active aging. A great example would be a partnership with a local fitness center. They might provide yoga mats for an Active Aging Week yoga event, sponsored or "brought to you" by their center.

When making a list of potential community partners, it's important to ask yourself what you'll gain from partnering with them, as well as what they'll gain from partnering with you. Events always look bigger when more than one member of the business community is involved, but it's important to be sure the partnership makes sense for all parties.

It's about finding mutually beneficial partnerships that promote the things you want to promote for Active Aging Week, making those connections, collaborating, and then being able to admire the results.

Achieving results

Successful senior living communities and other host organizations can obtain amazing results just by working to make the goals mentioned above become achievable. While Active Aging Week is rapidly approaching, and the deadline is bearing down, don't panic. You've got all the tools you need to get the results you're looking for. It's time to promote, take part in and enjoy a great week for older adults that takes place only once a year. ☺

Jeff Bell is a public relations senior account executive at GlynnDevins in Overland Park, Kansas. After more than a decade as a radio news anchor, Bell chose the field of senior living. A passionate storyteller, he loves talking with older adults, and sharing their experiences with the news

media and the public. For more information about GlynnDevins, email jbelle@glynndevins.com.

Thanks to sponsors

Active Aging Week 2015 is held by the International Council on Active Aging® in partnership with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, and the National Institute on Aging's Go4Life® Campaign. This year's sponsors include Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis, Caption-Call, Institute for Preventive Foot Health (IPFH), Nestlé Skin Health, SwimEx, and Sysco.

Active Aging Week resources

Feature webinar: "Share your adventure: Ensure your Active Aging Week events get the attention they deserve"

<http://activeagingweek.com/resources-organization/webinars.php>

Promote your events by borrowing techniques from public relations to focus on using media, technology and community partners. GlynnDevins' Brandi Towns and Jeff Bell, public relations experts, share ideas for increasing awareness and attention for Active Aging Week activities.

Additional resources

Promotional and planning materials, theme day resources

<http://activeagingweek.com/resources.php>

Webinar with PowerPoint slides: "Add themes to your Active Aging Week program"

<http://activeagingweek.com/themedays/webinar.php>