



**2018 PR Exhibitor Toolkit  
May 22-24, 2018 | Chicago, IL, USA**

We are so excited to welcome you to 2018 Sweets & Snacks Expo!

The Sweets & Snacks Expo is the premier event in the candy and snacking industry that connects 17,000 qualified candy and snack professionals to you.

Held each year in Chicago, the Expo is always a popular media event, with an average of 200 to 300 attending media. The event has been featured numerous times on the Food Network, CNN, NBC's "The Today Show," and other national morning shows and affiliate network stations in Chicago and around the country. In 2017, the Sweets & Snacks Expo generated more than 300 million media impressions.

In an effort to provide you with the tools and support necessary to make connections with attending media, the National Confectioners Association has developed this Public Relations Toolkit to assist you in generating maximum visibility for your brand(s) before, during and after the show.

Both experienced expo veterans and first-time exhibitors will benefit from the general PR best practices, online resources and opportunities to extend your exposure contained within this toolkit.

If you have questions regarding the PR tips outlined in this toolkit, please send an email to [kate@marketingdesigngroup.com](mailto:kate@marketingdesigngroup.com).

Have a great show!

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## PR CHECKLIST

Use this checklist and the following supporting information to make sure you're taking full advantage of all the resources available to you at the Sweets & Snacks Expo.

### Before the Sweets & Snacks Expo

- Acquire & Invite the Media
- Complete Necessary Forms for Booth Announcements on the Exhibitor Dashboard
- Compile Key Messaging & Complete Outreach Strategy
- Develop Your Press Kit/Press Release

### During the Sweets & Snacks Expo

- Deliver Press Kits/Press Releases to Press Room
- Attend the Media Happy Hour
- Make Appointments & Engage with the Media
- Discuss Your Key Messaging Points

### After the Sweets & Snacks Expo

- Follow-up with Media

#### **THE PRESS ROOM:**

The Press Room is located one floor above the show floor in W472 right near the top of the escalator. You may bring 75-100 copies of your press releases or press kits to the Press Room on Monday, May 21. If any samples are included, they must be contained within the press kit. Loose candy cannot be distributed in the Press Room. Boxes, bags and unusual sizes are allowed, but the distribution system is better suited for folders and paper.

#### **Press Room Hours**

Monday, May 21 (Pre-Show): 12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 22: 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 23: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 24: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## BEFORE THE EVENT

NCA encourages you to make the most of your opportunity to get media exposure for your brand and products during the Sweets & Snacks Expo by preparing before you even get on-site.

The Sweets & Snacks Expo is the perfect opportunity for your brand to:

1. Engage in deeper discussions with media about brands, products and trends.
2. Build introductory and long-term relationships with media in attendance.
3. Generate potential media coverage from a wider range of publications.
4. Help journalists develop storylines and content with your brand as the hook.
5. Assist journalists in getting to know your brand and your product line.
6. Encourage journalists to get hands-on with your product and ask product-related questions they may not otherwise glean from a standard press release, pitch or press kit.
7. Be included in short-lead and long-lead stories—media in attendance may be writing for a longer lead story so be prepared to share Fall/Winter 18 and Spring/Summer 19 product lines.

### **Acquire and Invite Media Contacts:**

You can access the pre-registered media list at anytime on the [Exhibitor Dashboard](#). If you have any questions about the list, please email Kate Blom-Lowry at [kate@marketingdesigngroup.com](mailto:kate@marketingdesigngroup.com). The list is available now and can be used to make appointments with the media during the show. Please provide exhibiting company name and booth number when making your request. Show management will inform you of any specific list usage requirements. Also, if you have a list of media contacts with whom you regularly communicate, it is recommended to add them to your outreach efforts.

Use this list to email relevant media about the products you will launch at the show. Make sure to explain how the products being launched are newsworthy and provide them with all the information they need to cover the story.

Recommended practice for reaching out to attending media:

1. Once you have the list of pre-registered media and your company media list, start contacting individual media likely to be interested in your products before the show to schedule a meeting at your booth.
2. Whether you're reaching out via email or phone, be sure to have your 30-second pitch ready—who you are, what sets you apart, what distinctive new offerings they'll see and why they should carve out time to visit your booth. Include this information in your communications with the media.
3. Not all media attending the Sweets & Snacks Expo will pre-register, so if you already have a target media list, cross-reference with the current list and reach out to media contacts on your list that you would like to invite. If they are not already on

the pre-registered media list, be sure to provide your media contacts with the [media registration link](#) .

### **Complete Necessary Forms on Exhibitor Dashboard**

Log in to your [Exhibitor Dashboard](#) to access any forms that require attention before you arrive at the Sweets & Snacks Expo. In the Exhibitor Dashboard, you will also be able to manage booth announcements to ensure that booth activities, press releases, giveaways, and press events get the additional attendance they need to boost participation and are brought to the attention of the show management.

### **Let NCA Help Promote You**

Let us help promote you! If you want NCA to help promote your company and drive media and attendees to you, please tell us what you have going on at your booth at the Sweets & Snacks Expo. We may feature you on our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn Group pages, in the Show Daily, or share your news with media if appropriate. Just fill out [this simple form](#) and upload your images to be considered.

### **Compile Key Messaging & Complete On-site Outreach Strategy**

This event is your opportunity to engage with and develop relationships with key media and influencers. Be well-versed on your company's key messaging, product benefits and features, launch details, pricing, brand, story and vision. Know how your product impacts the industry and fits into lifestyle storylines with your company or the industry.

Prior to the show, you'll want to formulate the following, so you're prepared to discuss when media personnel stop by your booth:

#### **USP (Unique Selling Point):**

What separates your company and products apart from the rest? Why should they write about or include your company in a story following this event?

#### **Your 30-Second Pitch:**

Communicate your key benefits and features as quickly as possible. Try not to be too long-winded and too detailed. Capture their attention while encouraging them to ask for more details.

#### **Product Availability:**

Where your products will be sold and when they will be available, including shipping and pricing details. You should also be well-versed on sales incentives and programs.

#### **Differentiators:**

What makes your brand different or unique? Are you first to market with a new product? Have you incorporated new packaging? Are you using different ingredients? Are your products organic or sugar-free?

#### **Expand Your Product Storyline**

To ensure broader coverage, look for ways to identify with a larger industry trend. Look beyond just product benefits and features. Tell a more engaging

story. In this newsworthy industry, look to connect with trending topics like snacking in moderation, reduced sugar consumption, organic treats, natural snacks, etc.

To ensure you are getting the best ROI on your media outreach efforts, it is essential that you prepare an outreach strategy.

1. **Do your homework prior to attending the Sweets & Snacks Expo.** An editor or producer will be more receptive to your story idea if they are an appropriate fit for writing about your brand or products. To ensure your time is efficient and to set yourself up for a higher ROI, research each media outlet you are pitching to make sure it is relevant for your product, see what the editor writes about and make sure he or she is the appropriate contact.
2. **Communicate with your media list,** in addition to the Sweets & Snacks Expo pre-registered media list, and be sure to provide them with the link to register so that show management can approve their attendance.

### **Develop Your Press Kit/Press Release**

There are many items that can go into a press or media kit, depending on the situation, the audience or the use. A press kit should be a comprehensive piece of marketing collateral that shares the value and importance of your company, product launch or overall news, making it easy for the editor to write about you, quote you or use you as a source for a future story. Only include information that is current and most relevant to your media targets.

The press kits and/or releases will be available for the media in the Press Room on-site. When thinking about your piece, please note that if any samples are included, they must be contained within the press kit. Loose candy cannot be distributed in the Press Room. Boxes, bags and unusual sizes are allowed, but the distribution system is better suited for folders and paper.

### **The Key to Getting Noticed**

Busy editors pick up and will later sort through piles of press kits from the show. Prepare and package your print and/or digital materials and make sure everything is presented professionally and is ready to be easily picked up on-site.

Below are suggested items to include in a press kit. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list and is solely intended to provide ideas.

1. **Letter of introduction:** Also known as a pitch letter, this first impression item is where you will grab or lose the reader's interest. Tell them upfront why they should care about what you're telling them. Provide a table of contents or a brief description of the items enclosed in the actual press kit. Let them know who they should contact for further comment or quotes.
2. **Information on your brand or company:** Include information that answers: what is your brand or company; what is the value in your attendance at the expo (why attend, history of attending, what you are showcasing, etc); what are the

events and activities, storylines, trends media will see from your brand or company, etc.

3. **Leaders/Management:** To position your staff as thought leaders in the industry, include bio sheets that profile senior management.
4. **Recent press publications and articles:** Copies of recent press coverage is very appropriate for a press kit. What other media have done will be of interest to current media targets. This can include article reprints and print-outs of online press that a company might have received. This can also be handled by directing media to a website to review, as an alternative to printing. Include the link in your introduction letter.
5. **Press releases:** Many times, these are what prompted the printing of the articles described above. Make sure the press releases being included are relevant and timely.
6. **Storylines/ FAQ:** This is your chance to guide the media. Provide a list of potential storylines that they may be able to create surrounding your company, brand, or products. This will help guide your meetings and interviews on the show floor and will help drive your key message points.
7. **Social Media:** Be sure to include your social media handles so interested media can follow you throughout the year for information, updates and story inspiration.
8. **Digital Images of Your New Products:** Have digital hi-res image (300 DPI files) of one or two of your hottest new products available for email, on a site for download or on a USB thumb drive. Be sure journalists know who to contact or how to access images quickly and easily.

## **DURING THE EVENT**

### **Deliver Press Kits/Press Releases to the Press Room**

The Press Room will be located in room W472. The Press Room is an area where members of the media can work on stories, check their email, write, conduct interviews, review hard copy press kits and view and download electronic press kits. The Press Room is open only to working journalists who are registered to attend the show and who have a working media badge.

Exhibitors are invited to bring hard copy press kits to the Press Room on Monday, May 21, for distribution to the media. The Press Room staff will make sure your press kits are displayed on the Press Room tables.

We recommend you have 75-100 press kits available. We also suggest you have an additional 20-30 hard copy press kits available in your booth to give to media who may have not picked one up in the Press Room.

## **Make Appointments & Engage with the Media**

Make the most of your scheduled appointments. You have worked hard to prepare and schedule your time with attending media so be sure to maximize your opportunity.

### **Appointment Etiquette**

1. Many media companies won't book appointments at all, but may say they'll try to stop by. Make sure you mention what area of the show floor you'll be in and your booth number, and be sure to have a company representative in your booth at all times to ensure you do not miss out on an opportunity to tell your story to drop-in media.
2. Be sure to allow at least 30 minutes for each booth appointment and do not double book. These appointments should be a time for you to meet with the media one on one so each can experience a personalized review of your brand/product(s) and in turn, you can learn what products interest them. This will go a long way in developing productive relationships with media. Some editors may only need 15 minutes per meeting.
3. When you schedule an appointment, send a confirmation email two to three days before the show and be sure to include your name, booth number, booth location, your mobile number and the day and time that you have agreed to meet. Try to get their cell numbers as well, in case you need to reach them.

### **Engage with the Media**

**Be proactive** – Don't sit back and watch the journalists walk by! Say hello and ask them if they'd like to learn more about your brand and your products. If they are on their way to another booth, respect that and encourage them to stop by after their meeting.

**Ask for business cards** – Most will oblige, but if someone refuses, respect their decision. Journalists are bombarded on a regular basis and some do not feel comfortable handing out business cards at events. If they do provide their contact information, be sure to follow up with a thank you after the event. It is also a good idea to give your business card to journalists.

## **POST-EVENT**

### **Post-Event Communications**

At the conclusion of the event, follow up with journalists to further pursue an opportunity and possible story. You can send a thank you or product samples, but most importantly, let the media know you are available to answer any additional questions.

# SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

## Get Social!

Social media is an important area to engage your customers and the media. Share that you'll be at the Sweets & Snacks Expo, use this opportunity to share what attendees can see or communicate any new and innovative product or service you'll showcase at your booth. Below, please find an example post and the Sweets & Snacks Expo social media handles.

### EXAMPLE POST:

"We're only 3 weeks out from @SWEETSandSNACKS Expo and we can't wait to showcase our brand new \_\_\_\_\_. Come check us out in booth 123 on the show floor! #SSE18"

SHOW HASHTAG: #SSE18



Twitter /  
@SWEETSandSNACKS



Facebook /  
@SWEETSandSNACKS



Instagram /  
@sweets\_and\_snacks\_expo



LinkedIn / Sweets &  
Snacks Expo