Public relations media plans try to assess the current position of a product, organization or person and set goals for a new position. The plans identify opportunities to communicate using various media and risks associated with that communication. Developing these plans usually begins with a look at stakeholders, people with some kind of interest in the current situation, product, organization or person.

Crisis communication strategies or plans are related to media plans but usually address immediate concerns in managing a situation that arose unexpectedly.

PR media plans vary, but below are some common elements considered in developing a strategy, illustrated using the Federal Emergency Management Agency as an example. As you plot a strategy, ask yourself the questions below and more.

The memo you write to describe your plan will be straightforward and informational, usually using concise paragraphs and bulleted lists to cover the most important points.

**Stakeholders**
Who is affected by your activities? Who has an interest in what you do or don’t do? Who expects or needs something from you? Which stakeholders are external (e.g., customers) and which are internal (e.g., shareholders)
FEMA’s stakeholders include people affected by disasters or emergencies, local and state emergency responders, taxpayers, politicians, charitable organizations involved in disaster relief, media outlets

**Current Media Landscape**
What stories have covered you? How have they characterized you? What stories have been missing or overlooked? Do you see any trends in how you’re covered?
An assessment of FEMA’s media coverage might reveal that disaster-related stories often focus on agency missteps while non-breaking stories focus on budgets and funding.

**Current Positioning**
How is your product, organization or person currently perceived by the media? By the public? What opinions do they hold about issues or organizations related to you?
FEMA is seen as a clumsy and unresponsive bureaucracy with red tape that prevents people from getting the help they need. It also is seen as expensive, inefficient and uncaring.

**Desired Positioning**
What is the ideal perception for your product, organization or person? How do you want people to feel about you?
FEMA is a caring agency that responds quickly and effectively in times of need.

**Threats to Positioning**
What media coverage interferes with your achieving this positioning? What factors besides media coverage interfere with your achieving this positioning, including your own resource constraints? How can you change, minimize or manage them?
FEMA faces negative stories, but they are often justified. Any media plan must be preceded by an audit of procedures and improved responsiveness and cost efficiency.

**Communication Opportunities**
What stories could we pitch to reinforce the desired positioning? What stories can we expect without pitching? What sources can we make available? How do we prep them?
FEMA might include:
- profile of disaster manager who represents caring and responsiveness
- highlight relationship between FEMA workers and a particular family
- technological advances among response team

**Target Audiences**
From our stakeholders, what audiences can we identify?
FEMA might target the public nationally as well as local to a disaster, emergency responders and news organizations. Politicians might be left to other relationship-building efforts not emphasizing media coverage.

**Communication Vehicles**
What media outlets are best to reach those audiences?
FEMA would consider which print, broadcast, online and social media would tell stories that would advance their desired positioning, as well as how to manage those messages that would work against their image.