

Media Training

March 19, 2014



MEET THE PRESS



What we'll cover

1. Preparation
2. Crafting your message
3. Delivering your message
4. Practice, practice, practice



Basic Groundwork

Research and ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of publication/program is it?
- Who is its primary audience?
- To what extent has the reporter dealt with this issue? Do they have an apparent bias?
- Who else is the reporter interviewing?
- Where does my point of view fit into the story?



The Media Checklist

- Be accessible/available to news media
- Demonstrate you are a resource and an expert of the subject
- Be prepared to tell the story
- Demonstrate concern when appropriate
- Be proactive in providing accurate information
- Evaluate efforts and monitor coverage
- Package results



Basic Groundwork

What is the interview format?

- live/taped
- in-studio "Live at 5" or talk show format
- on-location "stand-up"
- telephone interview
- "remote" interview (interviewer and subject at different locations)
- listener call-in broadcast program
- unexpected "ambush"
- press conference



Crafting Your Message



Define Your Agenda

- Determine the specific goal(s) of the interview. Who is your specific target audience, and ultimately, what do you want them to do?
- What you want to say to support your goal and set your agenda?



Define your Agenda

Prepare three types of materials to get your message out

- Key talking points
- Supporting information
- Q&A responses



Key Talking Points

- Prepare three to five, brief key messages to weave into your interview
- Your message points must be *provable assertions* that you can back up with additional facts.
- Each should be no more than two sentences in length and should do the following:
 - Describe and differentiate your position
 - Focus on the benefits to your target audience
 - Showcase leadership and demonstrate expertise



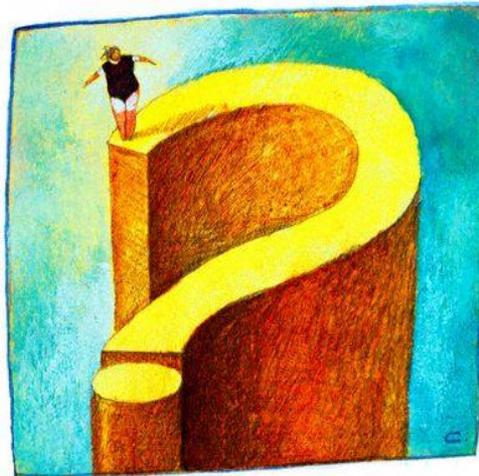
Supporting Information

- Compelling facts and figures
- Biographical or background information that demonstrates your expertise
- Trends or brief historical information
- Third-party reference when appropriate



Questions and Answers

- Be prepared to answer the basics: who, what, when, where and why
- Anticipate reporter's questions and controversies that could arise in the interview
- Incorporate key messages into the answers
- Develop answers to all the questions and say it out loud
- Practice



Delivering Your Message



Interview Do's

- Buy preparation time whenever possible. Tell the reporter that you'd be glad to talk, but are tied up at the moment. Find out the reporter's deadline, the focus of the story and set a time to get back to them. Even a delay of 10 minutes is sufficient to help you prepare.
- Establish an "interview atmosphere" by isolating yourself with the telephone as much as possible and find a quiet place
- Review your message points and other relevant notes. Keep them in front of you during the interview, along with scratch paper to take additional notes.



Interview Do's and Don'ts

- DON'T over answer. When you're satisfied with your reply, stop talking.
- DON'T be afraid to pause. Taking a few seconds to think will seem much longer to you than to the reporter or audience, and will make you appear thoughtful and deliberate.
- DON'T allow yourself to be provoked. Keep cool.
- DON'T "fake" an answer if you don't know it. If appropriate, assure the reporter you will provide the needed facts in a timely manner, or refer him/her to another source.
- DON'T lie to a reporter. Ever.



Interview Do's and Don'ts

- “Flag” key points with phrases like, “The most important thing is ...” or “I think the bottom line is ...”
- Speak in easily-understandable terms. Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Use facts and figures as appropriate to demonstrate your credibility
- Use illustrations and anecdotes to “humanize” and explain your topic (“enough widgets to fill Yankee Stadium” is better than “575,000 widgets”)
- Be sensitive to reporters' deadlines
- Be yourself. Don't try to reinvent yourself for an interview — you won't be credible



Did I Mention – Don't Use Jargon

Attached is the written testimony CBF did in the Senate BRFA hearing yesterday. Largely focused on rejecting the 10 million cut to Trust Fund but also mentioning that POS needs to be fixed to meet water quality goals as well.



Key Techniques

There are four techniques that enable you to respond to a question, shift focus of the answer, and influence follow-up questions:

- Repetition
- Counting Down
- Flagging
- Bridging



Repetition

- Repetition equals retention
- You can almost never repeat your key messages often enough
- In addition to repeating your key messages, remember to repeat the company name, use proper name instead of “we” or “I”



Counting Down

- State the number of points you wish to make
- Helps you can stay on track and alerts the reporter and audience of the number of key points you will make
- Helps you to stay in control and you are less likely to be interrupted until you have made all your points



Flagging

- Alerts the reporter to your key messages
- Emphasize the important points by using terms, such as:
 - “I’ve talked about a lot of things today and what it boils down ...”
 - “The best part about...”
 - “The most important thing to remember is...”
 - “The benefit of...”



Lures and Traps

Questions that are phrased, often deliberately, in a way that makes them difficult to answer with a positive message

- Irrelevancy
- Speculation
- A or B Dilemma
- Absent Party Ploy
- Loaded Preface
- Machine Gun Questioning



Other Interview Tips

- If you do not want a statement quoted, do not make it -- remember, nothing is “off the record.”
- Never say “no comment” - Instead, provide a three-part answer which says:
 - “I’m sorry I can’t answer that because “it is a pending legal action” or “it’s against our policy”
 - and follow with “but what I can tell you is”
- If a reporter is quiet, it may be his or her way of trying to rattle you or urge you to talk further about a subject that you do not wish to address
- If the interview ends abruptly – be prepared to summarize your key messages because most people will best remember the information they hear last



Television Tips

- Dress conservatively. Avoid loud ties or ties with small patterns. For women, wear a dark-colored outfit in solid colors.
- Don't wear white. It casts unflattering light on the face and causes problems for TV cameras.
- Men should unbutton suit jacket when sitting, button it when standing. Sitting on the back of the suit jacket will help create a wrinkled-free line.
- Don't wear large, shiny or noisy jewelry.
- If offered makeup, accept it. The host or reporter will have it on; you should, too. Women should apply a matte finish to avoid a shiny face, with blush and eye makeup only slightly heavier than normally worn.



Television – Before the Interview

- Typically, a "pre-interview" precedes the actual on-camera interview. This is a chance for you to mention the topic(s) you would like to discuss during the interview.
- If a technician asks you to test the sound level by speaking, speak at your normal level and say something innocuous (e.g., talk about the weather, recite a poem). Don't try to be funny, or say anything off-color or controversial.



Television – Body Language

- If seated, sit erect but not rigidly, and lean slightly forward or toward the interviewer.
- If standing, stand with arms at sides or one hand in pocket. Planting one foot slightly in front of the other will help you avoid swaying.
- Gesture naturally and keep gestures small and in front of you, as camera exaggerates movement. Avoid sudden body movement.
- Make your expression match your words. Smile if it is appropriate. Keep a mildly pleasant expression at all times; an expression that looks neutral off camera looks unhappy or angry on-camera. Practice in a mirror.



Television – The Interview

- Remember, make your statements punchy and concise. Put your most important message up-front.
- Whether an in-studio talk show format or a stand-up interview, talk to the interviewer or other guests, not the camera. Breaking eye contact by staring off into space or looking at the ground will make you appear "shifty."
- Don't overlap the reporter's questions. Wait until the question is finished to begin your answer.



Television – The Interview

- Avoid yes and no answers when possible, but fight the urge to fill 'dead air'
- Don't be afraid to pause to think of an answer
- If you make a mistake on air, correct yourself right away
- Act as if you are on air until you are absolutely certain that you aren't



Radio Tips

- Have notes in front of you to remind you of message points, key facts and figures.
- Try to make it as expressive as possible.
- Speak at a normal level of loudness.
- Personalize your delivery. In a talk program, ask what the host prefers to be called, and try to put the interview on a first-name basis.
- Don't let a hostile caller anger or fluster you. The most effective way to overcome hostile questions is to make your points firmly and politely and back up assertions with facts. Take the "high road" by responding to the issue behind the question, not the specific charge.



Summary

- View every interview as an opportunity to establish the message points about your organization or issue
- Identify goals and key message points and repeat the message points during your interview
- Don't be so fixated by the questions asked of you that you forget to make your own points



Summary

- Organize your points in a concise and compelling manner
- Practice your answers out loud
- Use plain, understandable language
- Tell a story to make your statements more memorable
- Think ahead to prepare your closing statement and summarize your key messages



Practice, practice, practice

