



Managing the Media

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UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Changing newsrooms

Newsrooms are no longer full of hundreds of people like you see in the movies. Instead, you'll see "one-man bands" and rotating weekly staff furloughs due to cost cutting.

- Less resources means less time to fact check and less time to investigate.
- The news cycle is 24/7. Outlets can post online and on social media channels any time of day.
- Outlets are introducing paywalls and limiting content to subscribers only.
- Newsrooms are concerned about balance — don't want to be labeled as biased or "fake news."



What makes a “good” story?

REPORTER’S DEFINITION

- Accurate, balanced
- Interesting, unique
- Short and sweet - on page one, or lead story in the newscast, easy to tweet, get on the website

YOUR DEFINITION

- Favorable, positive
- Accurate, balanced and true
- Spokesperson looks and sounds good
- Your key message gets through

What journalists and editors are looking for:

- Does this story matter to a broad segment of the community?
 - Does it directly impact a significant number of people?
 - Is it interesting? Is it a good human interest story?
 - Does it uncover a problem that needs to be fixed or abuses that might be remedied?
 - Does it shed light on a broader phenomenon?



Tips for getting coverage

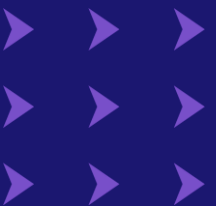
- Be available.
- Find competent reporters and cultivate relationships with them.
- Understand supply and demand (i.e. don't send press releases on Friday afternoon unless you want them to be ignored, consider weekend press events)
- Offer expertise



Bottom Line

Reporters have limited resources and tight time constraints. A reporter is going to do the story – with or without you.

A call from a reporter is an opportunity to communicate.



WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Your Checklist

Before you answer any questions from a reporter:

1. Gather information: WHO, WHAT, WHEN
2. Thank the reporter for reaching out and let them know you'll be back in touch shortly.
3. Start your research.

Step 1: Gather Information

WHO

Who is the reporter and what is their outlet?

Get their email address and cell phone number for follow up. You'll want this information to do a little research to see other stories they've done.

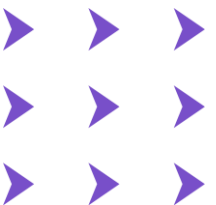
WHAT

What is the story about? Can you get a sense of the story angle? Sometimes it helps to ask what they are hoping their audience will learn from the story.

What do they want from you or your organization? An interview, confirmation, background, facts, photograph, access to your facility, etc.?

WHEN

When do they plan on running the story?
What is their deadline?



WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Step 2: Thank the reporter and end the conversation

Let them know you'll be back in touch shortly. Hang up before you answer questions. Take time to do some basic research and craft your messages before you give any sort of statement.



WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Step 3: Start your research

Google the reporter and outlet.

If you find that the reporter has run questionable stories, the outlet is not reputable, or if you have concerns, remember that you can politely decline an interview.

If your organization has a communications, public relations or media relations department or staff person, let them know of the interview request immediately. They can help you craft your messages or provide more background on the reporter and outlet.



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

The Process: 5 W'S and the H

Get started by writing down the answers to the following questions.

WHO

Who are you speaking to?
What relationship do you have with this group?

WHEN

When do you want your audience to take action?
When will you be taking action?

WHAT

What is your most important message?
What is your goal? What reaction do you want?

WHY

Why is the information you are speaking about important to your audience?

WHERE

Where can your audience go for more information?

HOW

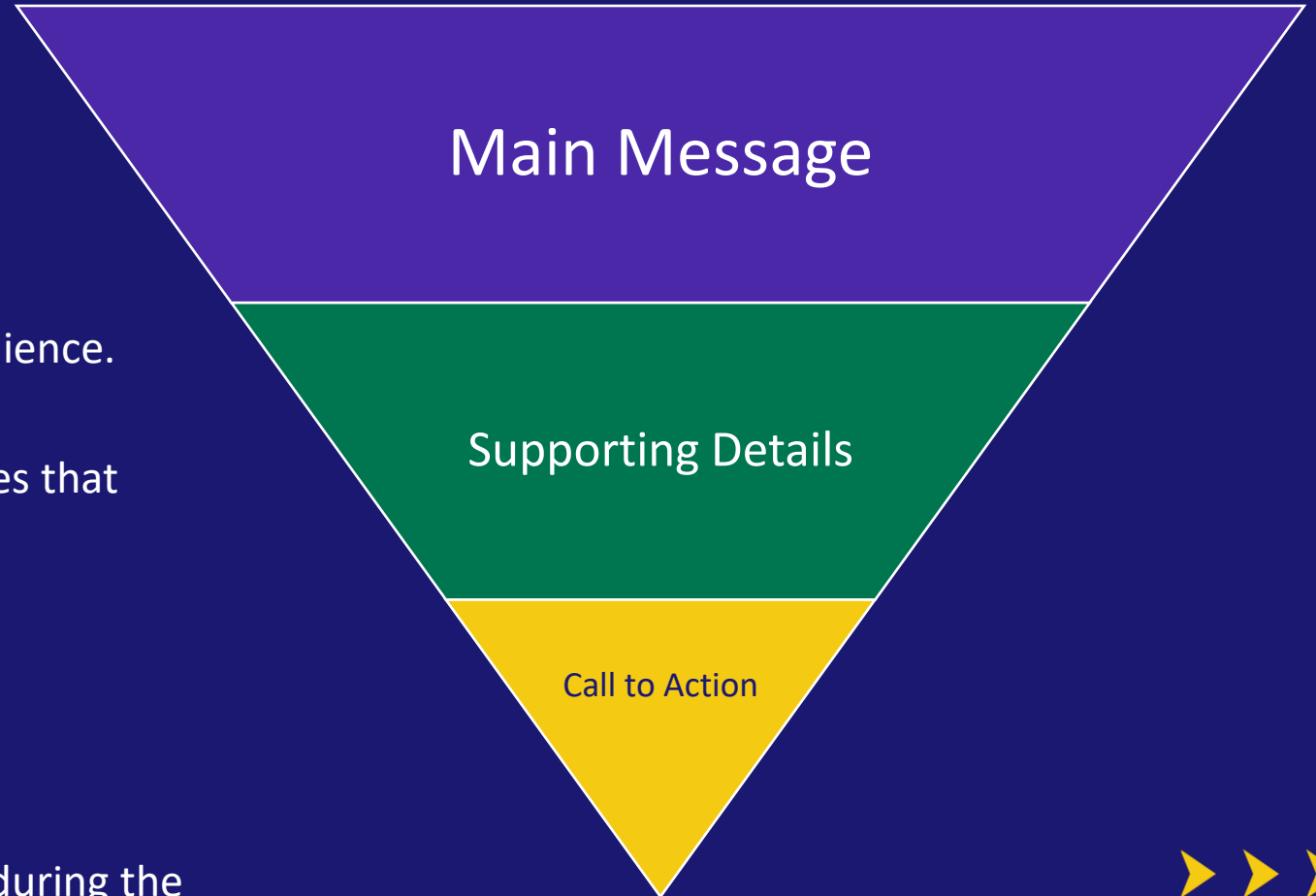
How might this information benefit your audience?

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Inverted Pyramid

- Main Message: The #1 takeaway for your audience.
- Supporting Details: Messages, facts, anecdotes that help drive the main message home.
- Call to Action: What you want people to do.

Write out your key messages and refer to them during the interview, if possible. Use notes during phone interviews or radio interviews but avoid notes on camera.



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Anticipate & prepare for questions

- Put yourself in the reporter's shoes. Anticipate the questions you are likely to be asked, including follow-up questions to your key messages.
- Think through the tough questions you will have difficulty answering. Practice pivoting back to your key messages (see next page for sample pivot phrases).
- You do not have an answer for every question. It's okay to say, "I don't have that information at this time." Or "I can follow up with you on that."



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Prepare to pivot

Practice using pivot phrases to transition to your key messages:

“What’s important to remember is...”

“I think the key issue you’re addressing here is...”

“The bottom line is...”

“What’s really at stake here is...”

“Let me share some relevant facts to that point...”

“We’re here today to discuss...”



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Be short and sweet

Use as few words as possible,
but do not sacrifice clarity for brevity.

One Breath Test:

Can you say your statement in one breath?

35-Word Test:

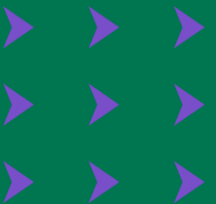
No sentence should be longer than 35 words.

8th Grade Level Test:

State your message, then restate it so that a 8th grader can understand.

Hey, Dawn! Test:

How would you say it if you were casually talking to a neighbor?



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Practice makes perfect

- Don't memorize; internalize – understand your key message and how your secondary messages support that key idea.
- Practice messages, timing, body movements and eye contact.
- Practice out loud — make sure the way you plan to say it feels natural to you.
- Practice while doing other things — in the shower, at the store, at the gym, etc.

INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

General execution tips

- Always tell the truth. NEVER lie to a reporter!
- No industry jargon or acronyms.
- Respond to the question you WISH you were asked, then pivot back to your message.
- Repeat your messages before you conclude.
- If you feel you're being misunderstood or misinterpreted, fix it by clarifying your position immediately.
- "No comment" is never a good answer. You can almost always say something positive.



INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Execution Do's and Don'ts

DO

- DO provide helpful information or fact sheets, if available.
- DO consider visuals (kids and animals are always a plus).
- DO have someone who's affected, if possible (more difficult in healthcare setting).
- DO help reporters localize their stories — provide local statistics and examples.

DON'T

- DON'T speculate — should be “just the facts,” and if you don't know an answer, let them know you can find out more and get back to them
- DON'T editorialize – i.e. “Those crazy cat people”
- DON'T use sarcasm or jokes

INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Television interviews

- **Consider visuals that tell your story.**
 - If you can do the interview on your turf, that's ideal.
 - Look at the visuals behind you. Are they sending the right message?
- **What's the show format?**
 - In a talk show format, you may have 6 to 20 minutes to deliver your message(s).
 - In a typical TV news or feature story, you have about 8 to 12 seconds to deliver your message(s).
 - That means you better know your message and be able to deliver it, regardless of the question. (PIVOT!)



INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Virtual interviews

- Find a quiet place to limit distractions
- Be mindful of your background and surroundings – is it distracting?
- Try to find good lighting that will make your face clearly visible — avoid backlighting with windows behind you
- Prop the camera up on books or a box for a better angle
- Test your audio and camera ahead of time
- Wear plain clothing (no patterns or large logos)



INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

What to wear on camera

- Dress the part: Wear your white coat or other professional attire
- Skip shirts with stripes — generally avoid patterns
- Avoid wearing any logos, unless it's part of your professional attire
- Jewel tones look good on camera
- Wear lip color and powder to avoid shine
- No sunglasses, hats or gum



INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Print interviews

- Generally, you will have more space to deliver your messages in a print piece versus a typical TV news story, but you still need to focus on your key message.
- You will also likely be asked more questions (including more “in the weeds” questions). That means you have more chances to go off-message.
- Help the reporter by sharing any infographics, video or searchable/interactive databases available.
- Share statistics or facts that help the reporter localize the story.

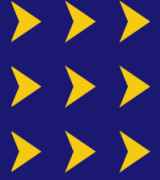


INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Radio interviews

- Recorded or “live” interview?
 - Recorded news interview: You will have about 6 to 10 seconds to deliver your message(s), which will be edited into a short soundbite.
 - “Live” segment on a talk show: You will have more time to deliver your messages.
- For live interviews, ask ahead of time if you will be on the call with anyone else (i.e. someone with an opposing view) or if the host plan on taking questions from callers.
- Call from a landline, if possible, to avoid interference or a dropped call.





EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP

Read, listen, watch & improve

- Read your clips / watch your newscasts
- Check your quotes for accuracy and request corrections, if necessary
- Commend accuracy — follow up with the reporter and thank them, especially for accuracy on a difficult issue
- Remember: the more interviews you do, the less daunting they will be!



Questions?

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