

Make Your Point!

Successful Media Interviews



Presenter: Jesse Bradley
North Dakota Community Action Confernce
April 23, 2014

Today's Agenda

1. Attitude
2. Understanding news and reporters
3. Preparation and “media-friendly” messages
4. Media preparation worksheet

Best media training quotes ever

“Does anyone have any questions for my answers?” – Henry Kissinger

“It is always a risk to speak to the press: they are likely to report what you say.” – Hubert H. Humphrey

“The questions don’t do the damage. Only the answers do.” – Sam Donaldson



Attitude Survival!

“I just want to make it through the interview.”



Attitude

“Don’t be interviewed just to answer the questions. Be interviewed to answer questions and to accomplish a business objective.”

Attitude

- Opportunity
- Strategic
- Control
- Tell the truth
- Have a point
- Prepare



Understanding News and Reporters

Reporters

- Don't know
- Can't educate
- Not the communicator
- Not friends
- Not audience



Understanding News and Reporters

What is News?

- News has two priorities: it must be current, and it must mean something to people.
- On the surface at least, the objective of news is to inform the audience.



Understanding News and Reporters

You are in control of the interview

- Interview
- Focus
- Ground rules
- Location

Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Before the interview:

- Audience
- Objective
- Messages
- Benefits



Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

- According to a study from the Center for Media and Public Affairs at Harvard University, the average “sound bite” is approximately 7.3 seconds.
- Since the average person speaks about three words per second, that means we have just about 21 words to communicate something of meaning.

Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Speaking in Sound Bites

SIMILE, METAPHOR OR ANALOGY

“It’s like trying to fill the bathtub with the drain open.” –

Mary Johnson, Medicare policy analyst

WITTY

“Our choices right now are not between good and better; they’re between bad and worse.” — **Alan**

Greenspan

Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Speaking in Sound Bites

WITTY

“She couldn’t get elected if two of her opponents died.”

– **Peck Young, political consultant**

REFERENCES TO POP CULTURE

“Republicans are as serious about fiscal responsibility as Paris Hilton is about modesty.” – **Marshall Wittman, political pundit**

Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Message Development

- So what?
- Why should I care?
- What is in it for me?
- Who cares?



Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Value Words

- Exciting
- Significant
- Unusual
- Impressive
- Important



Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Bridging Statements

- “And what’s most important to remember...”
- “The key here is...”
- “Let me emphasize again...”
- “Our goal is...”

Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

During the interview

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Passion
- Repetition



Preparation and “media-friendly” messages

Four things that will kill a media interview

- **Showing up unprepared** - You simply have to prepare before your interview.
- **Giving short, yes and no answers** - In sports radio, and it amazes me just how bad some athletes are at getting interviewed.
- **Rambling on and on** - Stay on point, and keep your responses as clear as possible.
- **Being argumentative** - Your job is to stay calm, no matter how intense the line of questioning may get.

Remember!!!

- Attitude
- Audience
- Messages
- Make a point
- Repetition



Media interview Preparation Worksheets