Meeting the Media, Made Painless

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Nothing but the basics...
Nothing but the basics...
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Live From the Hurricane!

Gloria, 1985

Gilbert, 1988

Andrew, 1992
What We’ll Discuss Today

• Media realities in 2017
• Tips to prepare for & conduct a media interview
• Developing your message
Media Realities

• The “news cycle” is 24/7

• Shrinking news staffs & budgets

• Pack journalism
DIFFERENT FORMATS AND SETTINGS

On the scene
Satellite interviews
Multiple interviews
Skype
Phone & print
VIP event
What The Media Wants from You

• Accessible
• Reliable
• Credible
What The Media Wants from You

-Faster! — short deadlines
-Quicker! — 10 min. vs. an hour
-Cheaper! — easy access equals less cost
-Graphics — provide a visual
Why Do We Bother?

Media are:

- An essential partner in getting the message out
- Important information & education source
- Not the enemy
“AP is on the line..”
Now what?
Prepare for the Interview

• Frame the story
• Create “The Message”
• Remember, an interview is a performance
Frame The Story

• Make the topic easy for your audience to understand
• Consider the elements of good storytelling
  • Characters
  • Conflict or drama
  • Visualization
Creating the Key Messages

- Main thing you want to say – *clear and concise*.

- What’s the *one* sentence you want the reporter to walk away knowing?

- The “why should I care” or “how does it affect me” information.
Creating the Key Messages

- No jargon!
- Speak to the 5th grade level

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v}) &= 0 \\
\rho \frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} + (\rho \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v} &= -\nabla \left( P + \frac{B^2}{8\pi} \right) - \rho \nabla \Phi + \left( \frac{B}{4\pi} \cdot \nabla \right) \mathbf{B} \\
\frac{\partial \rho\varepsilon}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho\varepsilon \mathbf{v}) &= -P \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \\
\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} &= \nabla \times (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B})
\end{align*}
\]
Delivering the Message

How do you prepare?

• Do you tailor message for different types of interviews?

• Can you re-do questions or entire interview?
Delivering the Message

How do you prepare?

• Do you tailor message for different types of interviews? **NO!**

• Can you re-do questions or entire interview? **NO!**
Delivering the Message

How do you prepare?

• What to do with your body – eyes, hands, if you’re standing or sitting?
Delivering the Message

How do you prepare?

- What to do with your body – eyes, hands, if you’re standing or sitting?

RELAX!
Delivering the Message

- Get the message out in an animated way such that the reporter follows you

- Stay in relative control of the interview
Some Examples
Preparation: The Bridge

- Bridge Lines:
  - The point is …
  - The important thing is …
  - The thing to keep in mind is …
  - What’s key here is …

CORRECT THE REPORTER:
*The fact is …
*The truth of the matter is…
*The real question is …
*The real focus should be …
Steering the Story

- Preconceived notions
- Separate fact from fiction
- Be clear
Steering the Story

- Reporter knows what occurred, but not how.
- Separate fact from fiction
CBS Early Show – Mar. 24, 2004
What if I don’t know?

Talking about a subject that is outside your area of expertise

- “I don’t know” is an acceptable answer
- Refer reporter to another person or organization
- Don’t answer “what if” questions, avoid speculating
- But you are an EXPERT and know more than reporter
Everything is on the record

Reporter’s in the house – avoid getting too comfortable

- No jokes and sarcasm
- Don’t get lulled into saying something you shouldn’t
- Never assume microphone is off
- Stay calm and relaxed, but not too relaxed
Everything is on the record

Reporter’s in the house – avoid getting too comfortable

- No jokes and sarcasm
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If you don’t want to see it in print, in a tweet, hear it on the radio or watch it on TV – don’t say it!
The Golden Ticket

“Anything else you’d like to add?”
Skype Interview Tips
S-K-Y-P-E

S – Shine a light!

- We need to see your face clearly
- Avoid back lighting
- Avoid shadows from a light above or below you
- Think about background – add a logo
- Dress appropriately

DID INTERVIEW OVER SKYPE

DIDN'T NEED TO PUT ON PANTS
S-K-Y-P-E

- **K** – keep focused on the camera!
  - Talk to the camera like it’s a person.
  - Even when the reporter is asking a question, you are on camera.
  - Avoid funny faces, scowling. Try to look “engaged,” practice active listening
S-K-Y-P-E

- Y – Yes. Or No.
  - Your answers should be more than just “yes” or “no.”
  - And your answers should be short – 10-15 seconds.
S-K-Y-P-E

- P – Plan what you want to say.
  - Have talking points.
  - Focus on key messages.
  - Plan how to bridge back to your talking points if they ask you something out of the blue.
S-K-Y-P-E

- E – End it smoothly.
  - When the reporter says “thank you” respond with something short and simple like “my pleasure.”
  - SMILE
  - Keep your eye on the camera until the light is off!

DO NOT say ANYTHING off topic until you know the microphone is OFF!
Remember to ...

- Be responsive to the reporter
- Know what you’re going to say, stay on track
- Stick to what you know
- Be 100% consistent
Remember to..

• Stay “on the record”
• Stick to the reason for the interview
• Be engaging
Remember **not** to…

- Recite a laundry list of details or facts
- Assume mic or camera is off
- Speculate
- Feel obligated to fill silences
- Show frustration
- Use humor
Key Interview Devices

• Steering / Bridging

• Takeaway

• Anything else you’d like to add?
A word about “Branding”

“WeatherReady Nation”

Use in preparedness messaging!
A word about “Branding”

“WeatherReady Nation”

Do NOT use in an operational interview!
Sometimes, you’re the story...
Just remember...

• The camera never blinks.
• Steer the conversation
• Stay on message
• Keep it simple, short, factual.
• If you don’t know the answer, say so.
ANY QUESTIONS?
FINAL EXAM

- Media arrives! Need a spokesperson!