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**Media Training Resource Guide**

***Build your reputation through effective public relations***

***"If you lose money for the firm, I will be very understanding. If you lose reputation for the firm, I will be ruthless."***— Warren Buffett to Salomon Brothers employees

Think of media interviews as an opportunity to tell a positive story about the work you do, and the chance to educate others on the difference you make in people’s well being every day.

This is a story each of you live, every day.

Media interviews can enhance your reputation for those who are already familiar with your work. In most cases, it’s the best and most credible way to build your brand.

Interviews can be stressful, but with practice and preparation, you can ace every media encounter. The result: A more positive public image – a winning reputation -- for your profession and a spotlight on issues that matter most to your future success.

**CONFIDENCE, CONTROL, AND CREDIBILITY**

The most compelling interviews are ones where the source achieves confidence, control and credibility.

* Confidence: Knowing you’re the expert who’s providing valuable information for a reporter provides a strong root from which effective communications can grow.
* Control: Maintaining key messaging puts you in a position to control the information being conveyed and the way in which it is being communicated. Control also refers to the ability to be active in the interview versus reactive.
* Credibility: The best sources are those who are experts on a topic and can earn the trust and respect of a reporter.

**Achieving the 3Cs is only possible when you do your homework!**

Know the 5-Ws of the outlet:

* Who is the audience?
* What are their interests?
* Where will the article be distributed?
* When will the article appear?
* Why does the audience/ publication care about your issue?

And, know the most recent two articles written by the reporter with whom you’ll be speaking.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions:

* Who else is the reporter interviewing?
* Where does my point of view fit into the story?
* What is the interview format?
* What type of story is the reporter doing?
	+ "hard news"
	+ feature story
	+ personality piece
	+ investigative report
	+ in-depth background piece
	+ point/counterpoint

Know basic etiquette

* You can't usually ask for the questions ahead of time, but it is OK to get a sense of direction, so you can be prepared
* Never ask to review the article before it’s published
* It’s OK to say no – if you aren’t a good source or aren’t comfortable making a comment, don’t! If you can refer the reporter to a better source, do!

**Messaging: Your Map Forward**

Interviews are brief: Chances are, you won’t be able to express every point you want to make. Be prepared to be concise and back up what you’re saying.

Start with the end in mind: What’s the goal of your interview? Who is your specific target audience, and ultimately, what do you want them to do?

In order to achieve your goal, remember that your message points must be *provable assertions* that you can back up with additional facts.

**GOAL**

**KEY MESSAGE 1**

* **KEYWORDS**
* **FACT 1**
* **FACT 2**
* **FACT 3**

**KEY MESSAGE 2**

* **KEYWORDS**
* **FACT 1**
* **FACT 2**
* **FACT 3**

**KEY MESSAGE 3**

* **KEYWORDS**
* **FACT 1**
* **FACT 2**
* **FACT 3**

**KEY INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES: BLOCKING & BRIDGING, HEADLINING**

Being in control of an interview means you can’t be passive! Don't feel obliged to answer every question specifically. The most effective spokespeople listen to the bigger issue behind each question, and address that issue as they choose. This is done through the technique called "blocking and bridging."

Blocking: Avoiding an unwelcome or unproductive question *without* saying “No comment”.

* Hostile or controversial question
* An undesirable hypothetical situation or choice
* A request for information that you can't disclose
* Something that doesn't pertain to your agenda during a brief interview.

Bridging: Making a smooth transition from an undesirable question or topic to an area that fits your agenda.

* “On the contrary…”
* “Our position is…”
* “My vision is…”
* “That’s one point of view, let me give you another”
* “The other side of that issue is…”
* “Our view is…”
* “Yes, and…”

Headlining: Having a banner message that resonates.

* Short, succinct, simple
* Relatable
* Relevant
* Repeatable

**Interview Tips**

* Never speak “off the record.”
* Repeat the question, re-positioned if need be, as part of your answer.
* Stick to the facts.
* Do not speculate or guess.
* Do not offer personal opinions.
* If you don’t know the answer to a question, it’s okay to say “I don’t know” but promise to get the answer before the reporter’s deadline.
* Speak from the perspective of the viewer/listener/reader.
* Tell the truth. ALWAYS.
* You don’t have to talk about things you don’t want to (or can’t) talk about.
* Have your own message.
* Each interview presents an opportunity to say something positive.
* Bridge to your messages at every opportunity.
* Use simple and clear “sound bites,” especially for broadcast media.
* Remember that your gestures and facial expressions may say more than words.
* Clarify misinformation and inaccuracies immediately.
* Be accessible to the news media to avoid gossip, speculation or criticizing.
* Don’t ask to read or preview a story before it is printed. Quotes will be checked, but you don’t have the right to preview the story in its entirety.

**Interview Do’s and Don’ts**

* DO "flag" key points with phrases like, "The most important thing is ..."
* DO use facts and figures as appropriate to demonstrate your credibility.
* DO use illustrations and anecdotes to "humanize" and explain your topic ("enough widgets to fill Yankee Stadium" is better than "575,000 widgets").
* DO be sensitive to reporters' deadlines.
* DO be engaging, likable, enthusiastic — but not a cheerleader.
* DO be yourself. Don't try to reinvent yourself for an interview — you won't be credible. Be the best you can be.
* DON’T use jargon.
* DON'T over answer. When you're satisfied with your reply, stop.
* 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 assume the reporter knows more about your area than you do. Usually,
* the reverse is true.
* DON'T assume the microphone, camera or tape recorder is off immediately before or after an interview. You are still "fair game." It's safest to consider your entire interaction "on the record."

**Personal Appearance**

What a speaker looks like should never overshadow what he or she has to say. A speaker’s appearance, however, can help make the message more convincing. Keep these points in mind as you prepare for a public appearance:

* Dress conservatively. If you wear a uniform to work, wear one to the interview.
* Wear a dark suit with a solid color shirt or blouse. Avoid white, which tends to reflect light onto the face of the person who is wearing it. Solids show up better than patterns.
* Do not wear flashy jewelry.
* Keep jacket or dress free of lapel buttons or pins.
* There should be no bulky items in pockets.
* For television appearances, use powder, professionally applied. A dusting of powder on your face will help avoid shine invariably caused by bright lights. It will also fix any tendency men have toward a “five o’clock shadow.”
* Do not wear sunglasses.
* When seated, keep jacket buttoned, but pulled straight to avoid wrinkles.
* Make sure collar and tie are straight, shirt tucked in.
* Never wear a hat.
* Women, wear lipstick or chapstick.