

MEDIA RELATIONS AND INTERVIEW READINESS

Presentation and Skills Workshop



Media Relations and
Interview Readiness

Skills Workshop



Welcome to today's training session!



What I'll cover today...



AGENDA

- 1 Building Media Relationships
- 2 Creating Effective Media Messages
- 3 Types of Media Interview Questions
- 4 How to Use Bridging to Deliver Your Messages
- 5 Different Interview Types
- 6 Being an Activist Spokesperson
- 7 Media Interview Prep
- 8 Group Activity



Housekeeping

- 1 Have a pen and paper
- 2 Lots of opportunities to participate
- 3 We will put what you've learned into practice at the end



Building Media Relationships



What kind of stories interest media?

Media Relations and
Interview Readiness

Skills Workshop

Media are interested in stories that
are timely, relevant and have
conflict, new information or fresh
perspective.



Visual elements

Media appreciate a visual element. Whether it's a photo opportunity, an event, or existing video or photography, this makes it easier for a journalist to tell your story.

If visuals are not an option, bring your issue to life through infographics, imagery and data. Media will either use your graphics or recreate their own inspired by yours.

Reaching out to Media

- 1 Research reporters who cover your 'beat'.
- 2 Understand what their interests and biases are.
- 3 Even without news, you can reach out to introduce your organization.
- 4 Media are always looking for credible sources - share your expertise for future reporting.
- 5 Comment on and share their reporting.
- 6 When you have news to share, consider offering reporters exclusive or early access to your story to give them the 'scoop'.

Activity: Pitching a story

Write down a headline about a topic that is important to you that you would love to see in the news.

We'll choose a couple and brainstorm how we would bring that story to life for a journalist.





Building Effective Media Messages



A person's hand is visible in the bottom left corner, holding a blue pen and writing in a white notebook. The notebook is open, and the page has some faint, illegible text. In the background, a laptop screen is visible, showing a document with text. The overall scene suggests a workspace or a study area.

Structuring effective messages

Structure your message as
Problem / Solution / Action.

Find different ways to say each
message using supporting data,
examples and analogies.

Activity: Building a Key Message Structure

Share another headline and let's brainstorm the key messages.





Types of Media Interview Questions



Questions you may encounter in an interview

- 1 Softball: Tell me why you're here today
- 2 The Basics: Who, what, when, where, why
- 3 The Significance: What does this mean to your community?
- 4 Words in your mouth: So what you're saying is...
- 5 The Hypothetical: What if...

Questions you may encounter in an interview (cont'd)

- 6 Human Emotion: How does that make you feel?
- 7 Off the Record: Nothing is off the record
- 8 Hardball: Explain why your organization hasn't met targets...

How to use Bridging to Deliver Your Messages





What is bridging?

“Now, let me be clear...” – Barack Obama

Take control of an interview and deliver your key messages.

Respond to an off-topic or difficult questions, and move the conversation along.

Remember: You must answer the question, but then you must also go beyond it by enhancing the answer with positive messages.

Examples of bridging statements

- 1 This the most important point...
- 2 What we really want to highlight is that...
- 3 What's important to remember is....
- 4 Here's the real issue...
- 5 The heart of the matter is...
- 6 To put this in perspective...

Different Interview Types





Understanding the medium you will be interviewing for will help you prepare your messaging, visuals, and responses.



Broadcast (TV

1

Understand if it's Live, Live-to-tape or pre-recorded / edited

2

Visuals matter most (live, b-roll)

3

Reach a broad generalist audience



Radio Broadcast

- 1 Typically shorter interviews
- 2 Having short, pithy quotes important for getting your point across
- 3 Typically a broad, generalist audience



Print / Online

- 1 Often the most in-depth
- 2 Opportunity to follow-up with more information / correct
- 3 Can reach a broad readership or a niche specialist audience (reporting vs opinion editorial)



Podcasts

1

Most in depth

2

Delve more into personal story telling

3

Often have niche / technical audiences
and reach an aligned audience



Social Interviews (LinkedIn, FB / IG Live)

- 1 Come with the most risk due to high engagement and ability to quickly share
- 2 Similar prep to broadcast
- 3 Can vary in length and be more fun and personal

Activity: Media Interview Critique

Cadbury CEO Brad Irwin
Interviews on CNBC's pre-market
show Squawkbox (2009)



CT 5:47 AM

DOW FUT 12652 A 28

DOW 30 FV A 24.42

LIVE

NEW YORK



FINVX 28.58 ▲ 0.27

Oracle | ORCL XE 22.70 ▼ 0.09

Pfizer

LCNBK

AIRWAYS TALKS BACK ON HOLD, UNITED CLOSE TO A

126.24
CRUDE OIL





Preparing for a Media Interview





In addition to preparing messaging and practicing bridging...

1

Research the interviewer and publication
(know your audience)

2

Research YOURSELF online

3

Develop your agenda - what you want to
cover in the interview

Considerations for Being an **Activist** Spokesperson



Activism in an age of 'anti-wokeness'

Bridging activism to the general public will bring more people on side your issue.

Speak to people with different values and different frameworks.

Avoid jargon and acronyms that might not be relevant to everyone.

We can't rely on values common in activist culture.

We have to appeal to widely-shared values.



Do's and Don'ts of Being a Spokesperson

- 1 Speak only for the organization / movement
- 2 Bring passion
- 3 Do not get caught answering hypotheticals or reinforcing the negative
- 4 Do not speak to issues outside your knowledge
- 5 Deliver a clear message and call to action

Activity: Media Interview Critique

CTV News Windsor interviews
Leslie McCurdy of the Black
Council of Windsor-Essex about
new report showing marginalized
workers are less likely to be
unionized (Aug 2024)



Windsor advocate not surprised by report highlighting union disparities



<https://windsor.ctvnews.ca/windsor-advocate-not-surprised-by-report-highlighting-union-disparities-1.6999498>

Activity: Mock Press Conference

Putting your new skills in practice
in press conference format





Structure

1

Four groups: 2 groups of journalists and 2 groups of organizations holding a press conference.

2

Organizations: each will be given a different narrative / announcement to share. Prepare your key messages, answers for challenging questions, and assign roles / subject matter expertise.

3

Journalists: Journalists choose a publication and prepare tough questions for organizations (2-3 questions each)



Structure (cont'd)

4

15 minutes to prepare and then we will hold two 10-minute press conferences.

5

Organizations: Moderator will open the conference, introduce the panelists and select the journalist to answer each question. Direct the question to the best panelist when needed

6

Journalists: Say which publication you are reporting for, ask your question (choose a type from the list) and direct your question to a panelist or to the entire panel and the moderator will assign someone to answer.



Conference topics

1

The Urban Heat Relief Fund is announcing a \$25 million corporate investment and how the funds will be spent what impact it will make.

2

Canada's Food Bank has released a report showing that Black and racialized Canadians are 50% more likely to experience food insecurity and share urgent calls to action to address the disparity.

Press Conference Debrief

What was the most challenging part of the press conference?

What surprised you?

What would you do differently with more time to prepare and some experience?

Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

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