



Conducting Successful Public Relations & Media Interviews

Rhett Butler

Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
U.S. Department of Labor

Benefits of Media Coverage

- Greater public awareness makes you more accessible to people in need of your services
- Volunteers and donors support organizations that are well known and understood
- When other non-profits, government agencies, or businesses seek partners for new projects, your organizations will come to mind
- It's free!

Overview

Public Relations

- Public Relations 101
- What the Media Wants
- Contacting the Media
- Media Kits
- Press Releases
- Letters to the Editor

Media Interviews

- Understanding the Media
- Types of Media
- Developing Your Message
- Transitional Phrases
- Communication Breakdown
- Final Interview Tips

Public Relations

Public Relations 101

- Look for the Media Angle—stories should be interesting to “average” people
- Frame the Issue—choose words carefully, avoid sounding self-righteous
- Manage Expectations—success is judged based on expectations
 - “Under promise and over perform”

What the Media Wants

- The media wants a story
 - Information—interesting story with broad appeal
 - Access—they need access to people with information (your spokesperson)
 - Respect—they need to be treated with professional respect

Contacting the Media

- Build relationships with your local reporters
- It is usually best to send a written media advisory prior to calling a reporter
- Tips:
 - Deadlines—don't call late in the afternoon when deadlines are due
 - Don't demand coverage—present them with info and opportunities to cover, then thank them

Media Kits

- The first item the media should see is your media kit
- The kit should provide an overview of your organization & your involvement in bettering your community
- The kit includes a press release for event, organizational fact sheet, appropriate bios, and, in some cases, news clips

Press Releases

- A descriptive title/subtitle—the reader can glance and know the issue
- Clear lead, with the five W's (who, what, why, where, and when)
- Inverted pyramid
- Keep to one subject
- Well researched/documentated
- “For Immediate Release”

Press Releases (cont'd)

- No editorials in the text—opinions should be in quotes
- Write in sound bites/quotes
- Active voice, not passive
- Short words, sentences, paragraphs
- End the release with “-30-” or “###” or “END”
- Keep copies of all releases

Letters to the Editor

- Around 100-250 words
- State your reason for writing
- Stick to one topic
- Try to use catchy hook at the beginning
- Reference the article(s) that you are responding to

Media Interviews

Understanding the Media

- Reporters are human, just like you
- Different media, different needs
- Move from news releases to coverage
- Focused on their audience
- Always on a deadline, always
- Gravitate toward interesting quotes
- Make it easy on them

Types of Media

- Print—the most prevalent, in-depth stories, and drives other news
- Local Print—you need a local angle, can be specialized, generally not as experienced as the national press
- TV—need a visual, deadlines, time constraints
- Radio—tightest deadlines, prefer audio, easiest to do over the telephone

Developing Your Message

- In one non-compound sentence, what story do you want to tell?
- Components:
 - Emotion—How do you want the audience to feel?
 - Contrast—How are you different?
 - Connection—Why should your audience care?
 - Credibility—Why should your audience believe you?

Transitional Phrases

- The moms and dads I talk with tell me...
- We're getting away from the important issue here...
- Let's not forget the big issue here...
- The most important issue we need to talk about here is...
- Equally important...
- That's an interesting point...

Communication Breakdown

- People decide if they like you in the first 8 to 15 seconds
- 93% of communications is Visual/Vocal (nonverbal); 7% is Verbal
- Visual (e.g., how you look, gestures, face)—
dramatize facial expressions by 25%
 - Best colors to dress in is blue and red
 - Don't wear anything distracting, including logos and pins (unless they are part of your message)

Communication Breakdown (cont'd)

- Vocal—Stressing different words changes the meaning of a sentence, use tone for meaning
 - “I will go to the well.”
- Verbal—you are being interviewed to get the message out, have two talking points for an interview

Final Interview Tips

- You must develop a message to reach the “average” person—keep it simple!
- Nothing is off the record, nothing
- It is okay to say, “I don’t know.”
- Never lie
- Never get upset or angry when talking to a reporter

Final Interview Tips (cont'd)

- Repetition, Repetition, Repetition
- “Speak low and speak slow”
- Become a source of information
- Learn about local media
- Introduce yourself to reporters—but beware (everything is “on the record”)
- Keep (or develop) a sense of humor

DOL-CFBCI Websites

Main Website:

www.dol.gov/cfbci

Legal and Regulatory Guidance:

www.dol.gov/cfbci/legalguidance.htm



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