

Making the most of your media relations



Elected Officials
Seminars Series 2012

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Making the most of your media relations

- About the media
- About the message and your role
- Do's and don'ts
- The interview



Opportunities



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About the media

- Have a job to do
- Work on deadlines
- May or may not call you to get “your side”
- May not know anything about the topics
- May not include your key messages



Your media relationship

- Proactive: You call them
- Reactive: They call you
- Build relationships through trust and respect:
 - Return calls promptly
 - Be helpful
 - Meet deadlines
 - Be honest and open
 - Get to know them!

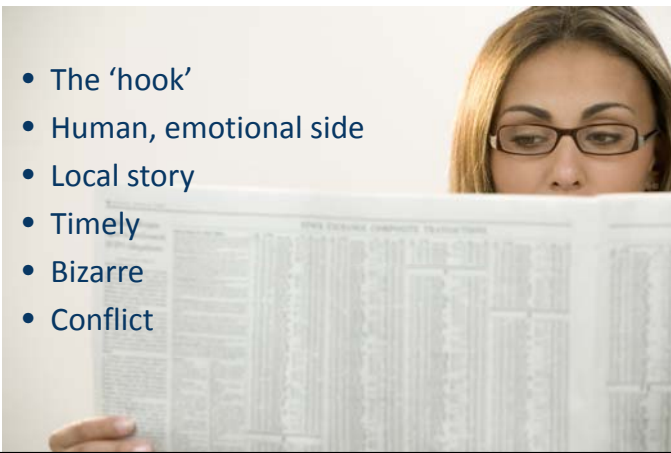


What the media wants...



What the media wants...

- The 'hook'
- Human, emotional side
- Local story
- Timely
- Bizarre
- Conflict



Print media

- Daily or weekly or monthly
- Deadlines
- Interview via phone or in person
- Looking for local and visual
- Can provide more background
- Stays around longer



Radio

- News hour, talk shows, on air with announcers
- Hourly deadlines
- Interview via phone or in person
- Short “sound bite”
- Less background
- Chance to change it!



TV

- Daily, weekly
- News story, features
- In person, on location
- Must have visuals – people, emotion, action
- Longer story that radio



Online media

- Most media have online versions
- Vancouver Sun:
 - ~364,000 circulation per week
 - 27 million impressions per monthly



Social media

- Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Forums, Blogs
 - needs continuous attention
 - instant interactive, viral
 - can generate positive or negative stories very fast
 - citizen journalists



What's your message?

- Quotable quotes
- Make it interesting, informative, KISS
- Back it up - numbers, facts, research, etc.
- Get help!
 - Communication support
 - Media policies, communication plans



You are also the message

- Vary tone of voice
- Natural and attentive body language
- For film:
 - Avoid stripes, white, jangly jewelry, coins in pocket
 - Don't look at the camera
 - Watch your background



The Interview

"The great sport of the media interview."

Richard Handler, producer
for the CBC

TheMediaInterview.com



When the media calls

- Who is it for?
- What's the purpose?
- Who else are you talking to?
- What's your deadline?
- Anything else you need to know?
- "Let me get back to you!"



What next?

Start your research

- What happened – why did they call?
- Determine who is the 'correct contact'
- Gather the latest info
- Get help with developing the message
- Practice



Do...

- Be available
- Stop speaking when done
- Correct the incorrect *first*
- Focus on the process
- OK to say "I don't know"



Don't...

- Don't speak for other groups
- Don't provide personal comments or opinions



Pete Wise

Don't...

- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know"
- No 'Off the record' or 'No comment'
- Don't be hostile or negative – show concern



When things go wrong

- Talk to your Mayor, Chair, CAO, communications person
- OK to rebut on point of fact not opinion
 - Talk to editor, reporter
 - Correction in print
 - Correction online



When things go wrong

- Mess up? 'Fess up and dress up!



Get ready.



Techniques to try: Bridging

Bridge the gap to a new topic or point

- “While I don’t have that information, what I can tell you is...”
- “While I don’t know the answer to that particular question, I can put you in touch with...”



Techniques to try: Flagging

Draw attention to a specific point you want to be sure to get across (your key message!)

- “What’s important to point out is...”
- “We are working to focus on...”
- “What people need to know is ...”



Techniques to try: Switching

Switch topics with an introductory open-ended statement or answer and switch

- “There are several new services we are offering for multi-family buildings in our community.”
- “There are three specific benefits to this program.”



And remember...

- Be helpful, respect deadlines
- Always ask yourself, “What is the purpose of the interview?”
- Check the mirror
- Remember the ‘Province’ test
- Go for it!



Thank you!

For more info...



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