Today’s Agenda

• Introductions/Overview
• Understanding the media
• Telling your story
• Making the most of media interactions
• How to work with the media
• Wrap-up
What Training Won’t Do

• Media training won’t guarantee a perfect story
• You don’t have control over the:
  • Headline
  • Outcome
  • Photos
  • Quotes
Understanding the Media
• Media industry is evolving rapidly.
• We have less and less time to respond to an inquiry.
• Media expects to hear from an “expert” rather than the PR person.
What is News?

• Timely and relevant
• Two sides to a story
• Local or national importance
• Of interest to a particular audience
• A scoop – first with information
What’s Changed

- Constant news cycle
- Citizen journalists
- Rise of social media
- Consolidation
- Transparency
Telling Your Story
Key Messages

• Your messages are your agenda
• What audience will remember
• Carefully planned, concise and memorable
  • Aligned with objectives
  • Position your organization appropriately
• At least one, no more than 3 or 4
• Keep them simple
Message Point Success

- Messages must be:
  - Credible
  - Believable
  - Supportable
  - Relevant
  - Timely
Get to the Point
Messages vs. Sound bites

• Messages – what you consciously deliver
• Quotes/sound bites – what reporters actually use; what people remember

The trick is to either make messages quotable or incorporate messages into quotable language
Making the Most of Media Interactions
Types of Media Interactions

- Phone call
- Face-to-face meeting
- TV interview
- Live radio interview
- Editorial board meeting
- E-mail exchange
- Press Conference
• May be by phone or in person
• Prepare and be VERY organized
• Reporter may be as knowledgeable as you
• Reporter may repeat or rephrase questions to get a different response
• Allow reporter to ask question before answering
• Look reporter in the eye
• Use hands, but…
• Always assume the camera is on
• Look at the reporter, not the camera
• Stand with your arms at your sides
• Answers need to be short and targeted
• Sound bites are 7-10 seconds
• Pay attention to attire/background
What not to do
Radio

• Remember the visual limitations of radio
• It’s okay to use notes
• Place emphasis on delivery – voice, inflection and pace
• Limit distractions
• Rephrase important points
How to Work with the Media
During the Interview

- Professional Distance
  - Not your friend
  - Not your enemy
  - Just doing their job
- You are the expert – reporter needs you
During the Interview

- No beginning, middle or end to an interview
- Set a time limit
- Stay on message from the time the reporter arrives until they leave
- Focus
  - The reporter is focused on the subject
  - If you aren’t the reporter is in control
Questions

• Opportunities for you to communicate your message
• Prepare for the questions you don’t want
• Left-field questions are a challenge to get back on message
• Incorrect assumptions should be corrected
• Don’t accept either/or, multiple choice or hypothetical questions
• Look for an opportunity with the last question
A = Q + M
**Bridging**: Using key phrases to both answer the reporters questions and (re)emphasize a key message.

**Blocking**: Using key phrases to answer a question without giving information that is not relevant or you do not feel comfortable giving.

**Flagging**: Using key phrases to let the reporter know what you are about to say is important or critical to the story.
Bridging Phrases

• “I think what you’re really asking…”
• “What’s most important is…”
• “That reminds me…”
• “If you look closely, you’ll find…”
• “That speaks to a bigger point…”
Blocking Phrases

• “I am not the best person to answer that question, but what I can tell you…”
• “It’s not our policy to discuss those type of things, but I can tell you…”
• “That’s a good question, but what’s really important is…”
• “Let me clarify. What we’re really talking about here is…”
Blocking Phrases
Flagging Phrases

- “The key issue here is…”
- “What’s important to remember is…”
- “If I can leave you with one final thought…”
- “You might also be interested to know…”
- “Let me put this in perspective…”
Flagging Phrases
Interview DOs

- Do listen carefully to the question
- Do keep answers brief and simple
- Do be sure of your facts
- Do say you don’t know, if you don’t know
- Do tell the truth
- Do be confident, energetic and animated
- Do understand that you are speaking on behalf of your organization
Interview DON’Ts

• Don’t say, “No Comment”
• Don’t use jargon the audience won’t understand
• Don’t talk down
• Don’t get emotional
• Don’t say it if you don’t want it printed or recorded
• Don’t say too much
• Don’t speculate
• Don’t fill silence
Questions