

Interview Success

SIMPLE MEDIA STRATEGIES TO STAY SAFE

- S** Speak like you eat – small bites
- A** Apply your experience
- F** Focus on key messages
- E** Employ bridging and flagging techniques

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- Research reporter
- Coordinate time and place
- Anticipate questions
- Prepare key messages

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- Lead from first question
- Answer plus one
- Use stories and examples
- Don't repeat negatives
- Don't force answers
- Don't fill dead air
- Don't use "no comment"

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Advise communications team
- Find answers and be available
- Be assertive to clarify
- Follow up

STYLE AND TONE

- Maintain good posture and eye contact with the interviewer
- Use gestures as comfortable and where appropriate
- Remain relaxed, engaged and confident

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Success depends on:

Speed... of response

Strength... of spokesperson

Substance... of message

Message = Emotion + Situation + Action

GUIDING THE MESSAGE

The Three P's

- Preparation is paramount
- Personal stories improve engagement
- Purpose for every interview

Bridging

Phrases that re-direct questions to more comfortable areas

"That's not my area of expertise, but let me explain what I do know..."

Flagging

Phrases that call attention to key points

"The most important point I want to make is..."

Trigger Words

Words that are a signal to bridge your key points

Blocking

Helps you put a stop to a line of conversation that is inaccurate or outside your expertise

*"That is inaccurate.
The facts are..."*

Top Five Mistakes

- Repeating negatives or being defensive
- Filling dead air
- Being passive
- Taking questions too literally
- Answering outside your own expertise or speculating



3 OUT: External, or out of your direct control

PURPOSE

What is your purpose for doing this interview? What action do you want the audience to take? What do you want them to think or feel?

OUTLET

What do you know about the outlet with which you are talking? What kinds of stories do they do? What can you learn about the reporter?

AUDIENCE

Who reads or watches this outlet? Are there special needs or considerations? Should you alter your language?

3 IN: Internal, or within your ability to control

KEY MESSAGES

What are the top three things you need to communicate to achieve your purpose? Are there stories, stats or experiences that illustrate your points?

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

You know the topic better than any reporter. Where are your vulnerabilities? What makes you uncomfortable? Plan answers for those questions.

PRACTICE

Physically practice answering questions. Do it out loud; record your practice. Get comfortable with your messages and your answers to difficult questions. See how your answers sound and feel. If it's unnatural, change it.

