



# Media 101 Key Takeaways.

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## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MISINFORMATION:

- Strengthen your ability to communicate your organization's work, research findings, and expertise to a broader audience. Increase your visibility and impact.
- Become a confident and effective advocate for science and evidence-based decision-making in your community and beyond.

## WHAT MAKES SOMETHING NEWSWORTHY?

- Timeliness
- Current News
- Proximity
- Impact
- Prominence
- How will it affect the audience?
- Human Interest
- Novelty

## TYPES OF MEDIA AND HOW INTERVIEWS ARE OFTEN STRUCTURED

### TV

- Traditionally shorter segments (5-7 minutes).
- Segments may be done live or pre-recorded, potentially virtual.
- Need a strong visual or interactive element in your pitch.
- During an interview, look at the interviewer, not the camera.
- Answer questions in 12-20 second responses. Questions won't often be received in advance.

### Radio

- Often includes a pre-interview call where a producer will ask questions and discuss the topic with the spokesperson.
- May be done live or pre-recorded, and style may change if it involves a call-in show.
- Your voice establishes your image.
- If calling in, ensure a strong phone connection and a quiet space.
- May involve being on camera for the outlet to repurpose as video content.

### Podcast

- Longer form interview often allows for more in-depth discussion.
- May be on video and likely pre-recorded to air at a later date.
- May involve going in studio or setting up to record from home.
- If calling in, ensure a strong phone connection and quiet space.

### Print/Online

- Traditionally done over the phone, or reporter may send questions over email.
- Length may vary depending on the topic and level of detail required.
- Allows for more in depth coverage.
- Offer photos or illustrations related to your message and audience.

## PITCH NOTE BEST PRACTICES

Pitches often accompany other press materials, such as a news release, and give the reporter a bit more information about what you're offering, your angle or story and why they should read the press release.

A few best practices to consider:

- Tailor your pitch note for the media outlet/reporter.
- Use strong visuals and multimedia elements, make these easily shareable and accessible.
- If sharing a press release, paste it in the body of your email.
- Personalize your pitch, include a greeting and why it's a fit.
- Keep it simple and concise, get to the point.
- Include all the details and assets they need.
- Read reporters' recent articles and check their social.

## CASL

Get up to speed on Canada's anti-spam legislation ([CASL](#)). If you are pitching a reporter or outlet for the first time and have no previous or existing relationship, or the reporter

has not indicated they are open to receiving press materials, you must include verbiage at the bottom of your email that allows them to unsubscribe, for example:

*"If you no longer wish to receive this information from [BRAND], email [EMAIL ADDRESS] with a message asking us to remove you from our mailing list."*

## ENGAGING THE MEDIA

- **Build your media list** - Create a list of relevant outlets and reporters at each who align with what you are pitching. You can search the masthead on a news outlet website, Twitter or via a general Google search.
- **Send your pitch** - Distribute your pitch note to your media list, being aware of holidays, and sensitive or breaking news.
- **Follow-up** - Follow-up with the reporter once after one to two days if you have not heard back.

## PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

### Research & Anticipate

- Make sure you know the publication, the reporter's niche, and the platform they publish on.
- Understand other angles or interests that the reporter might be looking for.
- Know who the audience of the media outlet is.
- Consider potential questions you may be asked, including difficult ones.

### Practice

- Role-play interviews with colleagues or friends.
- Practice answering questions in front of a mirror.
- Get comfortable speaking in front of a camera or microphone.
- Think about non-verbal communication cues.
- 'Get into the zone' by getting rid of distractions including email and mobile notifications or other distractions.

## INTERVIEW DOS AND DON'TS

### Dos

- Be prepared and know your key messages
- Be able to state your name, title, and what you do for your organization
- Speak in easily understandable terms
- Be yourself
- Be honest, transparent, and respectful
- Stay calm and professional, even under pressure
- Correct misinformation immediately
- Ask for clarification
- Follow up with journalists after interviews

### Don'ts

- Speculate or guess
- Get defensive or argumentative
- Go off the record
- Lie or mislead
- Debate
- Have a friendly chat
- Be afraid to pause
- Rush to fill silence
- Assume the reporter or audience know about your topic
- Give answers that are unclear or incorrect
- Use no comment
- Assume the microphone or camera is off
- Repeat negative language

## KEY MESSAGES

### What are they

- The 2-3 key points you want to convey, that the audience cares about, and that you want the audience to take away.
- They help control the interview and get your organization's point across.
- Messages that appear consistently across a campaign or organization.

## How to use them effectively

- Introduce your organization
- State your headline and your key messages, first
- Then follow up with supporting points, background and context
- Use them in the wrap up when asked if you have anything else to add

### Memorization Techniques

- Mnemonics
- Acronyms
- Numbering
- Momentum
- Memory Palace
- Straight memorization
- Chunking
- Flash Cards / Notes

## INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

**Bridging, flagging** and **teasing** are three ways you can guide the interviewer to your key messaging.

**Bridging** is a technique used in media interviews to steer the conversation back to a topic or point of interest. It involves smoothly transitioning from the interviewer's question to a key messages. For example, "Let's put that into perspective..."

**Flagging** is a method of highlighting important information during an interview. It involves emphasizing key points or statements, often by using phrases like "the most important thing to remember is..." or "let me be clear about this..."

**Teasing** is a tactic used to pique the interviewer's and audience's interest in a topic or upcoming event. It involves hinting at something exciting or newsworthy without revealing all the details immediately.

### **Bridging Examples:**

- While X is certainly important, don't forget that...
- What I can tell you...
- Let's put that into perspective...
- That's an interesting question, but let me remind you that...
- There's another way of looking at that...
- That's not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is...

### **Flagging Examples:**

- The three most exciting elements are...
- That's an important point because...
- What that really means is...
- What's most important is...
- The key thing to remember here is...
- The bottom line is...
- The best part is...

### **Teasing Examples:**

- "This is actually our second-largest campaign of the year..."
- "We've got some exciting things planned for next quarter..."

## **The wrap up:**

At the end of the interview, don't be afraid to summarize once again what you want the reporter to remember and takeaway from your interview. This should be approximately 20-30 seconds and include your key takeaways, key messages and a clear call-to-action for the reporter/audience.

## HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- Acknowledge the question, then bridge to your key message
- Say if you're not the expert
- Ask for clarification
- Think, breathe, take your time
- Stay calm and maintain your composure
- Don't take it personally
- Focus on your key messages
- Don't repeat negative information provided by the reporter.
- Don't speculate or answer hypothetical "What if..." questions.
- Answer only those questions that directly relate to your expertise – when you're not the authority, say so.

## MEDIA HANDLING TECHNIQUES

### Dos

- Keep your energy up
- Maintain eye contact
- Use good posture, sit tall
- Use appropriate facial expressions
- Use 12-20 second sound bites

### Dont's

- Try not to fidget
- Avoid jargon, depending on who you're talking to
- Don't be too self-serving, focus on why people would be interested in what you're saying
- Speak at a measured pace and with authority
- Never say 'no comment'