



Making Media Work For You

Messaging and Spokesperson Tips

Gathered from The Spin Project and Community Media Workshop

Messaging

- Remember that you can have many messengers, but only one message. Develop talking points that each person will use when they speak for your issue.
- Develop 3 talking points that include (1) a statement of the problem (2) a vision of the solution and (3) something the audience can do to bring about a solution.
- Talk to community members and those affected by the problem to gather stories to further illustrate your first talking point.
- Pull some quotes from those stories to emphasize the vision you and your organization have of the solution.
- Get details on how the audience can bring about the solution: who to contact and how, where to go for more info, details about rallies and vigils, etc.

Spokesperson Tips

- Practice, practice, practice. The more interviews you do, the better you will get at speaking on camera and in front of audiences.
- Have a diversity of spokespeople including women, people of color, LGBT people, people of faith, immigrants and youth.
- Choose spokespeople who can be available to the media at all times.
- Remember that you are the expert and be confident that what you have to say is important.
- Personalize your message. Begin statements by saying, "As a mother..", "As a student..."
- Never say, "No Comment." You lose an opportunity to say something. Bring it back to your message by saying, "I don't know the answer to that question, but I do know..." or, "What I'm really here to talk about today is..."
- Don't answer questions, respond with a talking point. They won't air what the interviewer is asking you, they will most likely just air your soundbite.
- Don't look at the camera when being interviewed, address the interviewer.
- For longer radio or tv shows, be prepared to share at least 3 stories that reflect your talking points.
- Translate large numbers to smaller ones. For example instead of 33%, say one-third.

- Don't use jargon-say the full name of your organization and spell out any acronyms you use internally.
- Use visual aids if possible: posters, photos, a pair of boots, anything to emphasize your message.
- When the interviewer gives you a chance to add something, be sure you say where to go to get more info-a website, phone number or office.

Radio Rules

- Respond with key messages and speak in soundbites.
- Do phone interviews from a land line if possible and in a quiet room.
- Don't listen to the show while your being interviewed.
- Speak slowly and with extra emphasis.
- Smile-it comes through the radio.

Television Tips

- Dress for the audience-wear neutral colors and avoid patterns, florals, stripes or dots.
- Don't wear noisy jewelry or large buttons or slogans on your clothing.
- Wear make-up if possible.
- Bring a smile into a serious conversation, it makes everyone feel more comfortable, including you.
- Sit on the edge of your seat and lean into the interviewer-you appear more engaged on camera.
- Use hand gestures to emphasize a point.
- Don't get distracted by a reporter, crew member or camera. Look at the person asking the questions and treat the situation like a conversation.
- Always respond with key messages and soundbites. If you get messed up, ask to start over, unless it's live.
- Remember that the audience is the target, not the reporter.
- Always be more reasonable than your opponent.

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