

# CML Training For Newly Elected Officials

## Working Effectively With the Media January 29, 2016

*Sheri Chadwick, Communications Director  
City of Centennial*

# Best Practices

- Be responsive, talk to the media
- Tell the truth
- Be authentic
- Be polite and respectful
- Correct mistakes, admit when wrong
- Do not “black list” – play the long game
- There is no such thing as “off the record”

# Enhance Your Credibility By:

- Understanding the basics
- Creating memorable messages
- Giving an effective interview
- Answering tough questions
- Preparing for crisis communications
- Embracing social media

# Rules of the Interview

- Focus the story
- Speak to your audience
- Repeat key messages
- Use stories, statistics and sound bites
- Keep it simple, keep it brief

# The Interview

- Set your agenda- have a plan going in
- Develop talking points
  - Prepare/anticipate tough questions
- Direct the message to the audience
- Should communicate some benefit or relevance to the audience  
(what's in it for me?)

# Body Language

- Remain open, no crossed legs or arms
- Lean slightly forward
- If standing, anchor footing
- Avoid swaying or excessive nodding
- Eye contact—look at reporter, not camera

# Handling Difficult Questions

- Remove negative language and reframe in positive terms
- Avoid “denial” questions
- Answer the question. Transition to message.

# Types of Questions

- Hypothetical Question
- Question: What if . . .
  - There may be underlying assumptions that may appear to be true by default, unless you clarify them. If you disagree, say so!

Response: I can't predict the future  
(then back to the topic)

\*Types of Questions: Kelli Narde, City of Littleton, CML 2012



# Types of Questions

- Speculation
- Question: Why did X do Y?
  - You are being asked to judge someone else's behavior or performance. Don't speculate.

Response: I don't have first-hand knowledge of that.

# Types of Questions

- Probing question
- Question: Do you always . . .
  - It is best to respond in broad terms rather than specifically. Avoid “always” and “never”.
  - “Usually”, “generally” and “typically” work well.

Response: Our policy in these matters is . . .

Our procedures are to . . .

# Types of Questions

- False Premise
- Question: X is true, what about Y
  - Correct the inaccurate or inflammatory statement first. If you leave it alone, you will seem to be agreeing.

Response: First, X is not true . . .

# Types of Questions

- Don't you agree question?
- Question: Do you agree that . . .
  - This type of question will put words in your mouth. Say what you want to say.

Response: We believe that . . .

# Bridging Technique



<http://www.mrmediatraining.com/2015/10/29/media-interview-bridging-two-good-video-examples/>

# Recommended Resources

- The Media Training Bible, by Brad Phillips
- Crisis Communications, by Steven Fink
- What is Your One Sentence, by Mimi Goss
- Masters of Disaster, by Christopher Lehane, Mark Fabiani, & Bill Guttentag
- Damage Control, The Essential Lessons of Crisis Management, by Eric Dezenhall and John Weber

# Contact Info:

- Sheri Chadwick, Communications Director
- City of Centennial
  - [schadwick@centennialco.gov](mailto:schadwick@centennialco.gov)
  - 303-754-3320
  - Facebook: /CentennialGov
  - Twitter: @CentennialGov or @Sheri\_Chadwick