



Media Training



• Media Training

If the media doesn't get the facts from you, they will get the "story" from ~~someone~~ ^{AND} else.

If you help the media when they call you, they will help you when you call them.

Goals for Media Training

- To prepare for the unexpected
- To understand the way the media works
- To know your role in responding to the media
- To know your options for providing information

Goals for Media Training

- Protecting yourself and protecting the City
- Best practices while being interviewed
- Knowing the do's and don'ts

Good Media Relations is Good Business

One responsibility of government is to communicate with residents about city services and issues that may affect their lives.

Good Media Relations is Good Business

One of the best ways to communicate is through the media; therefore, an important role of government is to establish working relationships with the media that make communication more efficient and effective.
****Seeing media relations as a partnership pays off.**

Media Relations Philosophy

We are responsive; we talk to the media
We tell the truth
We are polite
We correct mistakes

Media Relations Philosophy

Give personal opinions cautiously.
Recognize the media is just one way
to talk to your community.
There is no such thing as "off the record"

Media Relations Philosophy

- AGAIN -

There is no such thing as "off the record"

Reporters

- General assignment reporter - cover various beats, no particular specialty - infrequent contact
- Beat reporter - expertise and knowledge in a focused area - frequent contact with sources (Police, courts, legislature, schools and health often have "beat" coverage)

• Investigative reporter

The Media News Cycle

Denver Post – ?
Television stations - ?

The Media News Cycle

The Denver Post

Deadlines daily by 7 p.m.
Sundays – Friday afternoon
Beat Reporters – Special
Assignment
Distribution falling for years
Online presence via Web site

The Media News Cycle Television Stations

Deadlines – Vary by show
Planning and editorial meetings in
a.m., p.m.

Reporters – general/investigative

Viewership – Down significantly

More online content – platform
diversity

The Media News Cycle Television Stations

Denver Metro Area – 1.6 million TV homes
Colorado Springs/Pueblo – 354,000 TV Homes
Grand Junction/Montrose – 70,000 TV Homes

The Media News Cycle

Denver Metro Demographic Area
Total estimate for 10 p.m. viewers = 420,000

Channel 9 (KUSA) = 54,600 people

Channel 4 (KCNC) = 37,800 people

Channel 7 (KMGH) = 37,800 people

Working With the Media - Mayor

Speak from a citizen's point of view

Use language a citizen will understand

If you can't answer the question – tell them why

It is OKAY to not know - "I'll get you an answer"

Build rapport before the camera goes on

Working With The Media - Mayor

Be honest

Keep your promises

Remember they are doing their job

You are always "on"

Nothing is "off the record"

Working With The Media - Mayor

On The Scene

Professional appearance at a scene is extremely important

TV videographers are constantly shooting scene video

The generic footage will portray you and the City

Using Social Media - Mayor

If you already have a Facebook page, also create a
 "official" elected position Facebook page.
 During a crisis-rely on staff for your social media pos
 Don't get political on social media
 Use your pages as a resource
 Show your citizens that you are human...just like the

When the "News" is bad

If you screwed up, say so
 Don't err on a slow news day
 Try to get all the bad news out all at once
 (reduces the shelf life of the story)
 Be out in front of the story whenever possible
 (don't let media "uncover" bad news)

When the "News" is bad

Consider your best strategy
 News conference? Individual interviews? No inter
 Anticipate questions media will ask and
 develop talking points about those questions
 Does your incident impact other agencies?
 Have you talked with them?

PIO or CEO? When and Why the Boss should talk

The SIZE of the issue plays a role
 Note the difference between *factual informat*
 and *policy issues*.
 Generally the boss speaks to policy issues.

PIO or CEO? When and Why the Boss should talk

There are times the public simply needs
 to hear from the Boss/Chief.
 Show who is in charge and responsible
 Show support for officers and employees
 Send condolences to family members
 Calm or reassure the public

The interview



A Scheduled Interview

Confirm the topic
Develop talking points
Anticipate questions, including questions you may hope the reporter doesn't ask
*Prepare written material (a takeaway for reporter)

A Scheduled Interview

Tell the truth
NEVER go "off the record"
Limit your comments to known facts
Don't exaggerate
Don't speculate

A Scheduled Interview

Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question
It's okay to say "I don't know"
Follow up with – "I can get back to you with that"
Explain omissions; never say "no comment"
Bridge comments – transition to what YOU want to say
Use positive language

Types of Questions

False Facts – Incorrect information.

Solution: do not repeat false information

Hypothetical – Asks you to forecast a reaction.

Solution: "That's a hypothetical question, there is no way I can respond to that."
Bridge to what you can respond to.

Phantom Authority/Absent Party –

No real source for comment – "Someone said."

Solution: Do not answer a blind charge.

"I'm not aware of that information, but what I do know is...."

Types of Questions

Omniscient Authority – Expects you to know everything

Solution: "That is not my area of expertise, but I can get the information for you..."

The Machine Gun – Multipart questions.

Solution: Answer the one you want or answer the issue raised by the questions

The interrupter – does not let you complete your thought

Solution: Ignore the interruption and answer the question later or listen and say you'll address it after you finish. "As I was saying..."

Types of Questions

The paraphrase – Unfairly and/or inaccurately restates what you say:

Solution: Don't get angry, just restate position carefully.
"I may not have made myself clear..."

Silence – Solution: Don't feel you have to fill voids.

Charged words – Question that has negative language

Solution: Don't repeat negative language. "To the contrary..."

The Ambush Interview

Ambush interviews are becoming more common.
What leads a TV station to resort to this tactic?
Silence on an issue can be your undoing...
- Return Phone Calls – Appear Responsive -

The Ambush Interview

If it happens, DO NOT RUN... Reporters love to get footage of someone dodging a camera or putting their hand in front of the lens.
Remain calm – stop – look the reporter in the eye.
Listen to the reporter's question(s)

The Ambush Interview

Answer(s)– “It’s important to me that we provide an accurate answer on that. In order to do that, I’m going to need a chance to do some research and talk with others to get you a full and accurate answer.”
“I’m not sure I have all the facts to provide you all the information the general public needs. I will get back to you as soon as I can with a public an accurate answer to that right now.”

Suggestions

Contact your Communications PIO immediately.
Have city staff record your interview.
Dedicate space on the city’s Web site for responding to the media and clarifying for the general public .