

Managing Your Message

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Introduction

- Who we are is what and how we communicate.
- How we communicate to the public and our stakeholder will “make us or break us”
- Two critical elements for effective communication:
 - Competence and Skill
 - Strategy and Plan

Strategic Communication Plan

- Stakeholders/who will you communicate to?
- What message do you want to get out?
- What specific information will you share?
- What facts, information and/or data support your position?
- What is the potential impact to the key stakeholders/public?

Know Your Basis for How and What to Communicate

- Be responsive to public communication policies in your jurisdiction
- Link to agency legal mandate and mission
- know and understand the various media outlets and their roles
- be prepared with your own plan
 - clear communication protocol/who communicates what and to whom.
 - have materials prepared about your programs/organization

HANDLING THE MEDIA

Strategies and Techniques

- SOCO'S
- BRIDGING
- FLAGGING
- HOOKING
- DUMPING
- PREPARING
- DO'S AND DON'TS

SOCO

SINGLE

OVERRIDING

COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE

Keep it simple and clear

Use Common language

BRIDGING

No matter what you are asked, getting the conversation back to your SOCO or key message.

FLAGGING

Alerting your listener and target audience that you are about to say something important.

HOOKING

Ending your answer to a question with a statement that encourages the interviewer to ask a follow-up question that you think is important.

THE DUMP

Taking responsibility and admitting a mistake, a problem or negative situation

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17166299/>

THREE P's

PREPARE

PRACTICE

PERFORM

- Know your subject matter
- Think of the ten worst questions that can be asked and have answers ready for all of them
- Have the staff work with you on preparation

THE DO'S

- Remain calm and project a relaxed, open and confident manner
- Get important facts out first
- Take the opportunity to educate the intended audience about your agency the work you do – your SOCO
- correct misconceptions or incorrect beliefs
- Be aware of your clothing, posture, non verbal communications

THE DO'S

- Establish credibility - Cite
 - experts
 - third party which might have audience appeal
 - examples to which the audience can relate
- Bring communication back to your SOCO
- Be honest, genuine, and sincere
- Admit mistakes and take responsibility if appropriate
- Use “we” versus “I”

THE DON'TS

- Never say “no comment”
- Never assume anything is “off the record”
- Do not say anything that you don't want to see on the front page of the newspaper or prime time TV
- Do not speculate or be drawn into speculation

THE DON'TS

- Do not argue or become defensive
- Do not repeat negative or incorrect information
- Don't take it personally/avoid defensive characteristics
- Do not answer a question for which you do not know the answer

IN ADVERSE SITUATIONS

- Acknowledge the fears or concerns which prompt anger and hostility
- Read audience "noise"
- Listen to questions and consider your answers carefully
- Make eye contact
- Minimize apprehension, if possible

IF YOU SAY YOU WILL DO SOMETHING – DO IT!

- Credibility is the life blood of most organizations
- Don't make promises you can't keep and never guarantee something that is out of your control
- Prepare for the future: if I asked you today what your SOCO is – would you be able to articulate it?

RESOURCES

- NIC - PMR: Public & Media Relations: Take Control of Your Message <http://nicic.gov/Library/022948>
- NIC - PMR: Public and Media Relations: Gaining Confidence and Competence <http://nicic.gov/Library/022472>
- HHS/SAMSA - Communicating In A Crisis: Risk Communications Guidelines For Public Officials, 2002.
[Www.Riskcommunication.Samhsa.Gov](http://www.riskcommunication.samhsa.gov)
- CIVICUS: A World Alliance For Citizen Participation, Handling The Media Toolkit, Under Resources At The Website: [Www.Civicus.Org](http://www.Civicus.Org).

Media Revolution

Web 2.0 and the Social Media

“Individuals increasingly take cues from one another rather than from institutional sources like corporations, media outlets, religions, and political bodies. To thrive in an era of Social Computing, companies must abandon top-down management and communication tactics, weave communities into their products and services, use employees and partners as marketers, and become part of a living fabric of brand loyalists.”

Source: Forrester

Types of Social Media

- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Vidcasts
- Photo/Video Sharing Sites (Flickr, Digg Youtube)
- Social Networks (Facebook, My Space)
- Wikis