



Media 101

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MWR For All Of Your Life



Media 101



Why talk to the media?

- You have an obligation to be accountable.
- You have an opportunity to get your message out.
- Bad news is like garbage: The longer you keep it, the more it stinks.
- It's Army policy: Maximum disclosure with minimum delay.

The ten elements of news:

- Immediacy
- Consequence
- Prominence
- Conflict
- Proximity
- Suspense
- Emotion
- Sex/Morality
- Oddity
- Progress



Media 101



How to avoid bad news

- Rely on, empower, and inform your PAO; ensure your staff does the same.
- Know where the bodies are buried.
- Factor public affairs into every decision, action, policy.
- Get to know media representatives and recognize their roles and responsibilities.
- If you don't want to hear it on the air or see it in print, don't do it or say it!



Media 101



Guiding the story

- MAKE IT EASY for the reporter.
 - Have fact sheets with quotes.
 - Have individuals identified to speak with reporter.
 - Let him/her know where/when the best photo ops are.
 - Give them a POC for follow-up questions.
 - Fill them with your enthusiasm.
- MAKE IT EASY for the PAO
 - Tie it in to Commander's message(s).
 - How does it support the military community?
 - Do NOT
 - refer to revenue or audience sizes.
 - ask him to “promote” your programs or services.



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What do you need to know in advance?

- Who is the reporter?
- For whom does (s)he work?
- What is (s)he looking for? (The angle)
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How (in what form)?
- Who is the audience?
 - You will be talking to individuals, not a shapeless, faceless mass with identical concerns.
 - Sort out supporters, opponents and undecideds.
 - Target the undecideds.
- What are your messages, headlines, and danger zones?



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Messages are not accidental (At least they shouldn't be)

- Prepare for each interview.
- What is the most important thing you have to say to your target audience? The second most important? The third? *These are your messages.*
- How can you communicate these to your target audiences most effectively?
- Great messages are supported by examples, figures, anecdotes, visuals and humor.

Great messages are not just about policy.

They are about how the policy affects people.



Media 101



Your control arsenal

- Pausing
- Blocking
- BRIDGING
- Repetition
- Consistency
- Headlining
- Assertiveness
- Headlining

“The questions don’t do the damage.

Only the answers do.”

- Sam Donaldson



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BLOCKING & Bridging

Deftly avoid the question

- Never say “No comment” or refuse to answer with hostility.
- Block only when there is a good reason for doing so.
- Explain briefly why you cannot answer.
- Then Bridge to your message.



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Headlining

- Verbally and nonverbally emphasize your main messages.
- Headline by stating the message up front, then supporting the message.
- Don't dilute your messages with verbiage or details not important to your target audience.
- The more times you repeat your headline, the more likely it will be used in print or on the air.



Media 101



The unexpected interview

- Expect the unexpected.
- Know your messages.
- Know who you're talking to and why.
- Treat all reporters equally.
- Negotiate ground rules/limits.
- Remain friendly and undefensive.
- Keep your sense of humor.



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