Wednesday, December 7, 2022

In the News:
Getting Ready
Pre-game: Before your interview
Do you know?

• Who is the reporter? What expertise? History? Prior reporting?
• Why is this reporter reaching out to you? What role do they expect you to fill? Who else is being interviewed?
• How much time devoted to this interview?
• What is the story? Does this reporter already have a conclusion to prove or, in search of that conclusion?
• When will this story be published/broadcast?
• Where will this story be published/broadcast?
Pre-game: Before your interview

What’s your headline?

• If you were writing the story, what’s the headline you’d write?
• What is the most important point you want to communicate?
• Where are potential pitfalls/traps/challenges to your goals?
Pre-game: Before your interview
What questions will you be asked? How will you answer?

• Specifically define what questions you may be asked.
• Understand where you may be challenged.
Pre-game: Before your interview

What’s your message?

**def. MESSAGE [mês-íj]**

A limited body of truthful information which is consistently conveyed by... an organization to provide the persuasive reasons for an audience to choose and act on behalf of their (agenda).

- **Limited**
  - An effective message is concise, 25 words or less

- **Truthful**
  - An effective message is accurate and clear

- **Consistent**
  - An effective message is consistently conveyed

- **Persuasive**
  - An effective message is convincing

- **Act**
  - An effective message provokes action

- **Values**
  - An effective message speaks to values
In the game:
Remember your audience

• Talk to the people who will see or hear your story; they’re more important than the reporter interviewing you.
• Be conversational, imagine you’re a guest at the dinner table or in the living room.
• Keep your language simple, and easy to understand.
In the game:
Deliver your message

• Go into the interview with one or two key points you want to make; stick with them.

• First impressions count: make your first words the most important, particularly on broadcast interviews.

• Frame your answers:
  • Strong, affirmative, declarative opening statement.
  • Fact(s) supporting
  • Strong conclusion reinforcing opening, key message
In the game:
Deliver your message

- **Use facts and details to support (not overwhelm) your message**
  When in doubt, choose anecdote over analysis

- **The rule of threes**
  “Government of the people, by the people, for the people”

- **Contrast and compare**
  “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.”

- **Lead**
  “The most important point is...”

- **Stay ‘on’ message**: Repetition is everything
In the game:
Strong offense, effective defense

• Use your words, don’t allow interviewer to put words into your mouth.
• Don’t repeat negatives, or charges made against you or your cause.
• Avoid “off the record”
• When you don’t know something, don’t fake it.
• No jokes.
• No temper.
In the game:
Agree on definitions & rules of engagement

**On the record:** All that is said can be quoted and attributed.

**Off the record:** Information is provided to provide a confidential explanation, not for publication or broadcast.

**Not for attribution:** what is said can be reported, but not attributed.

**Recording:** On phone or online (Zoom), reporters must inform you interview is being recorded. It is in your best interest to also record.
In the game:
Interview “DON’Ts”

DON’T “over answer.” When you’ve delivered your message, stop.
DON’T repeat or accept a negative when presented as part of a question.
“No, I don’t beat my dog.” “The way I see it...”
DON’T be provoked. Keep cool. If a interviewer makes you mad, don’t show it.
DON’T make jokes, you’re a lawyer, not a comedian.
DON’T fake it. When you don’t know an answer, say so.
DON’T go off the record when a camera or recording device is running.
DON’T assume a microphone is ever off.
In the game: Interview “DON’Ts”

DON’T speculate when asked to predict the future or address a hypothetical
DON’T answer irrelevant questions with no bearing on your agenda, your area of expertise, or the stated focus of the interview
DON’T accept a loaded premise that is negative or incorrect simply because it is presented as a question.
DON’T make choices you don’t have to, i.e. when asked to choose between two or more bad options.
DON’T get drawn into a fight with an absent adversary.
In the game: Blocking & Bridging

Blocking & Bridging

Deftly avoiding an unwelcome or unproductive question  |  Moving the discussion from unfriendly to friendly territory

Examples:
• “The way I see it is…..”
• “I think what you’re really asking is...”
• “That speaks to a bigger point...”
• “What’s really at issue here is..”
In the game: Blocking & Bridging

• Only “block” a question completely when there is good reason to do so.
• There’s almost never a reason for “no comment” or “I can’t answer that.”
• Every question is an opportunity to deliver your message.
Post game:
Review

• Any errors in facts? Seek correction(s)
• Any misrepresentation in translation? Seek clarification.
• Assess for sharing
  • Good for sharing with key audiences? Across social platforms? Website? Internal audiences?
• Any follow-up?
IN SUMMARY

PRE-GAME:
Know reporter, audience, purpose
Define message, ready answers

IN THE GAME:
Deliver your message
Remember “Dos & Don’ts”
Block & Bridge

POST GAME:
Correct, if needed
Share
Follow up