

Delivering Your Message

Working with media

Nuffield Canada

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Working with the Media



What makes the headlines? Good news stories or bad news stories?



Meeting the Media's needs

Dailies, weeklies, magazines, radio and TV
– all with different deadlines; different requirements

Media Communications 101

- TV – think visuals
- Radio – think fast
- Newspaper – think story

- What's the angle? The hook?
- Local news always wins

The Interview

“Live with discipline or live with regret.”

Pinball Clemons

Toronto Argonauts Head Coach

The Interview ...cont'd

“We are not your friends.”

- Leslie Stahl, CBS, 60 Minutes

“Explain it to me like I’m a 7 year old.”

- Denzel Washington, Philadelphia

The phone rings ...

- Be friendly
- Thank them for calling
 - “I’m just in the middle of something and would be happy to speak with you, but ...”
- Interview them...
 - always ask ‘why?’
- Be professional
- Remember this isn’t about “becoming famous”
- Do not agree to an interview until you are prepared

Key Interview Techniques: The Interviewee's Bill of Rights

- It is your right to give an interview only after you have prepared
- Ask the right questions (see next slide) to help you prepare
- Determine a mutually agreeable time when you will call the journalist back
- Take the time to prepare
- Call the journalist back

The Interviewee's Bill of Rights: What to Ask When the Journalist Calls

- Name, phone number?
- Which publication, TV or radio station?
- Which program or column?
- Focus of story?
- Anticipated length of interview?
- Who/will anyone else will be interviewed?
- When and where will the story run?
- What is the journalist's deadline?

Before you speak...

- Know who you are talking to
- Talk about what you know...but not too much
- Use personal and specific examples
- Avoid or explain industry terms
- KISS (easy to understand words and explanations, no jargon)

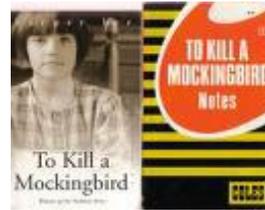
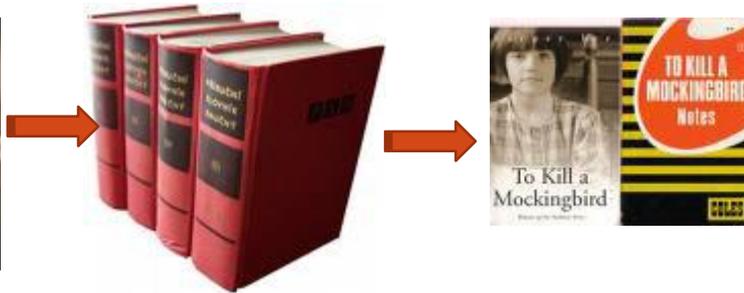
Ineffective



Effective



Keep it simple. Seriously.



KEY MESSAGES

- **NEVER** conduct an interview without them
- Introduce them at every opportunity
- Clear, concise, short
- Everyday language
- The message remains the same
- Say it differently to avoid sounding scripted

Key Messages & Support Points

Definition:

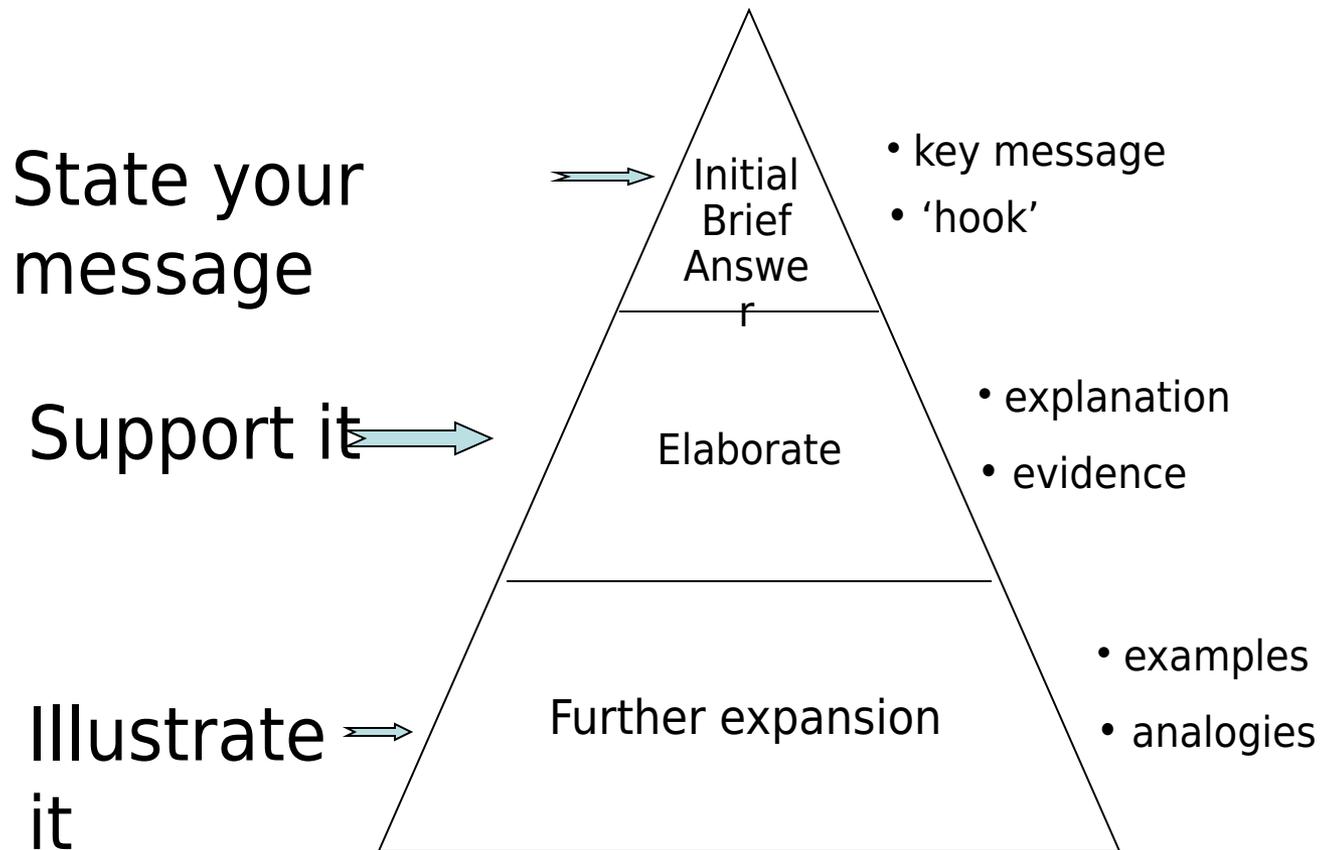
A key message is a basic tool to position your organization, products, research, issues, etc. It provides clear focus and is the most important idea that you want your audience to take away from your communication.

Guidelines (*not laws*)

- ➔ A point you want the audience to know and remember
- ➔ Why the issue/program/policy is important
- ➔ Draw the reporter's interest by framing it in newsworthy terms
- ➔ Key point to stress in an interview
- ➔ Maximum of three (3)
- ➔ Help you to speak consistently

Key Interview Techniques

Source: Barry McLoughlin Associates Inc.



Key Message – Example #1

Message:

- Canadian beef is among the safest in the world

Support:

- We have a rigorous testing and inspection program.
- Specified Risk Materials are removed.

Illustrate:

- The World Organization for Animal Health considers Canada a “Controlled BSE Risk Country.” This shows recognition for the effectiveness of Canada’s surveillance, mitigation and eradication measures.
- Major export markets are confident in the product and have reopened their borders for export.

Key Message – Example #2

Message:

- Bees play a vital role in food production and we need to protect them from disease.

Support:

- Flowering plants rely on bees for pollination so they can produce fruit and seeds.
- Over the last five years, the bee industry has been losing 35 to 45 per cent of our bees annually and losses continue to be high.
- We need funding now to develop best management practices that will help beekeepers manage disease and ensure future supply.

Illustrate:

- One-third of the food we eat is the direct result of the honey bee pollination. Without bees, any fruit or vegetable that's produced through pollination would be gone.
- Every 3rd mouthful of food is produced by bees pollinating crops.

Key Interview Techniques: Deliver Messages in Quotes & Sound Bites

What Makes for a Good Quote?

Brevity – the average radio or TV sound bite is 10 seconds long; the average print quote is 1 to 3 lines long

“The Olympics can no more lose money than a man can have a baby.”

- Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau

Self-contained (stands on its own)

“A falling Canadian dollar is good for exports.”

Everyday language (not jargon)

“With satellite technology we can determine where fertilizer is needed in a field.”

Key message techniques



Deliver messages in quotes and sound bites

Colourful or metaphorical

“The more you sweat, the luckier you get.”

- Ray Kroc, McDonald's

Passionate or energetic

“We are a net exporter of fruits, grains and meat... It is a crime that there should be food banks in our communities.”

Key message techniques



Blocking and bridging

Blocking

The ability to change the direction of the conversation; one which may be incorrect, irrelevant to you, confrontational, hostile or an undesirable hypothetical situation

Bridging

Smoothly redirecting the conversation from one line of discussion to another that will allow you to deliver your key message

Key message techniques

Blocking and bridging examples



“Let’s look at this issue from a broader perspective...”

“There’s another, more important concern here and that is...”

“Let’s not lose sight of the underlying problem...”

“There’s another issue at play here...”

“Have you considered the equally important question? That is...”

“I see what you’re getting at, but I think the real issue is...”

“That’s factually incorrect. This is about...”

Anticipating Questions & Controversy:

- Loaded Question
- Bait Question
- Personal Opinion
- Speaking on Behalf of Others
- Don't Know the Answer
- Persistent Questioning
- Hypothetical Question
- Rumour
- Multi-Part Question
- Sympathetic Approach

Key Interview Techniques: Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

- Pace
- Inflection
- Pauses
- Confident tone
- Words
- Energy

Key Interview Techniques: Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

Tone and Attitude

Focus on projecting that you are:

- Modest
- Reasonable and open
- Relaxed and friendly
- Positive
- Confident

Stay away from sounding:

- Smug and arrogant
- Hostile and defensive
- Uptight
- Negative
- Trying too hard to please

Key Interview Techniques: Interview Dos and Don'ts

DO...

- Judiciously use relevant facts and figures
- Personalize and humanize the story with anecdotes
- Repeat your key messages
- Be passionate about your topic while being rational
- Be yourself
- Be sensitive to journalists' deadlines
- Stop talking once you've made your point

Key Interview Techniques: Interview Dos and Don'ts

DON'T...

- Use jargon, acronyms or “researcheze”
- Repeat the question
- Repeat negative or controversial words
- Over-answer
- Be condescending
- Assume the reporter knows or understands the issue
- Become hostile and lose your cool
- Fake an answer, speculate or lie
- Stray from your agenda
- Agree to speak “off the record”
- Say “no comment”

Preparation & Confidence = Success

