

MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Traditional Media is on the decline:

- Traditional newsrooms at a local and national level are shrinking
- There are less reporters, and these reporters are covering more beats
 - They are swamped, have less time, resources, etc.
- But, placements in traditional media are still really valuable
 - Gives us the ability to reach an influential audience
 - Voters, journalists, policymakers
 - Allows you to build your credibility up as an expert or a thought leader on your issue

Digital Media is on the rise:

- Digital publications are growing rapidly
- These outlets are trying to cultivate a very niche, particular audiences (e.g., ThinkProgress, Vox)
- Though they are often perceived as less authoritative than traditional outlets, getting a placement in these publications is still extremely valuable
 - Allows you to reach a targeted audience (e.g., progressives who read Think Progress)
 - Allows you to build your credibility up as an expert among that audience, among journalists, and even policy makers
 - Digital content has the potential to go viral and reach hundreds and thousands of people through social media and other peer-to-peer sharing mediums
- It's also still extremely valuable to get placements in hyper-local, small, digital outlets, and for the same reasons as listed above

WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Ask questions:

- What is the reporter's name and who do they represent? Get the reporter's contact information.
- What is the topic of the story? What angle is the reporter pursuing?
- What is the reporter's deadline?
- Will the interview be broadcast? Live or taped?
- It's OK to ask for time to get your thoughts together before the interview and call the reporter back.

Before you say yes to the interview:

- What is your goal for doing the interview?
- What messages do you want to get across? Write down 3-5 concise messages.
- Are you the right spokesperson for the issue?

- Research the reporter's recent stories. Search for the reporter's Twitter account to gauge his or her interests.

If you decide to say no to the interview:

- Cultivate the relationship by giving them a resource--another spokesperson to go to or some background information in writing.
- Inform the Communications Team; we keep data on media inquiries.
- In some circumstances, consider issuing a press statement in lieu of doing an interview.

If you decide to say yes to the interview:

- What are the 3-5 concise, impactful messages that you want to deliver in the interview? Write them down.
- The Communications Team can help you frame key messages for your programs and initiatives.
- Prepare answers for questions that you don't want to be asked.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Bridging

Answer the question, then bridge or transition into your key message using phrases like:

- But perhaps an equally important issue here is....
- A more useful way to look at it is...
- Keep in mind that...
- More importantly...
- That's not the issue. The issue is....

Flagging

Call attention to your message and flag important information with phrases like:

- The four most important things about this study are:
- Our bill looks at three key policies...
- The key thing to remember is...
- At the end, it's critical we focus on...

Hooking

Bait the reporter into asking you about something, hook them in, or tease them with phrases like:

- You won't believe what we have coming up next year..
- We like this policy but it's nothing compared to an even more inclusive bill we're working on...
- On the horizon, we are looking at a new....

INTERVIEW TIPS BY MEDIUM

Print

- Eliminate distractions. Turn off your mobile phone, shut your office door.
- Practice with a colleague in advance to build your confidence and empower yourself to take control of the interview from the very first question.
- Have your key messages written down in front of you.
- Sit up straight. Good posture will ensure that you sound authoritative.
- It's OK to ask the reporter if she or he will send questions or themes in advance of the interview.
- It's OK to followup with additional resources.

Radio

- Ask if there will be listener call-ins
- Stay focused
- Warm up your voice
- Speak clearly

TV

- Look at the reporter, not the camera
- Don't get burned by a hot mic
- Give concise, conversational answers
- Avoid vocal fillers, fidgeting and hand gesticulation
- Wear solid colors, no black/white or busy prints

Web

- Frame the shot beforehand and make sure your head and shoulders are in the shot; it's always good to do a run through beforehand
 - Make sure you're not looking at the screen from an unflattering angle
 - Make sure there aren't any problematic images in the background
- Make sure there aren't any other distractions in the background
- Look at the camera, not the monitor
- Treat this like you would any other interview--that is, be sure to utilize the tips the other interview tips!

INTERVIEW 101

Research the reporter

Keep your guard up

Know your talking points

Speak in sound bites