

# Media Relations Training

Shawna Randolph Communications



PROTECTING YOUR REPUTATION



# Welcome and Introductions

## ■ Facilitator – Shawna Randolph

- 33 years in PR/Journalism industries
- 15 years in T.V. news industry (10 with CTV Edmonton, formerly CFRN & 5 with CTV-Two's AB Primetime)
- 2008 and on - Owner of S.R. Communications
- 17 years with media relations for COE & then for EHS





# Welcome and Introductions

CASS professional practice standard competencies (SLQS and LQS):

- Building effective relationships (SLQS 1)
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning (SLQS 2 + LQS 2)
- School Authority Operations & Resources (SLQS 6)
- Fostering Effective Relationships (LQS 1)
- Managing School Operations & Resources (LQS 8)



# MEDIA 101 – The Basics

## What you will learn today:

- What makes the news media “tick”.
- How to effectively interact with members of the news media, to get your messages out & also how to be proactive with YOUR storytelling.
- That YOU should be the one in control, not reporters.  
(*informal survey*)



# MEDIA 101 – The Basics



# MEDIA 101 – The Basics

## What makes news?

- Emotion and “drama, drama, drama”
- Great pictures and video and a good “human element”
- Scandals and cover-ups
- Emergencies, natural disasters
- Anything “new” and “current”
- Anything consequential to their audience
- Children, seniors and animals in stories



**Basically, anything that creates a “buzz.”**

# MEDIA 101 – The Basics

## Generating News:

- News releases
- Social media activity & viral videos on the internet
- Contact from their viewers, readers, listeners
- Inquisitive reporters
- Planned feature series
- Municipal government public meetings
- Other government announcements (province, feds)
- Reaction to an event linked to the region/province





# Understanding the news media

## Deadlines and pressures:

- Constant deadlines while used to people “hiding”
- Pressures from above for exclusives
- Competing with peers within same media outlet
- Competing with other media outlets in general, doing more with fewer resources
- ALL OUTLETS want to be #1 (exclusives)







# Personalities to deal with...

- Type “A”s
- Very Impatient
- Want to make names for themselves ... but still have compassionate side.  
It's up to you to find it



## Controlling all dealings with the media

- The media does not make someone “look bad”. A person can make **THEMSELVES** look bad when they don’t conduct themselves well.
- The key is to control yourself and control all conversations with reporters – don’t let them take control – YOU set the pace.





# Crisis Messaging:

## Key Messages:

- Concern, empathy, compassion
- Accountable
- Responsible - investigations & promises



**Face the music if there's something contentious.**



# Controlling all dealings with the media

**Don't block!**



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## When they reach out:

- Always react right away (pass along request to communications).
- Don't do a “cold-call” interview **ever!**



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Preparing for the interview:

- Think of the opportunity to speak to a certain audience.
- Make sure you know what you can or can't say.
- Know your messages/key points.



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Preparing for the interview:

- Be honest...Your credibility and that of the corporation is on the line. *“You are better off telling the truth, because then you don’t have to remember what you said”.*
- Stay within your area of responsibility and expertise.
- Know the 5 “W’s” and 2 “H’s”
- Don’t be an unnamed source.
- Rehearse!



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Paraphrase

- Reporter incorrectly paraphrases what you said.
- If it's wrong...correct it.
- “*Would you say*”... questions are usually paraphrased and could end up being a quote attributed directly to you.

## Bait words



PROTECTING YOUR REPUTATION



# Controlling all dealings with the media



**Unsubstantiated/hypothetical questions**  
**Rapid fire questions**



# Controlling all dealings with the media



## Silence Tactic

- Reporter does not respond when you complete an answer and you blurt something out that you regret.
- Ten seconds can seem like a lifetime.
- When you are finished with your statement, remain silent yourself.



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## The actual interview:

- Maintain good posture & visual distractions (*70, 20, 10 rule*)
- Be aware of your personal nervous habits.
- Be aware of distractions around you.



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## The actual interview:

- Talk to the reporter...NOT the camera (in-person interviews)
- Don't try to take the microphone
- Watch for "hand talking"
- No sunglasses
- Don't "dress up"
- Always assume the cameras/tape recorders are rolling
- Listen!
- Deliver key message statements up front – repeat. (*bridging*)



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Bridging examples:

- *“Before I answer that, you should know ...”*
- *“It’s important for people to know that ...”*
- *“The key point to remember is ...”*
- *“My opinion is not what counts. We’re here to speak about...”*



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Tips to remember:

- **NEVER** say no comment - *“When you say “No comment”, it means to me that you are admitting guilt, because if you’re not, you’d tell me what your position is”* - Wolf Blitzer, CNN.
- If you can’t comment, explain why and never say “no comment”.
- Don’t Lie
- There is no such thing as being “Off the Record”.



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Tips to remember:

- Correct misinformation immediately.
- Don't say it if you don't want it used.
- Avoid jargon or lingo.
- Be yourself.
- Don't argue or lose your temper.



# Controlling all dealings with the media

## Types of interviews:

- One on one interview - let the reporter start (main messages out first!)
  - In studio (TV or radio); in person; over the phone; virtual
- In a scrum, take control from the start. Tell the group you want to answer everyone's question, but let's keep it orderly and ask one question at a time. Then give an opening statement before questions.







# Now we practice.