

MEDIA RELATIONS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTIONS



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TODAY'S MEDIA

- Technology has dramatically changed information sharing
 - Internet
 - Social media
 - Blogs, podcasts, RSS, et.
 - Smart phones, PDAs
- Market share decreasing for:
 - Broadcast media/ TV news
 - Newspaper circulations



TODAY'S MEDIA

- Increased pressure and facing uncertainty
- Journalists asked to do more with less
- Time is of the essence
 - Who gets “what” story first?

WHO ARE REPORTERS?

- Seeking information – It's their job!
- Tremendous pressure from editors for stories
- Short deadlines, lean staff
- Competition on multiple fronts:
 - Social media
 - Print vs. Electronic
- Reporters are not the enemy.



MEDIA RELATIONS

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- ▶ Provides an opportunity to get information out and tell your story
 - ▶ Voter and Media education
 - ▶ Proactive component
 - ▶ Dispel myths or inaccuracies
 - ▶ Drive the discussion effectively
 - ▶ Reach your critical audience

MEDIA RELATIONS

- **Where Media Gets Information**
 - Internet
 - The public – candidates, special interest groups
 - White Papers/Reports
 - Industry Trade Publications
 - Past Media Coverage
 - Blogs/Message Boards/Community Forums
 - Other Media
 - Your Office

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Be **proactive** rather than reactive
 - Voter and media education
 - “The basics of the election process”
 - Routine press releases
 - Public service announcements
 - Post frequently asked questions on website

MEDIA RELATIONS

- **Be Ready**
 - Timing is everything!
 - Keep it Simple
 - Formulate with Input/Participation from Key Players
 - Closely Guard All Confidential Documents
 - Get accurate information together
- **Act quickly**
 - Be Prepared to Respond Quickly

MEDIA RELATIONS

- **Always comment**
 - Do not speak without being thoroughly prepared.
 - Focus on message.
- **Keep positive attitude** even when under attack.
 - Never show emotion or anger!
- Put **ego aside** for the greater good.
 - Your message becomes the organization's position.
 - Sometimes it is best to pass the baton to someone else.
- Never be afraid to say "I don't know, I'll find out and get back to you."

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Think of every media contact as an “**Opportunity**”.
- During times of crisis, **be available** – lack of information could be perceived negatively.
- Do not fear the media.

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Always comment
- Speak with **one voice** to ensure clear, accurate communication
- **Be consistent with information**
 - Provide Consistent and Convenient Location
 - Regular Press Briefings
 - Spokespersons/Media Contact(s)
 - Messaging
 - Be fair
 - Provide information in a non-partisan manner

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Coordinate your messaging
 - **Department of State/Division of Elections**
 - **Department of State Communications Director**
 - **Your local County Administration**
- Get Help

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Keep media informed as information becomes available
- Keep lines of communication open with the media

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Consider the limitations of office
 - Physical layout
 - Visibility of canvassing board, ballot counting process, etc.
 - Transparency to media and public

MEDIA RELATIONS

- **BE HONEST!**
 - **Never Lie.**
 - You will get caught
 - Your reputation will be on the line
- **Do not leave the media empty-handed**
 - Be a resource – provide useful information – Media Kits
 - Respect deadlines
- **Listen to the question**
 - Stick to the focus of the story
 - You do not have to tell everything you know
 - There is no “Off the record”

MEDIA MATERIALS – MEDIA KIT

- **Fact Sheet**

- Comprehensive, but easy to understand
- Handouts and Online

- **Q&A**

- Make it easy to understand – consider your audience
- Drive the message – ask questions you want to answer
- Good interview preparation tool – public and media resource

MEDIA MATERIALS – MEDIA KIT

- **Statistics, Maps, Charts, etc.**
 - Think of visuals – photos, videos, props, demos, etc.
- **Success Stories or Profiles**
 - Make the story come alive with real people and real stories
 - Use real examples whenever possible
- **Make Your Message Memorable**
 - Be innovative when making announcements

DEALING WITH MEDIA

BE PREPARED!

- **Be prepared for success**
 - Speak simply
 - Be brief, but avoid yes/no answers.
 - Stay away from statistics in oral interviews
 - Avoid professional jargon
 - Avoid acronyms
- **Shape your message**
 - Be brief, say what you mean
 - Concentrate on your most important points
 - Use your Fact Sheet and Q & A Sheet
 - Stop talking when done!

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

What is a Crisis?

(3 different types)

- Operational Crisis – Emergency (Reactive)
- Organizational Crisis – Issue Management (Proactive)
- Organizational Crisis – Reputation Repair (Reactive)

DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

- **Emergency**: The unknown, unpredictable...
 - *(natural disaster; technology/equipment related; human error)*
- **Issue Management**: Unstable condition involving the likelihood of an impending abrupt or decisive change
 - *(critical report or media coverage, imminent legal decision)*
- **Reputation Repair**: Integrity or reputation of an individual or organization is threatened
 - *(potential scandal)*

HANDLING A CRISIS

Crisis Communication Principles

- **Contact the Department of State immediately.**
- Never try to lie, deny or hide involvement.
- Ignoring a situation can make the matter worse.
- The public and media will usually decide what they are interested in.
- Coordinate message.
- Remember your stakeholders – the voters.
- Promote voter confidence in your communications.

HANDLING A CRISIS

Coordinated Communications Plan:

- Scheduled **Press Conference**
- Meeting with **Editorial Board**
- Information to **feature writer**
- **Create Fact Sheet** for dissemination and posting
- Coordinated **webpage** messaging
- Draft and distribute **PSA's**
- Create earned media **photo-op event**
- Create **Feature News Release**
- Secure **Op-Ed** Placement

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Development of Communications Plan

Do It NOW!

- Media list, Fact Sheets, Q & A, Media Kits
- Primary Contact Points – Front Desk Phones, etc.
- Assignment of Key Roles
 - Spokesperson
 - Staff Contact with Director/Division of Elections, DOS Communications Director
- Message Development – Develop Scenarios
- Media Training for staff

MEDIA RELATIONS – OTHER POINTERS

- Always assume that you may be on video or in microphone range.
- There is no “Off the Record”.
- You may be taken out of context – it can and will happen frequently .
- Be careful with your message!
 - Corrections- Don't be afraid to contact reporters immediately if you want a correction .

FINAL THOUGHTS...

- Maintain a Professional Working Relationship with the Media.
- Don't Burn Bridges.
- Reporters can be your advocate when you are trying to get information out!
- **Prepare, Coordinate, Communicate!**

MEDIA RELATIONS

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