



WHEN THE MEDIA CALLS: Tips for being prepared

Every media interview is an opportunity to communicate your messages and secure publicity that will increase awareness of your company, or in this case, to dispel fear and focus on fact-based decisions. The key to success is to be prepared and rehearse before the phone ever rings.

Develop Effective “Sound Bite” Messages

In today’s fast-paced world, the average television news story lasts one and a half minutes and can be as short as one minute in local newscasts. To work in that structure, your messages need to be developed and delivered as self-contained “sound bites” under 7 seconds.

For example, if the reporter asks how many clients were affected by a cruise cancellation, you could respond by saying, “When Happy Sails Cruise Line cancelled its sailing, three of my clients were affected. I was able to help them by ...” or “When the travel ban was announced, I was able to get ahold of the airline and reroute my client home.”

Even in the print medium, your chances for successful communication are enhanced if you keep your messages short and simple. Think of your responses as quotable with minimal extrapolating and avoid unnecessary descriptors / added words.

Key Messages: begin by asking these questions

- What is it that you most want to communicate to your target audience?
- Who is the outlet I’m speaking with and their audience?
- Why does your company want to be in the media?
- What do you want to communicate about your company’s specific products/services and competitive edge?

Things to remember when developing media messages:

- Concentrate on three key points. Don't confuse or dilute your message with unnecessary information.
- Keep your message points brief. Use 7 seconds as your guide.
- Keep your messages simple. Avoid technical jargon, acronyms or too many statistics. Remember that you are not delivering your message to your typical client. You're speaking to an audience who might know very little about your field.