



BUILDING COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



Communicating effectively requires...

- Discipline.
- Preparation.
- Keeping your story & message simple.
- Believing in your story...and showing it.
- Adapting your messages to the audience.

HOW TO ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE

Working With the Media



- It's necessary. Not optional.
- It's an opportunity. Not a threat.
- Preparation. Everyone needs it.
- Control. Know the rules of the game.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- General Public
- Donors
- Prospective Donors
- Staff
- Non-Profit Community
- Springfield
- Media

THE STATE OF THE MEDIA

The bad news is:

- Media is increasingly rushed, ill-informed, simplistic.
- Journalists and bloggers gravitate towards controversial, bad news.
- News environment is more diffuse, more cluttered.
- Negative sentiment

The good news is:

- Your organization has great, newsworthy stories to tell.
- Following simple rules can ensure you maximize opportunities in any given story/situation.
- Reporters are always looking for content and a good source

HOW TO PREPARE



HOW TO PREPARE

- You have the right to time.
- You have the right to know the story angle
- You have the right to prepare.
- You have the right to shape your message.
- You have the right to remain silent.

HOW TO PREPARE

- **Research** the reporter and his/her level of knowledge; understand the story ahead of time.
- Have **two messages** you absolutely want to get across, no matter what the questions are.
- **Have a story or example** to illustrate your messages.
- **Prepare** for the worst-case scenario and toughest questions.



WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

Key Messages

- These are the two or three things that describe who you are and what you do
- These are the things you want people to know about your organization
- Use them in good times and bad
- They should be short and memorable

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

Supporting Messages

- Proof points that support your key messages
 - Tell them a story that illustrates your point
 - Show them how you live up to what you say in your key messages
- Factoids
 - Facts and figures that back up your key messages

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

Situational Messages

- These are specific to the issue that the reporter is asking about
- They should still incorporate or reflect your key messages
- To create these, draw up a list of every question you can think the reporter might ask and draft your answers in advance
 - Think worst case scenario
 - Recruit others to brainstorm questions

STAY ON MESSAGE

- They call it “staying on message,” or message discipline, and there’s a reason it works.
- Emphasize your points
- True, you’ve said it a million times, but this is the first time the reporter and your audience is hearing it.
- Use the name of your organization, not “I” or “We.”

THE INTERVIEW



THE INTERVIEW

- You are prepared
- You know what THEY want to talk about
- You know what *YOU* want to talk about

How do you make that happen?

THE INTERVIEW

It's all about control...

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES -

Bridging & Flagging

BRIDGING

- “I can’t speak to that, but what I can tell you is...”
- “Historically that was the case, but today...”
- “Before we get off that subject, let me point out...”
- “That’s right, but let me put things in perspective...”

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES - Bridging & Flagging

FLAGGING

- “The most important thing for people to know is...”
- “Here is what is important...”
- “The main point is...”
- “What I really want to make clear is...”

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES: Q&A

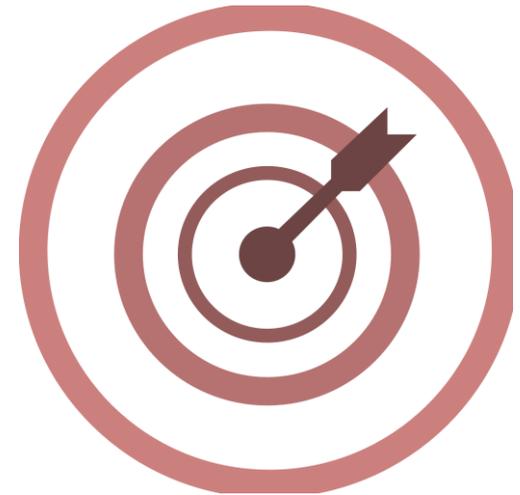
THE USUAL APPROACH...

Q/A, Q/A, Q/A...



THE BETTER APPROACH...

- **Q > A > Message**
- **Q > A > Point Of View**
- **Q > A > Message**



WHAT TO DO

DO

- Say “Hello” and “Thank you for having me.”
- Bridge to your messages – early and often.
- Remain calm & composed.
- Confirm you are on the right track with the reporter.
- Disagree with negative assertions (on your terms).
- It is OK to not have the answer.
- Repeat yourself: your answer is your answer.
- Be yourself, personable and honest.
- Use question, “Is there anything else you’d like to add?”
- Remember that the entire conversation is on the record.

WHAT TO AVOID

DON'T

- Repeat negative language.
- Speculate.
- Use jargon, buzzwords, acronyms.
- Say, “no comment.”
- Stray off message.
- Argue with the reporter.
- Fill silence.

REPEATING THE NEGATIVE

Think positive, not negative.

Q: “When did you stop beating your dog?”

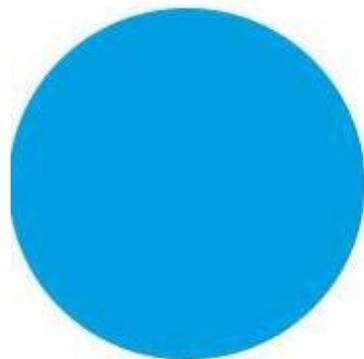
A: “I treat my dog well and am a strong believer that dog welfare is a top priority...”

Q: If this is such a great idea, why hasn't it been done before?

A: There is right time for everything. We think this is the right time. There is a convergence of need, expertise and desire. And we're the right organization to lead this effort.



REPEATING THE NEGATIVE



USA TODAY WEEKEND

A GANNETT COMPANY



Reviewed.com

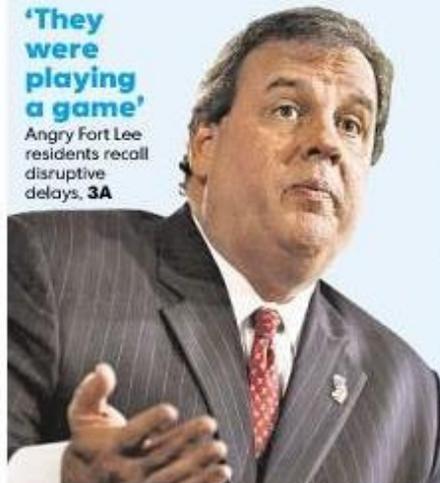
THE BEST OF CES

SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

FROM TOP: AP/GETTY IMAGES; BOOMBERG; EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

'They were playing a game'

Angry Fort Lee residents recall disruptive delays. **3A**



Christie: 'I am not a bully'

Governor tries to put to rest a scandal, smooth the edges of his persona

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie

Martha T. Moore
USATODAY

NEWS ANALYSIS

Gov. Chris Christie was definitive Thursday about whether his aides caused traffic jams for political payback: He knew nothing about it, and when he asked, they lied to him.

He also tried to lay to rest a nagging question. "I am who I am, but I am not a bully," the New Jersey Republican said. "I don't hide my emotions from people. I am not a focus-group-tested, blow-dried candidate or governor. ... Some people

your problem.

It has been asked before whether Christie indulges in political revenge. The answer is paramount if he is going to run for president in 2016.

Thursday, Christie avoided rolling his eyes, pointing a finger or calling anyone "stupid" — except staffers he had dumped. Bipartisan cooperation is his style, he said, not bullying. "It is the rare moment in this office when I raise my voice," he said.

Character and temperament (as the phrase goes) are central in any presidential campaign. If Christie is going to run — and everyone who wants a robust democratic process

blunt and unpleasant.

For one thing, if he is the GOP nominee, he will have an uphill battle with women. They lean Democratic, and he could be running against Hillary Rodham Clinton.

For another, Christie's personality is a bigger part of his national appeal than his ideas about governing. He has burnished his persona with a skilled use of media, from *Saturday Night Live* to YouTube videos of his dust-ups at town hall meetings.

Christie's staff promptly put out a video of the governor apologizing to the citizens of his state and accepting responsibility for the mess. But he should probably lay off dressing



IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE...

- Keep your message short and simple
- Tie your message to a story
- Your audience wants to know the “so what” or “what’s in it for me”
- Treat this as a conversation between two people. Be yourself, be honest and enjoy the interview.
- There’s no such thing as off-the-record

One for the road...

