



Media Training

For Higher Education

Pinnacle Communications Group





Academics of Media Training

Educators getting their initial introduction to the news or influencer interview process sometimes describe it as **counterintuitive**.

The academic publication process, to which they are accustomed, focuses on disseminating a scope of work in its entirety.

When doing a non-academic interview, entirety is replaced by succinctness.



Introduction

Media relations is a component of public relations focused on building, maintaining, and leveraging relationships with journalists and media outlets to develop and manage your personal and institutional brand.

Media training prepares you to communicate clearly, confidently, and authentically.

There is an intertwined spectrum of media relations activities - from basic relationship building to announcements, conversations, and crisis management.

It is a dynamic, ongoing, evolutionary process. Media Relations plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, building brand awareness, and achieving overall organizational objectives.

This handbook focuses on strategies for communicating concisely, handling challenging questions, and projecting a positive and professional image. With the right strategy, **every interaction can be an opportunity.**

3 Things to think about when framing your thoughts

Prepare

- Identify 2-3 key points you want to be your core message.
- Develop concise ways to express them.

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- Think about the interview topic and how your area of expertise provides solutions or improves lives.
 - Consider concise, impactful answers.

Practice

Anticipate

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- Are there any possible negatives related to this topic?
 - Be prepared to talk about it positively.
 - Be ready to confidently acknowledge differing views and articulately define the good.



Q and A

Before beginning your media engagement journey, create a key message document. Consider likely questions and the points you want to convey. Combine the two to formulate answers that are easy to understand, memorable, and actionable.

- Prioritize Your Talking Points
- Keep Your Language Simple
- Make Your Message Meaningful

It's not a script. You don't have to memorize it. This is the foundation for all your interviews. It's a living document that grows with each experience. Creating it and familiarizing yourself with it will keep your message concise and clear.



Concise

On **television, radio, or podcast**, try your best to condense your answers to **30-40 seconds**. This helps you maintain focus on the most impactful elements of your message.

Print and **online** journalists allow for greater detail, but still keep your answers to **two minutes or less**.

In all cases, allow the reporter to decide if he/she want more detail.

Confidence

If you don't have the answer, it's okay. Be sure you are prepared to concede you might not have an answer in a way that illustrates forthright confidence. You'll get the information someone needs. Nothing damages credibility more than fumbling for an answer or giving out bad information.

Common Sense

Be human and natural when you speak. Don't overthink. A little commone sense can go a long way.



Always on the Record

There is no such thing as *off-the-record*. Always presume that everything you say and do will be in the story.

Journalists, particularly in less formal mediums like podcasting, may start your interview with an “off-the-record” conversation to establish a casual atmosphere. Similarly, they may ask for additional “off-the-record” details after the interview is complete.

Don't be afraid if they want to go off-the-record. Ninety percent of the time, they legitimately only want to talk. Just always keep your mind *on* the record and speak accordingly.



Positive

Always speak positively. Even in the most difficult situations, it is possible to speak positively. Convey solutions that your expertise or research offers to the situation being discussed.

Purpose

Let your knowledge and expertise speak for itself. There's no need to directly plug your work, unless asked. The expertise you're showcasing will promote your brand.

Posture

How you say it can be just as important as what you say. Body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and tone of voice all impact how a message is received.



Notes

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