STAYING ON MESSAGE

Thriving in the New Media Environment

Legislative Leadership: the Art, the Politics, the Challenge
February 18, 2011
Washington, D.C.

Gene Rose
NCSL Communications Director
gene.rose@ncsl.org
It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my people across the seas who will make our cause their own…The tasks will be hard; there may be dark days ahead and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield.
TODAY’S AGENDA

• The Media’s Role
• The Social Network
• How to Develop Messages
• Secrets of the Interview Trade
• The Role of Leaders
What Makes News

- Winners and losers
- Heroes and villains
- Criticism, controversy, conflict
- Trend or change
- New, unusual or different
Daily Challenges to a Journalist

- Deadlines
- Write stories that have to be approved by an editor
- Can only report what people tell them
- Subject of endless ‘sales pitches’
- Don’t write headlines or decide programming
Volunteers needed to help torture survivors
Lincoln, Nebraska, Journal Star

Governor Signs Open Records Law With Teeth
Kansas Publisher

Legislators Say Fix School Funding During Breakfast
Cincinnati Enquirer

2 States May See Delegates Halved
The New York Times

Base Closings Get Bush’s OK; Congress Next
The Indianapolis Star

Judges Appear More Lenient on Crack Cocaine
The Wall Street Journal

Police Told By Mayor to Stop Looting
The Patriot News (Harrisburg, PA)
### Legislators

1. News tips from inside the legislature
3. Conversation/Introspection
4. Editor Assignments
5. News tips from outside the legislature
6. Other News Outlets

### Reporters

1. Conversation/Introspection
2. News tips from inside the legislature
3. News tips from outside the legislature
5. Editor Assignments
6. Other News Outlets
Interviewee’s Bill of Rights

You Have the Right to:

✓ Know the topic
✓ Know the format
✓ Buy time
✓ Have time to answer the question
✓ Correct reporter’s misstatements
✓ Use notes
✓ Record the interview (based on state laws)
Interviewee’s Bill of Rights

You Do **Not** Have the Right to:

- Know the questions in advance
- See the story in advance
- Change your quotes
- Edit the story
- Expect your view be the only view
- Demand article be published
A Reporter’s Lexicon

- **Off the record**: Material may not be published or broadcast. Period.

- **Not for attribution**: Information may be published, but without revealing identity of the source.

- **Background**: Usually means not for attribution. Confirm with reporter.

- **Deep background**: Usually means off the record. Make sure it does.
“There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

Mark Twain

Credit: Time Magazine, Town’s End Books
“slow”  “contentious”  “unresponsive”

41% don’t believe contact public official helps

2/3 of 18- to 24-year-olds believe no one is listening
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Trust Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military Officers</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Druggists, Pharmacists</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>Medical Doctors</td>
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<td>Police Officers</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
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<td>Judges</td>
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<td>Auto Mechanics</td>
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<td>Bankers</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>TV Reporters</td>
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<td>Newspaper Reporters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Officeholders</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Members of Congress</td>
<td>09</td>
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<td>Lobbyists</td>
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Data from the Gallup Poll, Honesty and Ethics Poll, November 2010.
The Changing News Landscape

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<td>Television</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>RSS/Custom webpage</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<td>18%</td>
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<td>Social networking/Twitter</td>
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<td>13%</td>
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<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</table>

Source: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2010
The Changing News Landscape

Trends in News Consumption “Yesterday”

- Watched news on TV
- Read a daily newspaper
- Listened to news on radio
- Got news online

Source: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2010
## Broadcast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network/Show</th>
<th>Viewers</th>
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<td>NPR</td>
<td>26,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 Minutes</td>
<td>15,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBC Nightly News</td>
<td>10,100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABC World News Tonight</td>
<td>8,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBC Dateline</td>
<td>8,300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBS Evening News</td>
<td>6,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>O’Reilly Factor</td>
<td>3,800,000</td>
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<td>Daily Show with Jon Stewart</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry King Live</td>
<td>930,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Maddow</td>
<td>876,000</td>
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# Newspapers

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<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>2,024,269</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>1,900,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>927,851</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>657,467</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Washington Post</td>
<td>582,844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago Tribune</td>
<td>465,892</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houston Chronicle</td>
<td>384,419</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Inquirer</td>
<td>361,480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denver Post</td>
<td>340,949</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las Vegas Review-Journal</td>
<td>175,841</td>
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</table>
Newspapers Folded: 115 since 2009; 20 in 2010
Layoffs: 14,845 layoffs and buyouts in 2009; 2,229 in 2010

Source: Paper Cuts Blog
Is Social Media a Fad?
Or the biggest shift since the Industrial Revolution?

Watch Social Media Revolution Video at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFZ0z5Fm-Ng
Social Media Research

More than four in five US online adults use social media at least once a month

Half of those adults participate in social networks, such as Facebook

Most rapid growth currently are consumers 35 and older
"Member communities" (social networks, blogs, etc.) are more popular than email
Things to Do

Google Yourself

YouTube Yourself

Network Yourself
“In the field of observation, chance favors only the prepared mind.”

Louis Pasteur

Credit: History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Majorly English Blog
“I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I’m not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”

Robert McCloskey
What the Reporter Says:

What You Hear:
What the Reporter Says:

“How’s your family?”

What You Hear:

“You are a maniacal, egotistical (expletive). Is there any gray matter in that brain of yours?”
What the Reporter Says:

“Today’s debate completely got out of hand. How would you assess your role in the process?”

What You Hear:

“I’ve already contacted our editorial cartoonist, who is going to draw a caricature of you in a clown costume for tomorrow’s paper.”
What the Reporter Says:

“The other chamber says it won’t accept your amendments and the bill is dead. Are you willing to accept defeat?”

What You Hear:

“I hope that question makes you lose your temper. I really want to break the station’s YouTube hits record tomorrow.”
What the Reporter Says:

“Question?”

What You *Should* Hear:

“My story potentially is going to be seen by hundreds of thousands of people tomorrow, including your colleagues, stakeholders and your constituents. I am considering including you in the story. Please let me know what exact words I should attribute to you.”
“It’s a presentation, not a conversation.”

Every PR Consultant in America
“I only regret that I have but one life to give to my country.”

1776
“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

1863
“Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.”

1961
“I have a dream today.”

1963
“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

1987
The Power of Time

- 15 seconds
- 30 seconds
- One minute
- Five minutes
- 30 minutes
“It ain’t bragging if you can back it up.”

Muhammad Ali

Credit: DM Boxing, Glory Days Memorabilia
What Makes A Great Quote?

- Easy to Understand
- Concise
- Paints a Picture
- Evokes Emotion
Crafting Quotes

- Tone (political or social)
- Sensitivity (to people or issue)
- Serious-Humor Scale (what’s appropriate)
- Demographics (who is target audience)
- Opposition (what will be said in return)
Questions to Ask

- Is it genuine, credible and authentic?
- Will all your family members understand it?
- Will it fit on Twitter?
Key Message Structure

1. Level One: Key Message

2. Level Two: Supporting Points

3. Level Three: Statistics
Key Message Structure (NCSL)

State Legislatures are the forum for America’s Ideas (Level 1)

Congress has followed the states’ lead on welfare reform, education standards and energy issues (Level II)

Fact sheets on welfare reform / education / energy issues (Level III)
Your Message Structure

My platform is simple and sound: I work to create jobs and educational opportunities so my constituents can achieve the American Dream. (Level 1)

I sponsored legislation creating the Workforce Development Program and spend at least 10 hours a month helping to train students at the local community college. (Level II)

Fact sheets on bill, videos of training workshops, and testimonies of others supporting your efforts. (Level III)
Brainstorming: Find Your Metaphor
(Concepts to Use to Create Your Quote)

- Current events
- Movies
- History
- Imagery
- Word Association
- State Names/Phrases/Mottos ("Don’t Mess with Texas")
Examples: NCSL

“It’s like trying to spell a word while stirring alphabet soup.”

“It’s like breaking your leg and then getting pneumonia.”

“We now know that the rose has thorns.”

“The fiscal situation facing states is like a bad horror movie. The details get more gruesome and the story never seems to end.”
Recent Examples: Budget

"This is a matter of everybody having a serious conversation about where we want to go and then ultimately getting in that boat at the same time so it doesn't tip over." President Obama

"We are cutting where we can to invest where we must." Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

"They are trying to save money on the backs of agents.” T.J. Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council.
Recent Examples: Budget

“The president’s budget will destroy jobs by spending too much, taxing too much, and borrowing too much. By continuing the spending binge and imposing massive tax hikes on families and small businesses, it will fuel more economic uncertainty and make it harder to create new jobs.” House Speaker John Boehner.

"We are changing the culture here. You're either for spending cuts, or you're not.” Majority Leader Eric Cantor.

“The President’s budget comes in at close to a thousand pages,” said McConnell. “The people who voted for a new direction in November have a five-word response: We don’t have the money.” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.
Recent Examples: Budget

"It's going to be hand-to-hand combat for every dollar.”
Paul Bledsoe, senior adviser to the Bipartisan Policy Center.

"It's no surprise the administration is proposing yet again to raise taxes on the U.S. oil and natural gas industry. But it's still a bad idea and comes at one of the worst times in our economic history.” Jack Gerard, American Petroleum Institute.

"We have consistently said it's not our intention to shut down government. That is political talk, and we ought to get that off the table, and let's go about the real business of trying to cut spending.” Majority Leader Eric Cantor.
Recent Examples: Budget

“$3.8 trillion in spending in the coming year and $8.7 trillion in new spending over the next decade shows the President hasn’t really listened to the message Americans are trying to send Washington...Our economy needs a fiscal plan that cuts wasteful spending, reins in out of control government programs and frees small businesses and entrepreneurs to do what they do best – create jobs.” Rep. Kristi Noem, South Dakota.

“Is (Obama) going to get everything? No, of course not, but it’s not dead. If the agenda of innovation and creation of new jobs is dead, America is in serious trouble,” Sen. John Kerry
The Quote Campaign

It’s like putting lipstick on a pig.

Events
Speeches
Social Media
Response to pig lobby
Media Relations
Collateral
Advertising
“I was taught that the way of progress was neither swift nor easy.”
Know Your Agenda

• Determine your audience and what you would like to tell them
• Develop messages -- two or three things you intend to say whatever the questions

“Do you have any questions for my answers?”

Henry Kissinger
A = Q + Key Message Point

• Structure
  – One or two sentences
  – Clear, concise
  – Quotable
  – Compelling & passionate
  – Soundbite
Blocking & Bridging

• Don’t ignore or evade the question
• Address the topic of question
• Asked about a problem, talk about a solution
• Never say “no comment,” but explain why you can’t
Blocking & Bridging

• "I think what you're really asking is..."
• "That speaks to a bigger point…”
• “Let me put that in perspective…”
• “What’s important to remember, however…”
• “The real issue here is…”
• “I don’t know about that...But what I do know is…”
• “What you’re asking is…”
• “Just the opposite is true…”
• “That’s false…”
“Everyone would like to be the best, but most organizations lack the discipline to figure out with egoless clarity what they can be the best at and the will to do whatever it takes to turn the potential into reality.”
Leadership Questions

- **Who** controls your legislatures’ message?
- **What** resources do you devote to positioning the legislature in the framework of public perception?
- **When** do you create your annual communications plan?
- **Why** does the public have a poor perception of legislatures?
- **How** much time and resources do you devote to positive public outreach?
Communication Tools & Strategies

- News releases
- Flyers/Posters
- VideoWeb Site(s)
- Blogs
- Podcasts/vidcasts
- List serve
- Direct mail
- Newsletters
- Media outreach
- Online news rooms
- Focus groups
- Polls
- Photography
- Television programs
- Paid media campaigns
- Annual reports
- E-mail blasts
- Speaking engagements
- News conferences
- Events
- Wikipedia entry
- Op-Ed pieces / Ed. Letters
- Widgets
- Community meetings
- PSA campaigns
- Social media
- Others?
<table>
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<th>Policies</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<td>Public contact (letters, phone calls, emails, text messages)</td>
<td>• Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public recognizes “form” responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media response &amp; strategies</td>
<td>• Recognize deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regular contact helps when you “need” them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Offer contributions</td>
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<td>Web/social media outreach</td>
<td>• Make it easy to “find” you</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Strategies on responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact information / availability</td>
<td>• Put on everything!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Publicize appearances</td>
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Interviews and public interactions are opportunities to get your message out. Create messages that define you.

In your interactions with the public and the media, remember: It’s a presentation, not a conversation.

Any question, no matter how it’s framed, is an opportunity for you to get your message out.

Take advantage of the time opportunities presented to you.

As a leader, you play a crucial role in framing public perception about the institution.
“Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits, for they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

Author Unknown
STAYING ON MESSAGE

Thriving in the New Media Environment

Legislative Leadership: the Art, the Politics, the Challenge
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Washington, D.C.

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