

You're On! Manage Media Interviews Like A Pro

Gumbo Media Relations

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The 3 C's of Media Relations

- Control
- Competence
- Concern

Overview

- Preparation
 - Before you get on-scene
 - Before you begin the interview
- During the interview
 - Responding to questions
- After the interview

Preparation:

Before you get on-scene

- Format (live or taped)
- Reporter/news agency
- Other sources
- Deadline



Preparation:

Researching the questions



- Reporter's questions
- Your own questions
- Focus on topical issues
- Be the devil's advocate
- Elements of news
- 5 x 5 x 5

Prep for Standups & News Conferences

- **Standups**
- **One hour of Prep time for every minute of airtime.**
- **Three-Seven Minute Standup = up to seven hours of Prep.**
- **News Conferences**
- **13 minute News Conference = 13 hours of Prep time**

Preparation:

Developing responses

- Information + message = good response
- Response vice answer
- Command messages or Talking Points
- Labels

Preparation:

Find the Information

- Tell the Truth!
- Nothing but the Facts (Staff)
- SAPP

Command

Messages/Talking Points

Command messages -- statements or information that you work into responses that explain the command's position on a particular issue or event.

- Explain what you want the audience to remember
- What are we doing about a problem/issue?
- What is our position/angle on the matter?
- Command messages are not generic

Developing Gumbo Messages

- **27-9-3**
- **27 words**
- **Nine seconds each.**
- **Three messages**
- **Three Supporting Gumbo Messages.**

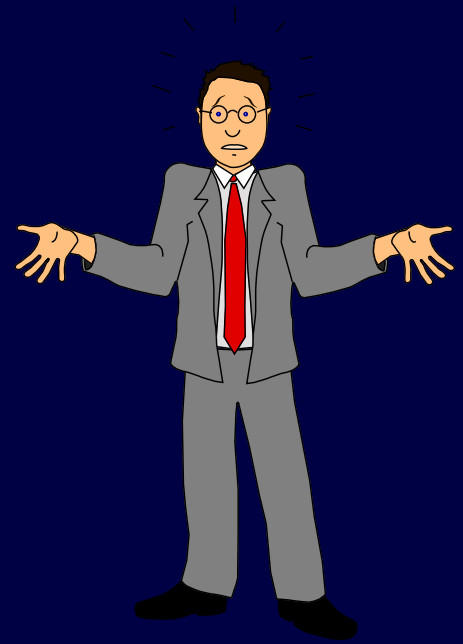
Command Messages

- **Where do they come from?**
 - Boss' guidance
 - Public affairs guidance
 - You develop your own

Labels:

What are we calling this?

- Tragedy, incident, disaster
- Crash, accident, mishap
- Criminal, suspect, murderer
- Terrorist, guerrilla, freedom fighter



Putting it all Together

- Short (...but not too short)
 - Sound bite (10-12 seconds)
 - Avoid Jargon
- Clear
- Honest
- Simple
- Info + command message



Is the worker going to die?

- ↓ That would call for speculation, and I can't do that.
- ↓ I don't know.
- ↓ Right now, we are providing her with the best medical care available. We are hopeful that she will recover, and are focused right now on helping his family through this difficult time.

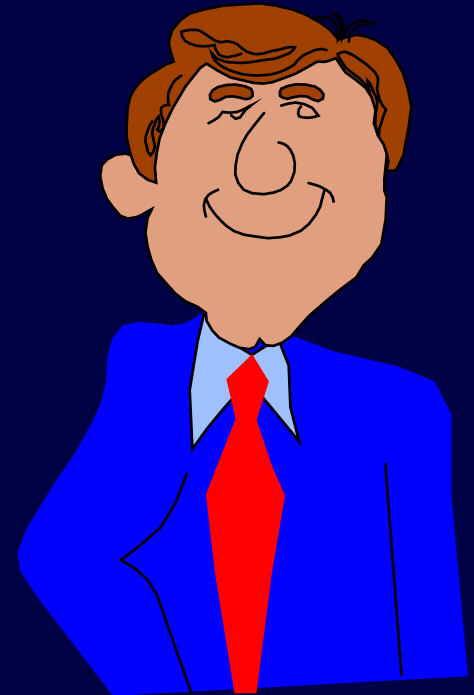
Do you know what caused the explosion?

- Right now I can't comment on the cause.
- No, we really don't know yet.
- At this point, we are just beginning the investigation into the cause of the accident. Our goal is to find out as best we can what happened so that we can learn from it and prevent something like this from happening again.

What Will Pierre
and Michelle Know
and Think?

Final Preparations

- Appearance (Women & Men)
- Printed materials (release, fact sheet)
- Location considerations
- B-roll suggestions



Getting Started

- Take advantage of off-camera time
- Meet and greet
- Explain any restrictions (SAPP)
- Correct any mis-information
- Provide a starting point (hook)

The Interview

- **Open with 25-40 second summary**
 - who, what, when, where and what we're doing about it
- **Listen, pause, think, answer**
- **Each statement stands alone**
- **Look at the reporter, not the camera**
 - importance of non-verbals

Condolences in the Lead?

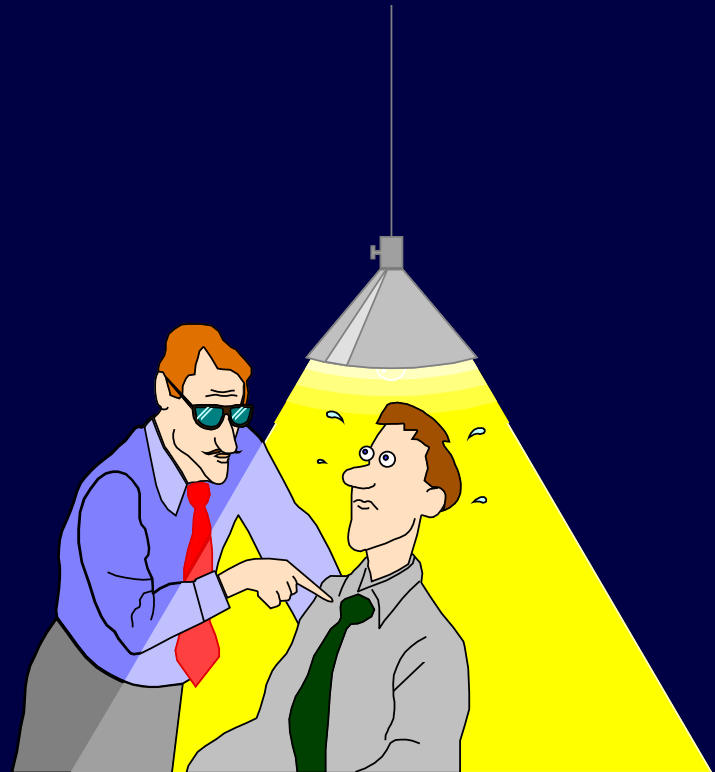
- Good if smooth and sincere
- Awkward if generic or nervous
- Best as part of “what we’re doing about it”
- Great as wrap up comment to “anything to add”

Interview Techniques

- Always remain calm
- Bridging
- Flagging
- Bundling/packaging
- If you “choke,” ask to try again

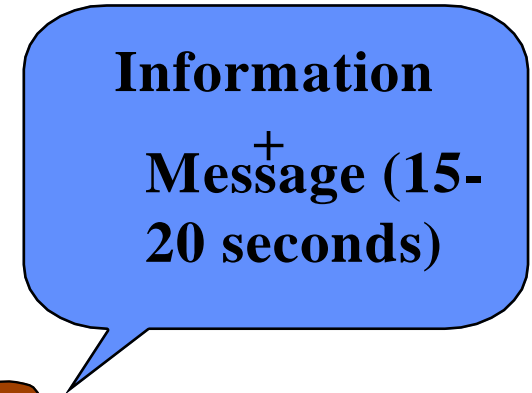
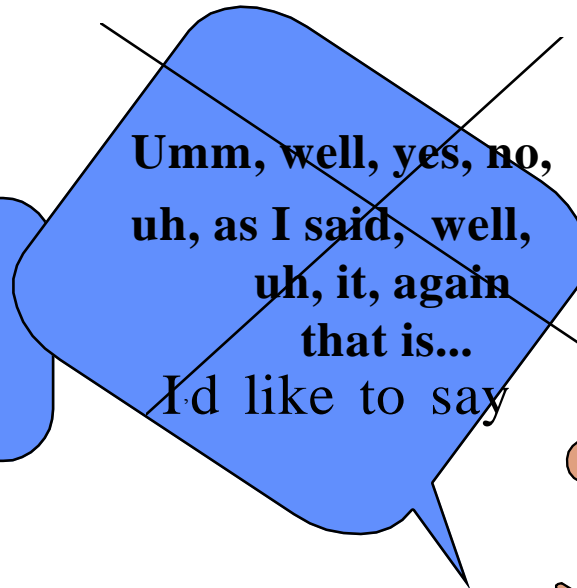
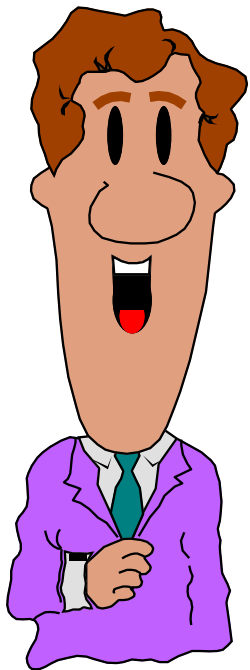
Avoidance Questions

- Needling
- False facts
- Reinterpretation
- Words in your mouth
- False conclusions
- Hypothetical
- Baiting



Stand-up T.V. Interview Ideal State

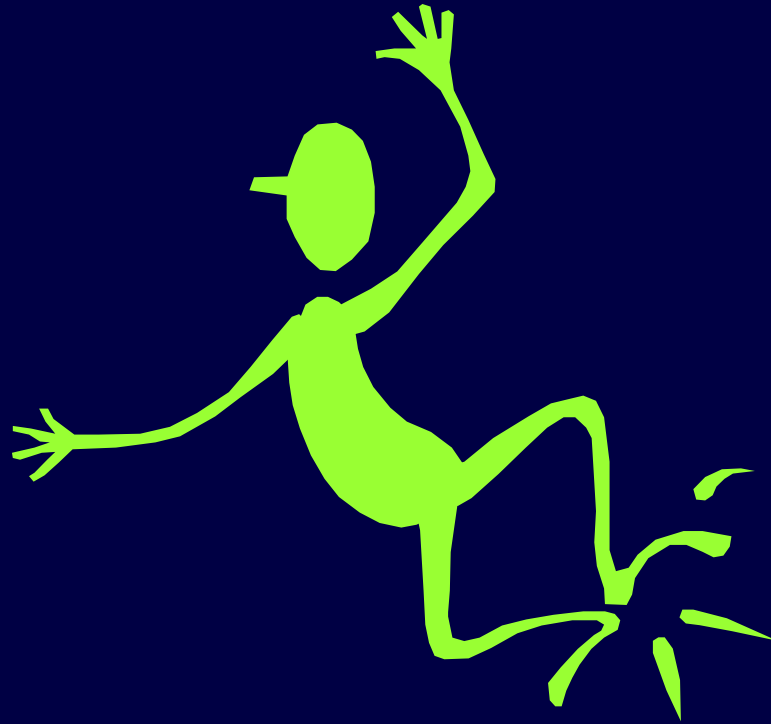
Pause/Think . . . then self-contained statement = opportunity





CONVERSATION

Post-Interview



Post Interview

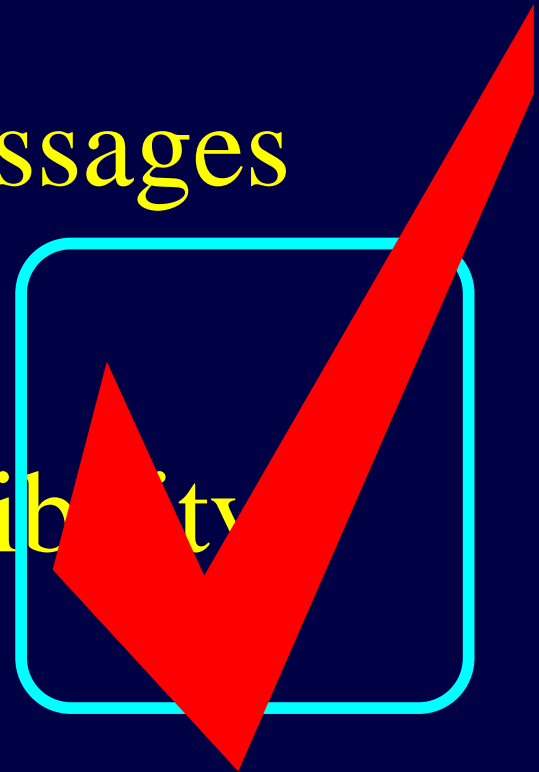
- When will it air?
- Don't ask for copies
- Do get back to the reporter, if:
 - you owe him answers
 - he has “real” accuracy problem

Review

- Preparing for an interview
- Conducting an interview
- Explaining the principles of media training

Grading Criteria

- Credibility
- Bridging to Key Messages
- Believability
- Non-verbals/Accessibility



Thank You! God Bless You and America!

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