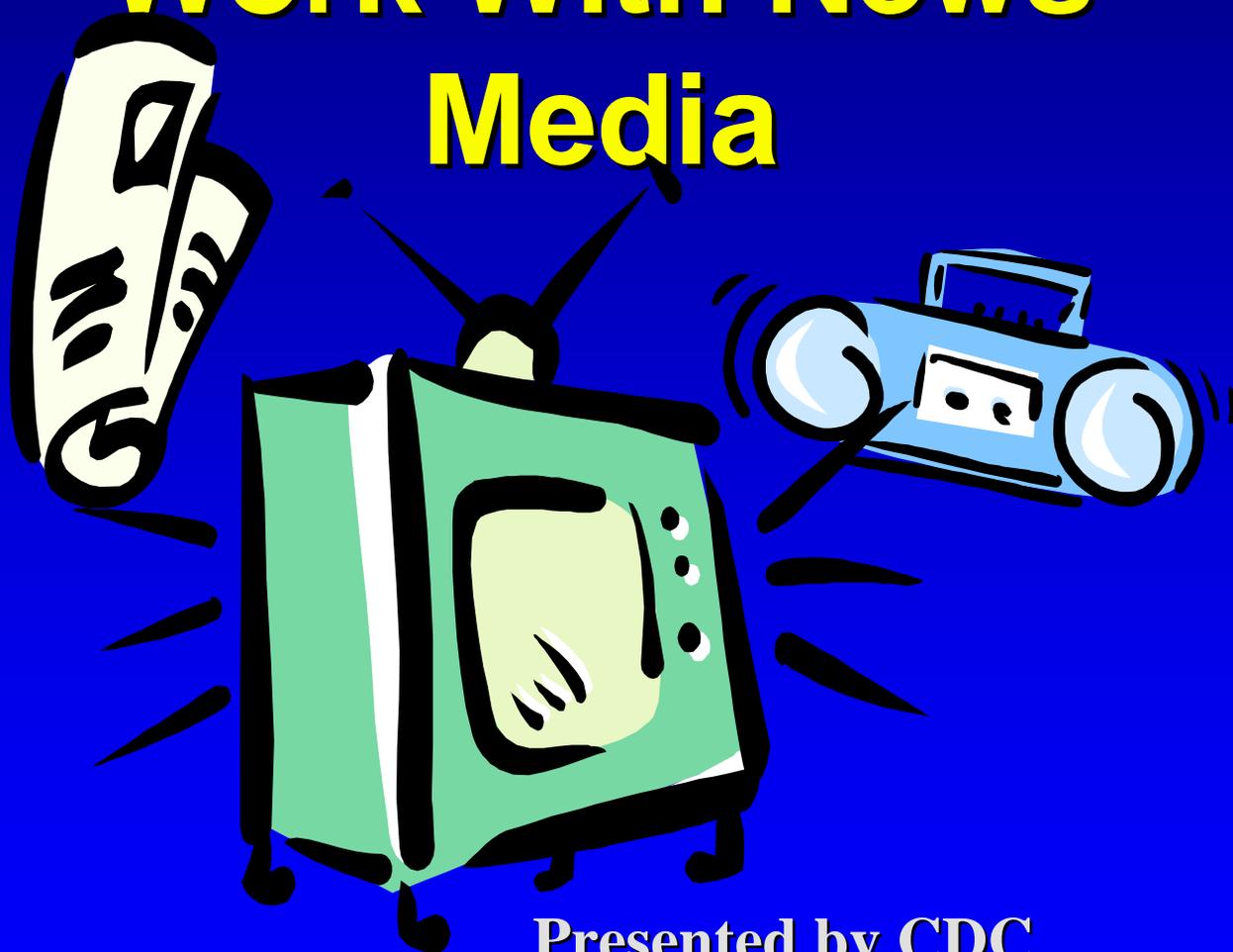




10 Tips You Should Know To

Work With News Media



Presented by CDC
Media Relations
Division



Tip #10

**Interviews are not
conversations**





Tip #9

Understand how a reporter looks at news

Timely
Change
Controversy





Tip #8

**Each media outlet
is different**



⚙️ Deadlines

⚙️ Information Gathering

Press Coverage & Science



“Science is a long movie, and news media generally take mere snapshots.”

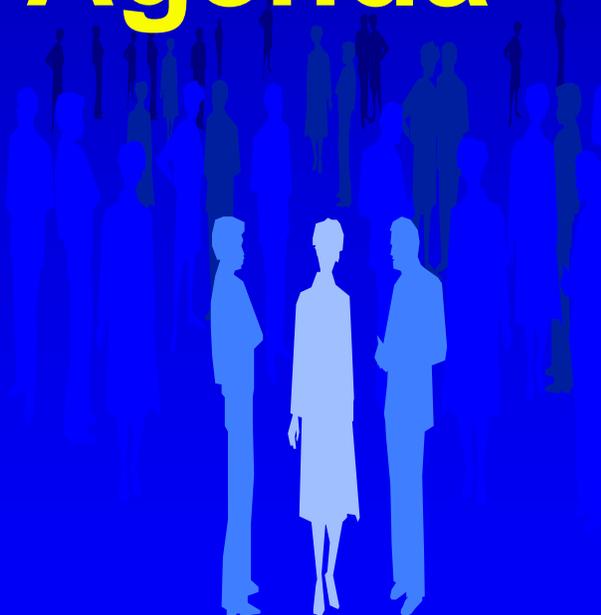
**John Schwartz -
Washington
Post**



Tip #7

Define Your Agenda

- Who's the audience?
- What's your goal?
- What's your objective?
- What's the audience outcome?





Tip #6

Develop Messages

- **Explain THE WHAT**
 - **State facts; break down behaviors into small steps; address problem directly; provide a solution**
- **Explain SO WHAT, WHY NOW?**
 - ® **Address the reasons or benefits. Why is this need compelling?**



Develop Messages

- **NOW WHAT?**

- **® Define your desirable outcome.**

- **◆ “We need more information”**

- **◆ “This study does ...”**

- **◆ “We want to reach a specific audience”**



Tip #5

Your Interview Bill of Rights

- **Who am I talking to? Who do you represent?**
- **What's the type of show, publication, etc.? What's the format? live/tape, panel, etc.**
- **What's the focus of your story? Who else is being interviewed?**
- **How does my point of view fit in?**



News and Numbers

“The first thing to understand about science is that it is almost always uncertain.”

Victor Cohn,

News And Numbers



Tip #4

Be prepared – practice



Tip #3

Interview Tips

- **Give each interview your full attention. Turn off distractions. Shut off phones.**
- **Headlining - state your summary first**
- **Sound bites – TV - condense your message to 8-12 seconds**
- **Radio – 30-45 seconds**
- **Be prepared - know your messages**
- **If you inadvertently misstate an answer, correct it as quickly as possible**



The Tools

- ◆ **Block & Bridge**
- ◆ **Speculation**
- ◆ **Hypothetical**
- ◆ **Feeding the Mike**
- ◆ **The Pause**
- ◆ **Headlining**
- ◆ **Character Attack**
- ◆ **Machine Gun**
- ◆ **Hot Mike**
- ◆ **Negative Baggage**
- ◆ **Props**



Block & Bridge

Answer the question, then bridge to your agenda

- “What I think you are really asking is...”
- “The overall issue is...”
- “What’s important to remember...”
- “It’s our policy to not discuss, but what I can tell you is...”
- “What I’m really here to discuss is...”
- “Your readers/viewers need to know...”



Headlining

- ◆ Use an inverted pyramid -- state your conclusion first



Speculation & Hypothetical

- ✦ **Risky, tricky questions**
- ✦ **Do your scientific results reach this finding? No? Then block & bridge to your agenda**



Character Attack

- ✦ **Don't lock horns with an adversary during the interview**
- ✦ **Do question the science, issues, goals, but not someone's character**
- ✦ **Block & bridge**



Machine Gun Questioning

- ◆ Reporter fires rapid questions at you and interrupts your answers

“Please let me answer this question, it’s important for your audience to know...”

- ◆ You control the pace and the interview. Take the time to think



Feeding the Mike & The Pause

- ✦ **The reporter pauses and waits - you've discussed your key messages**
- ✦ **Stay on your agenda**
- ✦ **Be aware of non-verbal cues**
- ✦ **It's the reporter's job to fill the air-time**



Hot Mike

- ◆ **You are always on-air -- even during commercial breaks**
- ◆ **If on-camera, stay in place until the floor manager says “All clear” and removes your microphone**



Negative Baggage & Other Stuff

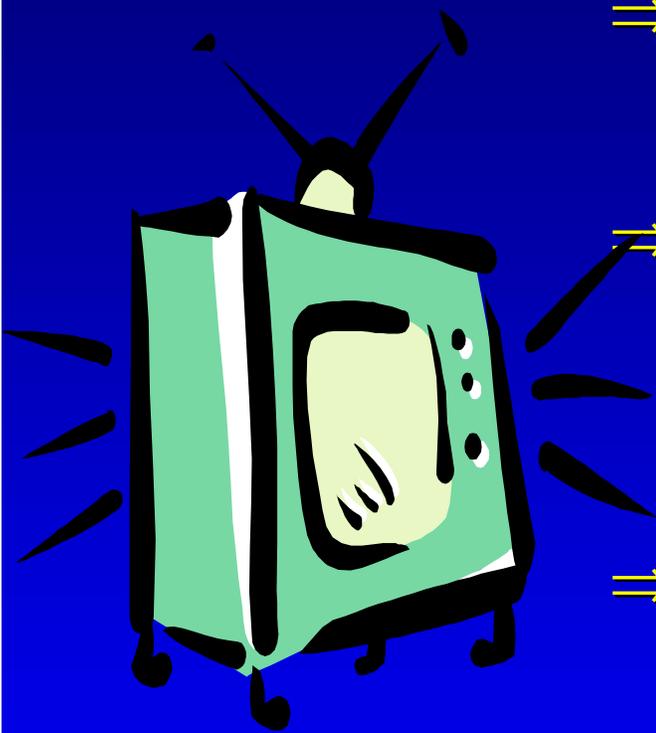
- ✦ Questioning starts with “flag words” (negative phrases) or inaccuracies or an either or dilemma
- ✦ Use positive phrases. Don’t repeat negative words
- ✦ Correct the inaccuracies without restating the negative



Props

✦ **If you take it, you own it. Don't take it.**

TV Interview Tips



⇒ Visual -- is very important

⇒ Body language & words

must be consistent

⇒ Eye Contact is vital!

-- Add a smile

⇒ Watch Your Posture

⇒ Practice your “soundbites”



TV Appearance: What to Wear

- **Men - dark colored suit, light blue shirt, knee-length socks, conservative tie**
- **Women-knee length or longer skirts or dress, avoid loud, clunky jewelry**
- **Both - avoid photo-sensitive glasses, reds, checks/patterns**

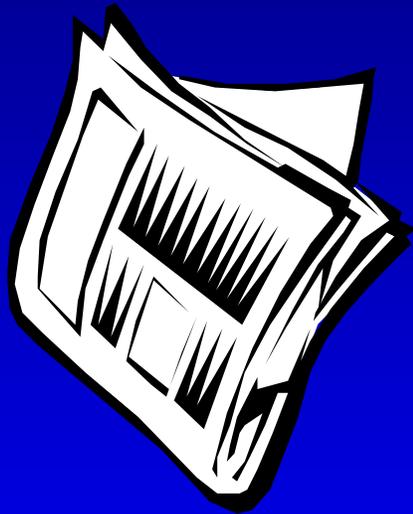


Radio Interview Tips

- **Turn off distractions before starting the interview**
- **Telephone interviews can be difficult because of the lack of non-verbal feedback. Ask the reporter if he/she understands the issue**



Newspaper Interview Tips



- **Expect to discuss the subject more in-depth**
- **Continue to restate your messages**
- **Be prepared -- you can have notes**
- **If you've misstated a fact, correct it as quickly as possible**
- **Don't expect to be able to review the story before hand**



Magazine Interview Tips

- **Can be specifically targeted to audience segments**
- **Can explore more complex issues**
- **Longer life - audience can clip, reread, contemplate material**
- **Apply same interview “tools & techniques” used for newspaper**



"The TV business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free and good men die like dogs."

Hunter S. Thompson



Tip #2

Select The Right Spokesperson

- Find the right person for the right news media outlet**



Tip #1

Tell The Truth