

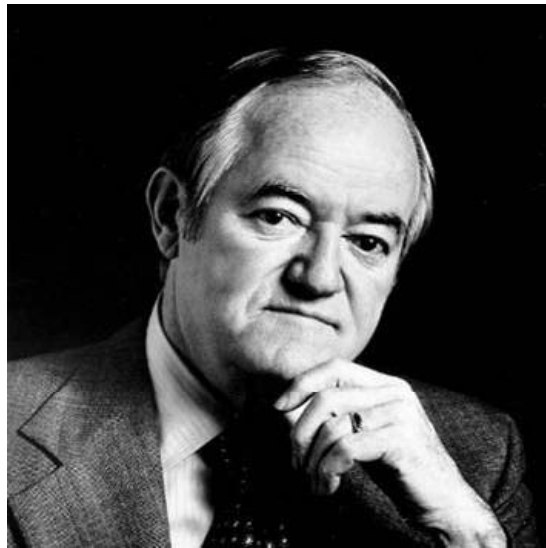


What to say and how to say it

March 24, 2009
Bloomington, Minnesota



***“It is always a risk to
speak to the press:
They are likely to report
what you say.”***



-Hubert H. Humphrey



They Can't Report What You Don't Say

- Most are apprehensive about talking to media
- May feel you've been treated unfairly
- It's a great opportunity
- Key is to be ready for any situation
- It's your job to prepare messages
- Practice, practice, practice!

DON'T JUST WING IT!



“Now that’s what we call a grabber”



Today's Objectives

- Understanding the media
- Learning about messaging and the role of message points
- Using the messages with the media
- Identifying best practices and avoiding pitfalls
 - Learning interview tips
- Blocking and bridging
 - Using your story and messaging in television, radio and print interviews



Understanding the Media



Today's Media

- 24/7
- Highly competitive – driven by ratings
- Television news dominates
- Newspapers still viable but readership is shrinking
- Online sources rapidly growing



Television News

- 77% of adults say they watch local broadcast news several times a week or daily
- 71% say they watch network broadcast or cable news
- 54% listen to talk radio
- 19% read a national newspaper



Television News

- The local TV newsroom produces 42% of the station's total revenue
- In 2007, the amount of on-air news increased but staffing/salary levels were flat
- Staffing levels have increased for "online" services



News Media Trends

- Big events get the spotlight (Diamond Pet Foods aflatoxin contamination, peanut butter contamination)
- Post-event story lines are ignored or quickly dropped
- Cable news, talk radio seize polarizing stories and amplify them
- Reporting resources continue to shrink



State of the Newsroom

- 2,185 newsroom jobs lost in 2007
- 8,188 newsroom jobs lost in 2008
- 6,024 newsroom jobs lost so far in 2009
- Circulation is dropping:
 - 62 million total newspaper circulation in 1970
 - 53 million today



News Media Trends

- 1960s: the average length of a TV or radio quote (sound bite) was around 60 seconds
- The average length now is seven seconds
- “McNuggett News” — Fast and tasty but not very satisfying



Today's Reporter...

- has a job to perform, just like you
- has to tell a timely and interesting story
- will not fully understand your business
- needs conflict or controversy to fuel the story
- is focused on his/her story. If you aren't focused, they will be in control

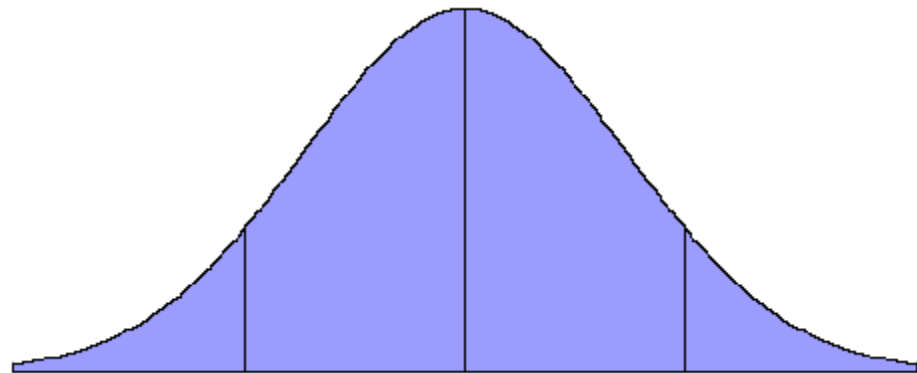


Don't Expect Them to Understand Your Business



Who is Your Audience?

- Not the media – they are a conduit to your audience
- Not the activists – anyone more than one standard deviation from the mean is not likely to be moved
- Your customers
- Your employees
- Your shareholders
- Potential customers
- The public in general



The Role of Message Points



Maintaining Control

- Every interview is an opportunity to deliver your key messages
- Your job is to deliver messages, NOT answer questions
- Your opponents are not afraid of the media – your participation will help keep stories balanced
- Don't hide – all news about your business or industry should come from you
- The media will always find out about bad news – you can shape what they perceive



Message Points

- Your agenda
- The thoughts you most want the audience to remember
- The foundation for each answer you provide
- Think headlines: Conclusion first, followed by supporting facts
 - “I am committed to treating my animals with the best care possible.”
 - A)
 - B)
 - C)



Message Points

- Appropriate for all audiences — not just media. This means no jargon; use consumer friendly terms, i.e. “process” or “harvest” not “slaughter.”
- Words are the tools we use to shape perception. Choose the right tool for the job.
- We want the audience to understand everything we say because you don’t have much time to say it.



“Death on a Factory Farm”

- “As a producer, I have an ethical obligation to make sure the animals on my farm are well cared for. Giving them a clean, comfortable environment is the right thing to do.”
- “I am as disgusted and appalled as anybody by the footage shown in this film. Those who take part in such abusive behavior should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”
- “Animal abuse in any form is unacceptable. The actions of a few bad actors in no way reflects the high standards demonstrated by a majority of America’s farmers.”



Tone and Attitude Matter

- Focus on your audience, not the reporter
- Develop messages that appeal to the rational majority
- Remember that shared values are 4x to 5x more important in building trust than demonstrating competence
 - “I care about the environment – protecting my neighbors, my family and my animals.”
 - “There’s nothing more important to me than providing safe and healthy food for my family and consumers.”
- Put a friend or family member on the receiving end of the information when you develop a message.



The Message Test – The “Three C’s”

- An effective message is always:
- Clear
- Concise
- Compelling



Developing your Message Points

- Your message points must be relevant to your target audience
- Consist of primary messages and proof points
 - Headlines followed by the “story” (evidence)
- Be frequently and consistently delivered in all communications
 - Become familiar and comfortable, but not memorized!
- Be reviewed and updated
- No more than 20 seconds in length
- It’s not a message point unless it’s written down
- Stick to YOUR message — don’t offer the other side a platform by bringing up their position



Blocking and Bridging



Blocking and Bridging

*“Does anyone have any questions
for my answers?”*



-Henry Kissinger



Blocking and Bridging

What is it?

- The use of smooth connecting phrases to move the conversation from an unproductive, hostile, or irrelevant area back to your message points



Blocking and Bridging

- “Blocking and bridging” is a technique to help an interviewee stay on message
- “Block” by acknowledging and briefly answering the question – then “bridge” to the key message you want to deliver
- Don’t ignore or evade the question
- Address the topic of question
- If asked about a problem, talk about a solution



Blocking and Bridging

Reporter:

“Describe the odor that you smell from a dairy farm.”

Answer:

BLOCK: “I’m glad you bring up that issue.”

BRIDGE: “What’s important to remember...my family and I live and work on this farm. We breathe the same air and drink the same water and we’re committed to protecting our environment for future generations.”



Blocking and Bridging Phrases

- “That’s interesting, however, ...”
- “Another thing to remember...”
- “That’s not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is...”
- “Another way of thinking about this is...”
- “I think what you’re really asking is...”
- “That speaks to a bigger point...”

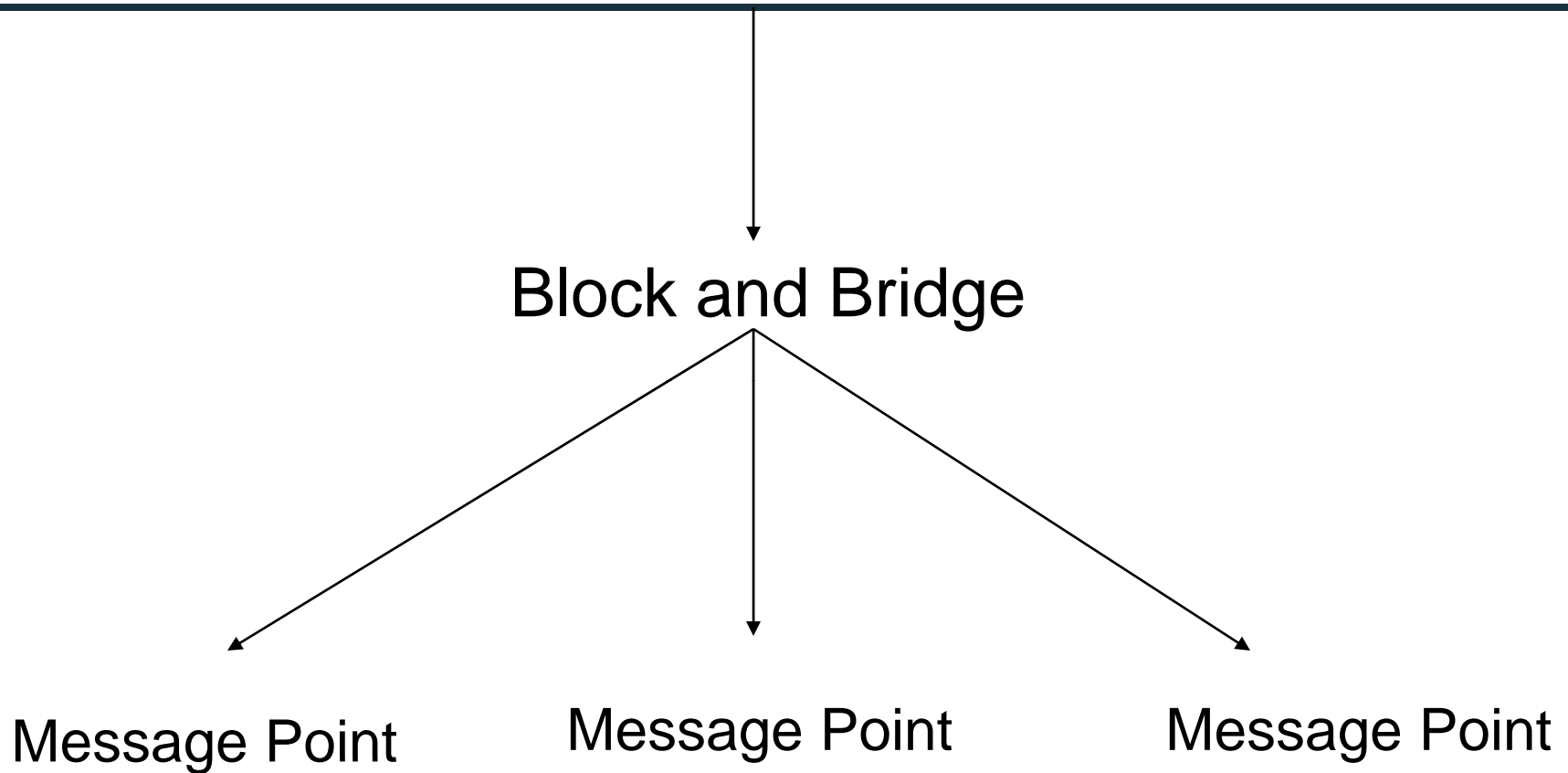


Blocking and Bridging Phrases

- “That’s a good question. There’s been a lot of attention given to the issue of manure and dairies. But remember...
 - Values-based message (“No one cares more than me...”)
 - Facts



Question



Media Relations Checklist

- Tell the truth
- Be accessible
- Prepare, practice, then practice again
- Stay calm
- Choose your words carefully
- Stay on message
- Block and bridge
- Control your own news



Granting Access: Yea or Nay?

- A reporter wants access to you or someone in company
- Have you received a request for an interview or is the publication just wanting background information?
- Determine your primary goal in conducting the interview
- Decide if this interview makes sense for you and your organization
- Your obligation is to your position, not the media



Best Practices and Pitfalls



Get Info Before You Give Info

- Get background information about the story
- Find out who they have spoken to and who they would like to interview
- Ask about their deadline
- If you don't know the answer, say so but tell the reporter you will get the information and **call them back**



Engaging the Media: Best Practices

- Ask the reporter about the story, who else is being interviewed, his/her deadline, etc.
- Google/research the reporter
- Know your messages
- Messages are concepts distilled to sound bites
- Prepare, practice, then practice some more
- Arrive early
- Look and listen to the person talking to you
- Knowing what you want to say and stick to messaging
- Be yourself



Engaging the Media: Best Practices

- Illustrate your points with examples or anecdotes
 - “Deciding your future based only on the past is like trying to drive your car looking only in the rearview mirror”
- Say only what you want to say, then stop!
- Don’t be afraid to repeat messages
- Don’t speak to the other side
 - “Why are your neighbors upset?”
- Be ready to respond to other viewpoints
 - “Neighbors claim the odor makes it intolerable to live outdoors.”



Engaging the Media: Best Practices

- Call a timeout if you need to
- Choose the proper backdrop
- “Is there anything else you want to add?”



Engaging the Media: Pitfalls

- Don't stand a reporter up
- If you don't know, don't speculate
- Don't repeat offensive language in questions
- Don't fill dead air
- Don't fidget
- Don't refuse to answer a question: block it and bridge to your answer/your message
- Avoid "no comment" and "off the record"



The Microphone is Always On



Keep it Simple

- Don't go into too much detail
- Keep answers short and concise (20 second bites)
- Use universal language

*Would someone outside of the situation understand what you are talking about?



BEFORE
SOUND
BITES:

FOURSCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO,
OUR FOREFATHERS BROUGHT FORTH
ON THIS CONTINENT A NEW NATION,
CONCERNED IN LIBERTY, AND DEDICATED
TO THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL MEN
ARE CREATED EQUAL..

AFTER
SOUND
BITES:

READ MY LIPS:
NO SLAVES.

OWMAN
WE'VE GOT
OUR FUTURE

Body Language

- Sit forward
- Make eye contact
- Smile
- Appear interested
- Be enthusiastic



Television Interview Tips

1. Wear a dark/medium colored shirt or jacket - avoid patterns

- Provides shape, conveys confidence and credibility

2. Lean Slightly Forward Toward the Camera

- Gives you more presence and intimacy and makes you look thinner

3. Don't Look Directly into the Camera

- Tends to make you look confused (unless you're a seasoned pro)

4. Look at the Interviewer

- Avoid 'wandering eyes' syndrome — looking around makes you appear shifty and untrustworthy



Television Interview Tips

5. Control the Background

- If possible, choose a backdrop appropriate to the topic

6. Relax

- Breathe deeply and slowly for a few moments
- SMILE

7. Avoid Milk, Caffeine and Alcohol

- Stick to water

8. Review, Evaluate, Improve

- What worked well? What could be improved?
What will I work on for next time?



Governor Palin Pardons Turkey



Radio Interview Tips

- Keep your answers short
 - Generally only one or two sound bites will be used
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace
 - Emphasis on delivery: voice, inflection, pace
- Need to speak “visually”
- OK to use notes
- For phone interviews, stand up
- Be expressive and animated, but not defensive



Print Interview Tips

- Don't be lulled into false sense of security
- Just because there are no recording devices doesn't mean you can go "off record."
- Can use notes



General Interview Tips

- Ask when the story will be published or on air
- Don't stand a reporter up
- If you don't know, don't speculate
- Don't be drawn into criticism (no he said, she said)
- Watch for loaded question
- Don't repeat offensive language in questions
- Avoid the phrase "I think"

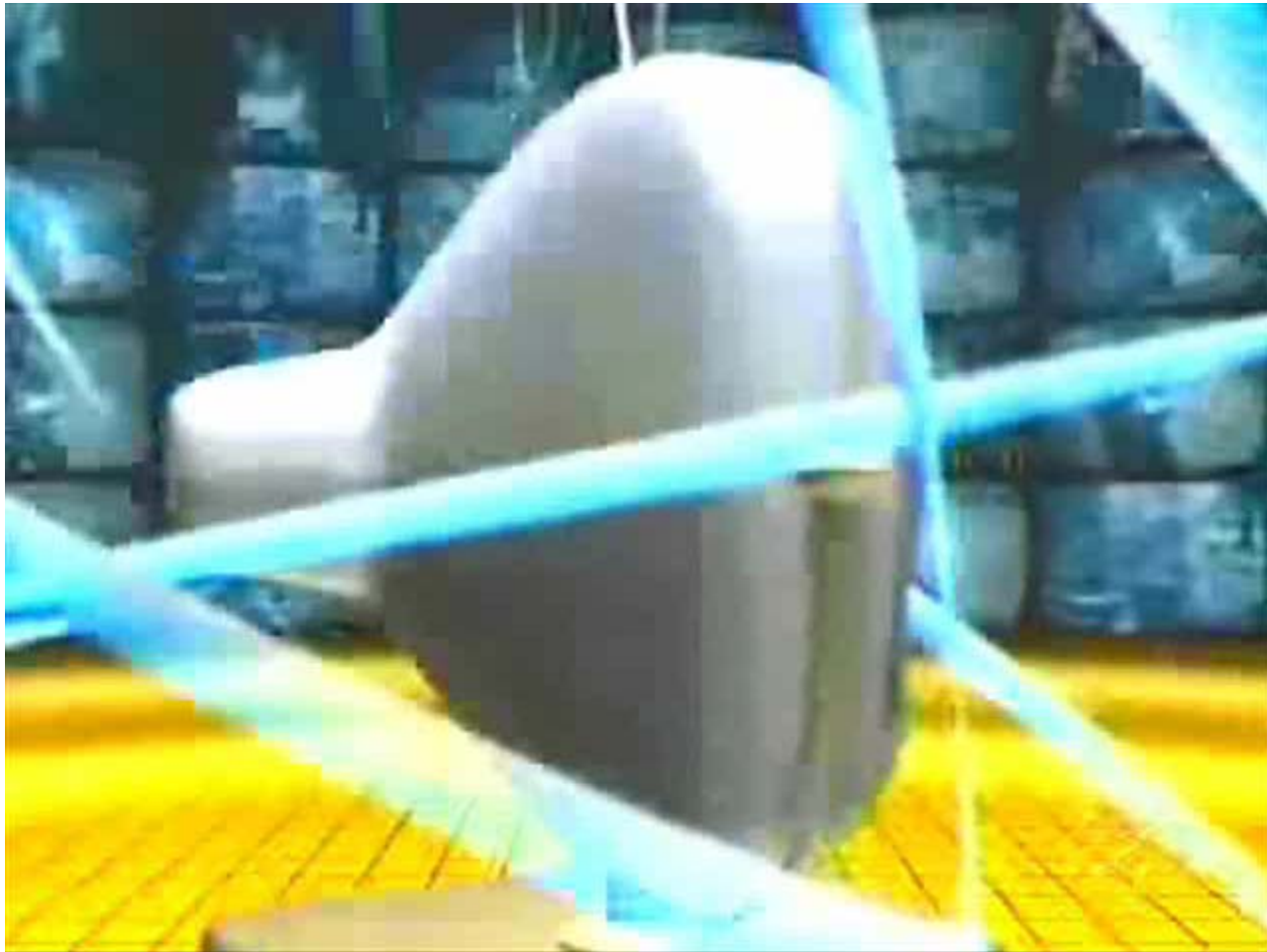


General Interview Tips

- Don't fill dead air
- Don't refuse to answer a question: block it and bridge to your answer/your message
- Don't fidget
- Flag your key messages by saying things like “the most important point” or “what people should really know is”
- Practice!



Even Presidents Need Practice!



Thank you!





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