

# Getting Your Neighborhood's Message Out

## *Dealing with the Media*

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Name

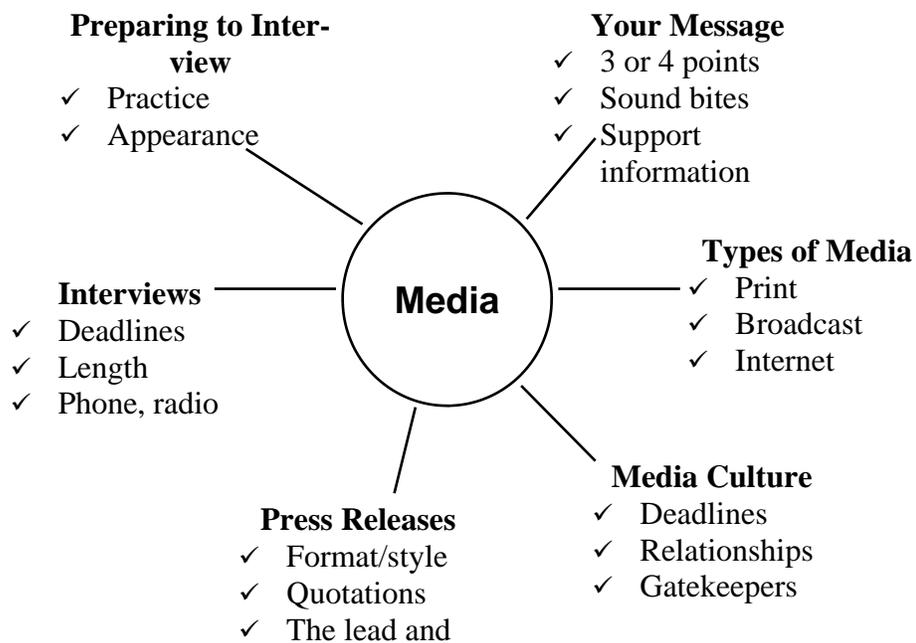
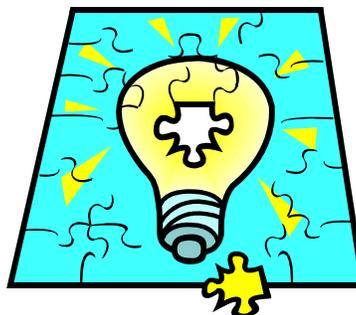
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Date

A Training Program of



Special Points of Interest



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**The goals of “Dealing with the Media”** are to develop participants’ knowledge and skills in:

- ⇒ Give a basic understanding of the media
- ⇒ Provide information on the different types of media
- ⇒ How to get participants messages into the different types of media

### **Workshop Performance Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- ⇒ Discussed common myths about the media.
- ⇒ Explored basic truths about the media.
- ⇒ Developed messages you want to share with the media.
- ⇒ Written a proper press release.
- ⇒ Examined techniques for interviewing.



# Developing Your Message

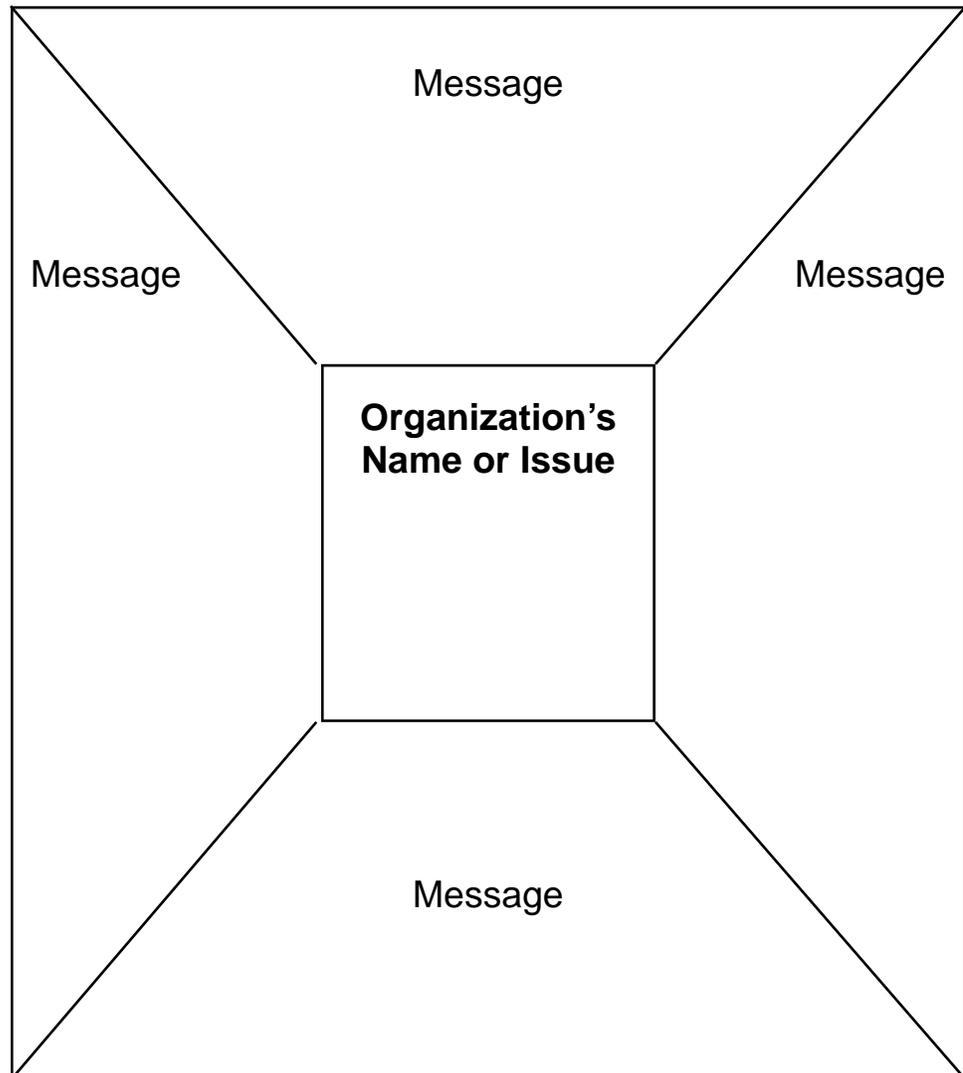
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## Successful interviews are message driven.

Start with your vision and mission statements. Further clarify your message by asking these questions.

- ⇒ What do people need to know, believe, and care about to become engaged with your neighborhood association or your cause?
- ⇒ What obstacles or misconceptions do you need to overcome to get people engaged or interested?
- ⇒ What needs to happen, or what do people need to do, to meet your organization's goals or have an impact on your issue?
- ⇒ If people did this, how would things be different?

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## The Message Box

- ⇒ Don't need to be in any particular order.
- ⇒ Write your main points in the message spaces.
- ⇒ Use bullet points outside the message box to add statistics, phrases, and other information to support your message.

## Keys to Remember

- ✓ Only have **3 or 4 messages**. More than that can be confusing.
- ✓ All statements should support your neighborhood association's **main goals**.
- ✓ Messages **must be simple** — one or two sentences. If they require a paragraph, keep working to simplify it.
- ✓ Messages are not necessarily sound bites — they are the **main ideas** you want to get across.
- ✓ Messages are **reinforced by sound bites, phrases, statistics, and stories**.
  - Sound bites help you remember your messages.
  - They are quotable information that increases the value of your story.
  - Don't exaggerate with your sound bites. Stay accurate.
- ✓ **Don't rush** the process of creating your messages.
- ✓ **Messages stay the same for awhile**. For messages to have impact, they need to be repeated over and over and over.
- ✓ You may tailor your messages for specific audiences, but the message remains the same.
- ✓ **Use your messages in all your communication efforts** in the neighborhood (your newsletters, fliers, meetings, web site).

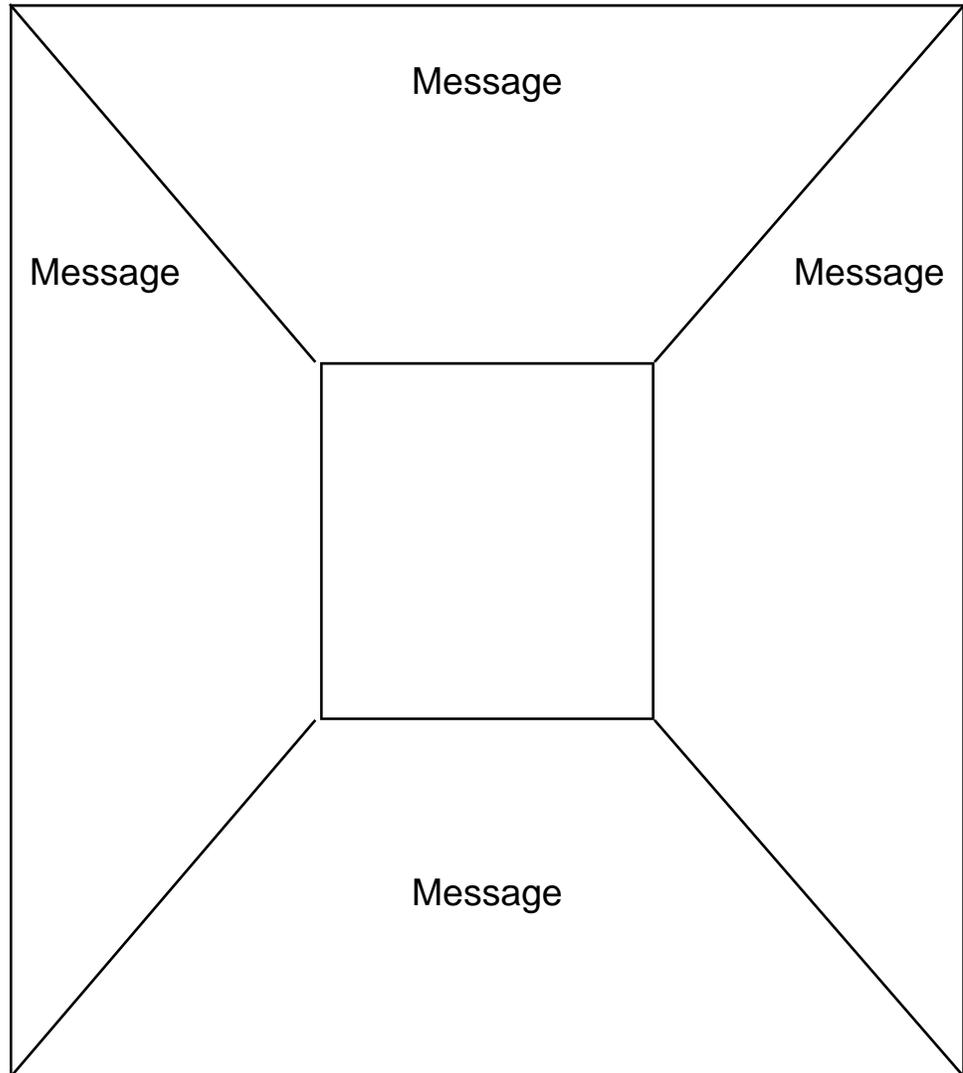
# Writing Your Message

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**Vision:**

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**Mission:**



You have your organizational message, now you are ready to face the media. But, which type?

### **Print Media**

- ⇒ Longer, more detailed information
- ⇒
- ⇒

### **Broadcast Media**

- ⇒ Limited time
- ⇒ Strong visuals needed
- ⇒
- ⇒

### **Internet Media**

## **Culture of the Media**

*Who are the Gatekeepers?*

*What are the Deadlines?*

**Relationships** *are important.*

# Elements of a Press Release

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## **Format**

- ⇒ Your organization's letterhead
- ⇒
- ⇒

## **Contact Person**

- ⇒ The person "in the know"
- ⇒
- ⇒

## **Headline**

## **Lead Sentence**

## **Quotations**

## **Inverted Pyramid Style**

## **Length**

# Sample Press Release

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XYZ Community for Change

*Neighborhood Name*  
*Address*  
*City, State ZIP*  
*Org. Phone Number*

Contact Person: *Put Name Here*  
(*Contact Person's Day Phone Number*)  
(*Contact Person's Night Phone Number*)

For Immediate Release: *Date Sent*

**HEADLINE GOES HERE—SHOULD BE ONE SENTENCE AND ALL IN CAPS**

The first paragraph is called the lead. It should explain the importance of the news item. (*Who, what, when, where, and why.*) It is also a great place to put in some parenthetical information about your organization.

“This should be followed by a quote supporting the lead,” said Jennifer Stone, Manager of Program Development for the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA). “A direct quote is put in quotation marks,” while a summary of words said should not be in quotation marks. Although not essential, it is nice if you can give quotation attribution to all of the paragraphs after the lead. This makes the story easier to write and increases the chances of getting it published.

All press releases should be written in the “Inverted Pyramid” style, said James Prim, Manager of Neighborhood Sustainability for KCNA. This style puts the most important information at the top of the story and goes to the least important information at the bottom of the page.

“After a person’s title and name have been mentioned once, use only the last name,” said Stone. It is important to limit the amount of work a writer will have to do to convert your press release into his or her story.

“You should work hard at keeping your press release to one page,” said Prim. Having too many pages will discourage editors from assigning the story. If there is a need for more than one page, do a fact sheet to attach to the press release.

“The rule of Keep It Simple Silly or KISS applies here,” said Stone. “Getting your information published or covered is the key to a good press release.”

END  
###

# Your Turn to Write a Press Release

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Event:

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Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

List points in order of importance, most important to least important

Headline

Lead

You have your message.

You have sent the press release.

Now, they've called and want an interview.

## What Do I Do?

### Prepare and Practice.

Ask the report or yourself these questions before the interview takes place.

Reporter's deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

Time and channel of airing: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of interview? \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the story about?
2. What is your main message?
3. What type of interview will it be?

News story	Investigative ( <i>Be aware.</i> )
Q&A	Feature
In-depth	Personality profile
4. Why am I being interviewed?
5. What type of publication or program is it? (Taped, live, or on the phone?)
6. Who is the audience?
7. Has this reporter or station covered events like this one before?
8. What kind of questions will they ask based on the press packet you sent to them?
9. How familiar is the reporter with this issue or topic? (*Do they have a bias for or against your issue?*)
10. Have there been any changes to the information you included in your press packet that need to reach the masses?

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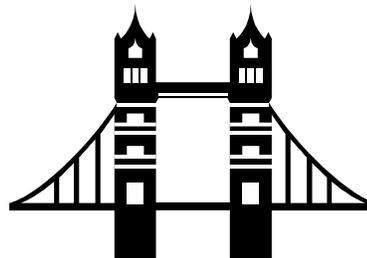
## Blocking and Bridging

- ⇒ **Blocking**
  - ⇒ Avoid the unwelcome question
  - ⇒ Use your sound bite to counter the given question
- ⇒ **Bridging**
  - ⇒ Use a sound bite to direct the next question
  - ⇒ Take control of the interview
  - ⇒ Tool to ensure your main message is told

## Avoid the Traps of

- ⇒ Irrelevant questions
- ⇒ Speculation
- ⇒ Either/or statements
- ⇒ Loaded statements

## Examples and Notes



### How Do I Dress?

- ✓ Have a clean t-shirt ready if you're at a cleanup.
- ✓ Stay conservative and wear solid colors. (White and patterns appear harsh.)
- ✓ If wearing a suit, try navy or gray with a blue shirt and conservative tie.
- ✓ A white shirt with a dark coat will work.
- ✓ If seated, do not sit with your coat buttoned.
- ✓ Women's suits: avoid red and white.
- ✓ Find out what color the back screen is. Don't wear the same color as the screen.
- ✓ No jingling.
- ✓ Don't wear anything that will take away from your message.

### At the Interview

- ✓ Arrive early.
- ✓ Take deep breaths and relax.
- ✓ Be concise.
- ✓ Talk to the interviewer, not the camera.
- ✓ Never cut the reporter off, even if you are excited about the question.

### Your Body Language

## On the Radio

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## On the Telephone

## When Not to Talk to a Reporter

1. When you do not have all the information.
2. When you need more time to prepare.
3. There is a preferred spokesperson for your organization.
4. You believe you are the wrong person to talk to or someone else is the expert.
5. When the question or topic entangles you in controversy.
6. When the issue involves confidentiality and legal matters.

## A Successful Interview's Top 10

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1. **Always be honest** and truthful. A lie takes 1000 more to come around to the truth. NEVER LIE!
2. Back up any of your opinions with **facts, data, and experiences**. Be sure to keep it as simple as possible, so you do not lose the audience.
3. **Anchor your major points** with statements like, “Bottom line is...”, “This is critical to understand...”, “The most important thing is...”. This helps the reporter ask the next question and you to be in control.
4. Using **short stories** to illustrate your point. Ensure that the story is short enough to get your point across. You can shoot yourself in the foot if you try to be cute and tell a story that does not relate to your point or help your credibility.
5. **Do not over-answer the question**. When you have made your statement STOP.
6. **Take your time**; do not rush through the answer. Some of the best interviews occur when the interviewee pauses and thinks about the response.
7. If you do not know an answer, **admit it**.
8. **Never say NO COMMENT**. It is better to say, “I am not able to talk about this subject at this time.”
9. **“Off the record” is never off the record**. The reporter is always on record and you should watch what you say. If you cannot say it “on record” it is not worth saying.
10. **Just because they shut the camera off does not mean that the reporter has stopped listening**. Do not make flippant comments after the interview. Thank the reporter and the camera person. Feel free to talk when you are in the car or the reporter has left.



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