



Session: Working with the Media – Brigid O’Connor, MBA
Client: Financial Planning Association – Colorado Chapter
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2009

Information Sharing

Pondering the press

- the people and the system
- deadlines – why we bother

Interview skills and tactics

- interviewing the interviewer
 - o How much does the reporter know?
 - o What’s the story angle?
 - o Who else is s/he talking with?
 - o Who is the real audience?
 - o What’s the deadline?
- controlling the outcome
 - o preparation
 - o FAQs
 - o three points & bridging

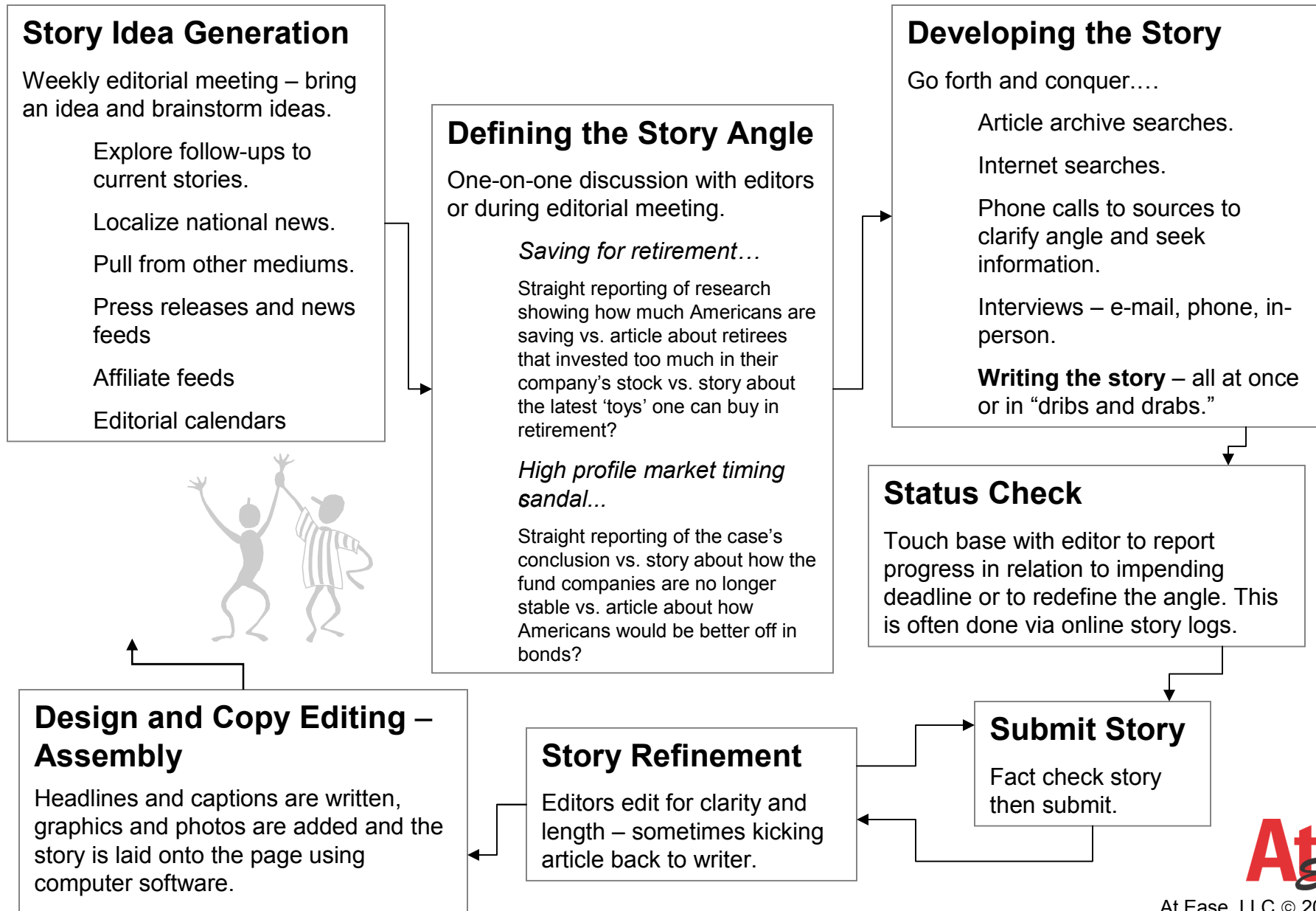
Crafting responses

Making an impact on television and when communicating in general

Pitfalls

- repeated questions
- restating negative or charged words
- multi-pronged questions
- leading questions
- speaking on behalf of others
- an acceptable “no comment”
- incorrect info in the question

Publish or perish - the news story's path



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Impact the Outcome – Interview the Interviewer Worksheet

You need to be empowered with information before starting any of your own. Armed with information you can better prepare your point and be more efficient. It's helpful to tell the journalist. Ask the journalist the questions quickly and in a relaxed, helpful manner. Do not let your questioning pose a real or perceived barrier to the journalist's ability to get the information she needs.

1. How much does the journalist know about the story topic and/or situation?

2. Who is your real audience? In other words, what segment of the community will I read or view this journal story?

3. What is the story angle? Of the many different paths the journalist could take to get this story written – which is she choosing? [Reference: "Publisher Perish: The News Story's Path for example of divergent paths on a single topic"]

4. Who else is the journalist interviewing?

5. What is the deadline for the story?



Impact the Outcome – Media Interview Prep Worksheet

Once you receive information from the journalist, develop your point using the worksheet below. [Reference “Impact the Outcome – Interview Interview” worksheet for examples of the information you need.] If appropriate and feasible, ask the journalist for direct quotes of your thoughts of file. At minimum, take a moment or two to review the following so your interview builds information and the perfect context for your public.

What is your main goal for this interview?

What is the ideal headline for the resulting coverage?

What three messages do you want included?

1.
2.
3.

What story, example case study, client contact or analogy will you share to reinforce each message?

1.
2.
3.

What topics do you not want included?

How do your message points benefit or affect the journalist's audience?

1.
2.
3.

What supporting documentation might be helpful to the journalist and so intensify your messages?



At Ease with Television: TV Tips

What do I need to know?

- Interview the guest booker/assignment editor/reporter before the interview.
- View the show before becoming part of the show.
- Prepare and memorize your talking points and FAQs. Role-play these with a colleague or media expert if time permits.

What do I need to wear?

- Avoid: stripes, unrelieved black or white, tiny patterns, huge patterns, distracting accessories.
- Aim for: tailored pieces that allow for a crisp look, polished shoes with appropriate socks, clothes that fit perfectly and are newly pressed.
- Remember to: reduce shine, sit on jacket tail, straighten all clothes, look the part.

What do I do?

- Show up early for interviews. Be unfailingly polite to everyone.
- Expect the unexpected.
 - During an “in-studio” interview you *may* be led to a waiting room called a “Green Room” by a production assistant. That person or another *may* lead you to the studio and attach your microphone. You may never meet the interviewer until you’re being interviewed or you might. Your interview slot may be moved or cancelled at any time.
 - If the interview comes to your site: A field producer, camera person and/or reporter may arrive with various pieces of space-consuming equipment depending on whether the interview is live or taped for later editing. Anyone of these people may conduct the interview and each may have a very different level of knowledge about the topic at hand.
- Flow with the experience from beginning to end, remembering why you are involved – this experience provides a valuable communication channel to your publics.
- You are “on” from the moment you enter the studio or from the moment journalists arrive at your site.
- In advance, establish the amount of time you have to offer the interviewer. If the interview takes place at your site consider designating someone to track this time and politely interrupt when the time has elapsed.

Eye contact and facial expression.

- Look at the interviewer, with few exceptions.
- Look at props only as you describe them. Handle props carefully or not at all.
- Beware of your expression, because the camera may focus on you at any time - during wide shots, when questions are asked, as the camera cuts to commercials, as the camera cuts from a previous story.
- Remember, it’s not over ‘til it’s over. Maintain positive attitude and strategic caution throughout.

MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS

INTERVIEW TRANSITION / BRIDGING TECHNIQUES

1. That's an interesting question. It reminds me of...
2. What I really want to talk to you about is...
3. What's most important is...
4. And don't forget...
5. Before we get off that subject, let me add...
6. That's not my area of expertise, but I think your audience would be interested in knowing that...
7. What I'm really here to talk about today is...
8. Let me just add that...
9. That reminds me...
10. Let me answer you by saying that...
11. Let's take a closer look at...
12. That's an important point because...
13. What that means is...
14. Another thing to remember is...
15. Now that we've covered _____, let's move on to _____.
16. While _____ is certainly important, don't forget about _____.

These "bridges" are difficult to use skillfully, and if overused, can annoy an audience

BASIC DOS AND DON'TS FOR ALL MEDIA INTERVIEWS

DO...

- ◆ Use the inverted pyramid technique in phrasing statements and responses – make the most important point first.
- ◆ Know before your interview the points you want to make.
- ◆ Use everyday language; avoid jargon.
- ◆ Turn negatives into positives.
- ◆ Listen for compound or loaded questions.
- ◆ Know your FAQs (frequently asked questions).
- ◆ Be prepared to answer the questions you most hope aren't asked.
- ◆ Say, "I don't know, but I'll find an answer and get back to you."
- ◆ Keep answers simple – don't assume that the reporter or your audience has the same background that you have.

DON'T...

- ◆ Don't discuss things you know nothing about – no "what if" speculation or speaking for someone else.
- ◆ Don't say anything you don't want to appear in print or on the air.
- ◆ Don't say "no comment."
- ◆ Don't repeat negatives and don't use negative buzzwords.
- ◆ Don't overestimate a reporter's knowledge of the industry or your subject.
- ◆ Don't argue with a reporter.
- ◆ Don't speak "off the record."
- ◆ Don't ask to see a copy of the story before it is printed.





At Ease Pitfall Prevention

Repeat ed Quest ions

If a journalist asks you the same or similar question repeatedly either: 1)s/he is trying to encourage you to hone your reply, or possibly 2)s/he is attempting to trip you up. For example, “As I mentioned, my client followed the proper procedures. And documentation to that affect is public record, so with all due respect it is pointless to go over that same ground again.”

Rest at ing Negat iv e or Charged Wbr ds

A journalist can phrase a question using any words s/he chooses. Your job is to avoid reusing poor words in your answer.

Q/ “What is your answer to the accusation that your client funded this development with shady partners and funny money?”

Incorrect A/ “There is no truth to accusations about shady partners or funny money.”

Correct A/ “Real Homes Incorporated is a leader in quality construction.”

Mul t- pronged Quest ions

If confronted with a question that is really several questions just answer the part that works best for you. So if a journalist says, “Please share with me how this happened, why this happened and what you plan on doing to be sure it doesn’t happen again.” Answer your preferred portion and then redirect to the journalist by saying, “And what was the next part of your question?”

L eading Quest ions

Intentionally or inadvertently a journalist may put words in your mouth by offering a comment (maybe a paraphrase of your last reply or not) and saying, “don’t you agree.” Rather than nodding or verbally agreeing, your reply should indicate your point of view in your own words.

Q/ “Women are frightened of health screenings because discovering cancer is a truly devastating experience, don’t you agree?”

A/ “96% of the women we screen learn they’re cancer free. Four percent learn how we can help them get there.”

Note: if you are on live radio or TV you may need to first insert, “What I actually said was...”

Also avoid being led toward a fixed answer when you encounter a question that offers two impossible jumping off points.

Q/ “Is the company going to reimburse the customers or take the money to the bank?”

A/ “Neither. Our goal is to provide quality service in a manner considered fair and affordable.”

Spea king on Beha l f of Ot hers

Don’t. If a journalist asks you, “Why do you think the SEC is up in arms over this issue?” Deflect the answer back to the party in question and then insert one of your talking points. For example, an appropriate reply might be, “You need to go directly to the SEC for that answer, but what I can tell you is our goal is to provide quality service in a manner considered fair and affordable.”

I f You Real l y Can’ t Comment

Always avoid saying ‘no comment.’ It isn’t smart, polite, helpful, or strategic. Instead fill in the blanks in the following construct – 3 steps. 1) I can’t talk about ____ 2) Because ____ 3) But what I can tell you is ____.

I ncorrect I nfo i n t he Quest ion

If you are faced with a question that has false or misleading information embedded in it, just take a moment to correct the info before answering.

Q/ Given that your local financial services firm only handles investing, wouldn’t people get a more comprehensive experience going with a national full-sized company?

A/ I would like to first correct something you said... “The financial planners in our firm have expertise in and currently assist clients with a broad spectrum of service – including and beyond solely investing...”