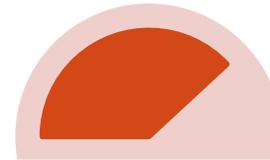
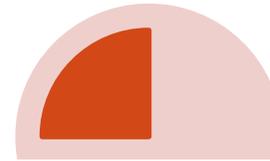
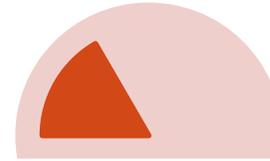


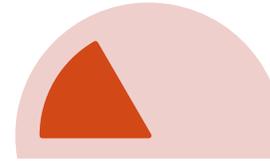
4 Tips on Talking to The Press...



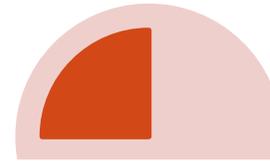
...And How to Come Out on Top



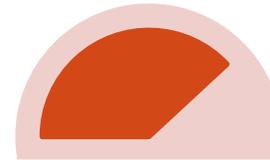
A Discussion-Based
Best Practices Review
by Kimberly Manchester



For the Record



Be Concise



Setting the Tone



Always Be...

For the Record

Taking to the media can be a nerve-wracking experience. Journalists are trained to put you at ease to get you talking

They are also trained to read your body language

- Putting your guard up will make you look defensive
- Speaking too casually will make you look untrustworthy

And, **unless they agree with you** when you say you want to remain “**off the record**”, it will be on the record

- Someday, somewhere, what you say will be researched and corroborated for veracity
- Even **Deep Throat's identity** was eventually revealed



For the Record

To overcome nervousness, guardedness, and other involuntary “tells”, practice speaking in front of a mirror

- Imagine what questions you will be asked; study your facial expression. What do you see? **Would you trust you?**
- Does your voice sound firm and convicted, or does it waver? Do you speak in a **monotone** or with **cadence**?

What do you hear?

Would you quickly lose interest in what you are saying?



For the Record



- Don't worry too much about **eye movement**; it's a **myth** that rolling your eyes to the right means you are lying
- **Watch your hands**: studies have shown that **excessive and wild hand movement**, not eye movement, indicates untruth
- Remember to breathe. Calm, regular breathing is a sign of **confidence that can be trusted** whereas harsh, uneven breaths can be seen as angry and arrogant – a sign of **gaslighting**
- Speak **slowly** and **clearly**. No more than **30 words per minute** to ensure that what you say is what the reporter hears.

Be Concise

Did I ever tell you about **this one time at band camp...**?

You cringed at that opening, didn't you? **Because you know what comes next.** A boring anecdote that you will tune out before the 5 second mark

- Unless you are a **storyteller**, don't try to tell a story
- Stick to the basic facts of the matter at hand
- If asked to elaborate, **pause to think** before you start speaking



Be Concise

Say what you mean, mean what you say

- If there are two ways of saying something, choose the way that is **most easily understood**:
 - × We sent not our best and brightest's sons to Viet Nam
 - ✓ We sent not the sons of our best and brightest to Viet Nam
 - × Let's eat, kids
 - ✓ Kids, let's eat



Setting the Tone

To set the tone, **set and confirm** the location and time of your interview

- On location? Confirm the location! (**Don't be like Rudy G. at the "Four Seasons"**)
- Set a location that makes *you* **comfortable**, yet maintains **professionalism**
 - ✓ Your office
 - ✓ Your favorite local coffee shop
 - ✓ Your favorite upscale restaurant
 - ✗ Local dive bar
 - ✗ Massage parlor



Setting the Tone



If possible, avoid “remote” interviews with the media

- Telephone interviews leave you unable to see how the other party is responding
- **Miscommunication** occurs far too often via email, where **sarcasm and sincerity** can be hard to tell apart
- Zoom interviews are frequently interrupted by **technical difficulties**

Setting the Tone

If you must do a remote interview, remember to **set the tone**

For a **telephone interview**, go to a quiet room where you will not be interrupted

- **Good, natural lighting** is a plus; it will make you feel energized
- For best results, **use a landline**
 - Less risk of dropped calls
 - No notifications coming through to distract you



Setting the Tone

If you must do a remote interview, remember to **set the tone**

For a **Zoom interview**, go to a quiet room where you will not be interrupted

- **Good, natural lighting** will prevent you from looking like an untrustworthy shadowy figure
- Wear solid colors, not prints, so **the focus remains on you** and what you are saying
 - If you are **dark-skinned**, wear a pale color; **light-skinned**, wear a dark color. This will prevent blending or looking washed out



Setting the Tone

If you must do a remote interview, remember to **set the tone**

For a **Zoom interview**, go to a quiet room where you will not be interrupted

- **Do not use** a distracting background
- Do not turn off your camera – **it's rude**, and you want the reporter to like you
- Keep live interruptions by kids and pets to a minimum or out of the picture altogether; not everyone finds them charming



Setting the Tone

If you must do a remote interview, remember to **set the tone**

For an **email interview**, the rules are more complicated – and time consuming

- Review each question **twice**
 - Be certain you are answering the question you were asked, not the question **you think you were asked**
- Draft your answer to each question – **and then let it sit**
 - Return to your drafted answer several hours later, or even the next day, to **thoroughly review** it with fresh eyes



Setting the Tone

If you must do a remote interview, remember to **set the tone**

For an **email interview**, the rules are more complicated – and time consuming

- **Before hitting send**
 - Print out your responses and have someone from **Marketing or Public Relations** proofread them
 - For grammatical and technical accuracy
 - To make certain you are not revealing proprietary information



Always Be...



1. Present and Available

- a. Being present and being available **are not the same thing!**
 - Call if you are going to be late
 - Interruptions are inconsiderate
 - Unless it is an actual *emergency*, do not give away the time you have **reserved for others**

2. Aware

- a. Of what you are saying and what you are revealing;
remember everything is on the record
- b. Of your language
 - While you may not use profanity, every “**um**” and “**like**” will be recorded.
 - Due to journalistic integrity standards, **quotes cannot be modified**

Always Be...



3. Appropriately dressed

- If **safety gear** is required for the location, **wear** your safety gear
- If you are **representing** a VIP, **dress like** a VIP yourself
- If your clothing is soiled: change it, spot clean it, or **cover the stain**
- Don't over-accessorize. You want to **dazzle** the reporter with **what you say**, not the dazzle from your jewelry

Always Be...



4. Unafraid for not knowing an answer
 - **If you do not know an answer**, tell the reporter you will need to get back to them; **do not make up something on the spot**

5. Unapologetic if something is not your fault
 - If you sympathize, say so:
 - I understand; I've been there myself
 - Please accept my heartfelt concern
 - Do not say **"I'm sorry"** when you really mean **"I'm sympathetic"**

Summary



For the Record

Always be conscious that what you say could end up in print - in a newspaper, an email, or a court record. Be aware of how you sound, and how you present to listeners



Be Concise

Use as few words as possible to say what you need to say; refrain from saying what you want to say unless it furthers the discussion



Setting the Tone

The environment and medium *you* choose for your interview allows you to hold the position of power, breeding self-assurance; do not give away your power or let others take it from you



Always Be...

Always be aware of who you are representing when you talk to the media, and take steps to ensure that you are representing them in a proper light through your words, costuming, and other behaviors



Questions?