

# Dealing with the Media

**The Good...The Bad  
and  
The Ugly**





the Ugly

the Good

the Bad

UNKNOWN

SERGIO LEONE

# “The Good”- Benefits

- The Media can be your friend!
- The Media can help your organization inform the public and build your organization’s reputation!
- The Media can tell **YOUR** story!
- The Media can help!



# “The Bad” - Liabilities

- The Media can be your enemy!
- The Media can ignore you!
- The Media can tell someone else’s story!
- The Media can cause you serious headaches!



# “The Ugly” – Dealing with it

- Have a Media Person (in tune with everything in the organization, typically a calm, professional and reserved personality).
- Have a back-up Media Person or Specialist for specific topics and others as necessary.
- Have a communications plan (who, what, why, when and where).
- Tell your story! Your job is to keep the public informed and build your organization’s reputation.

# “The Ugly” – Dealing with it

- Build relationships with the media!
  - They are just people.
  - When there’s news, you don’t want it to be the first time you’ve spoken.
- Think of it as an opportunity!
  - You can help media people advance their career by making them look good while they are making you look good!

# Action Plan

- Know the different communication styles with the various Media forms.
  - Print - may take place over the phone
  - Radio - may tell your story in small sound bites throughout the day, multiple days or could be live
  - Television – generally needs good pictures otherwise it might not be “newsworthy”
  - Social Media - needs photos (LOTS!) and positive stories; pay close attention to the feedback

# Action Plan

- Understand the type of media you are working with and their audience.
- Make contact with a short email or phone call if you know them.
- Ask for topics in advance of an interview so you can establish your objectives.
- Be able to briefly answer the interviewer's questions while also discussing your own priorities.



# Action Plan

- Be consistent no matter who may speak within your organization!
- Assign one person to escort a reporter at all times when they are on your premises or on a project site.
- Understand you are speaking through a reporter and your comments and attitude could show up on the air.
- Answer questions with short sentences as directly as possible.

# Action Plan

- Be honest and upfront no matter what!
- Have your message ready as you never know when the media is looking for a story.
- Respect the media's deadlines.
- Establish a reputation of always being accessible to reporters....this is really important if you have any hope of being contacted before publishing bad news about your organization.

# Action Plan

- Broaden your group of spokespersons by encouraging or having others (residents) provide a testimonial to the media.
- Look at each question as a potential point to jump off and articulate your agenda.
- Be proactive.....suggest story ideas and explain how it might impact the general public or be of special interest.
- Answer each question as directly as possible and if you are not sure, let them know and offer to follow up once you have the answer.

# Action Plan

- Plan in advance who will be the spokesperson for the organization in times of crisis....only that one person should provide interviews.
- Remember it is the interviewer's job to ask questions but you do not have to answer all of them.....you can establish guide lines.
- Call the media ahead of a press release.....they really like the heads up and it gives you a chance to explain why it is important to readers and viewers.

# Action Plan

- Understand that reporters will typically record conversations conducted over the telephone.
- Provide empathy in situations involving injury, death or other serious hardships.
- Be relentless and positive about your position....use the media to tell your story!

# Action Plan

- If you don't call ahead, make sure someone is available to comment when sending out a press release.
- Remember.....those who submit to an interview are fair game!
- Utilize an actual conversation rather than telling a story through email.
- Understand you can't stop a news story!

# Action Plan

- Expect follow up requests from the media, they just want to get the story right.....and so do you!
- Avoid answering a question outside of your area of expertise.
  - Even if you know the answer.
  - This might be a case where you want to refer the media person to a staff person who has the expertise or knowledge to answer the question.
- Be careful not to tell a media person more than they want to know.

# Action Plan

- Understand that “off the record” comments.....are never really off the record!
- Don't use the phrase “No Comment”.....reporters are very sensitive if you use this phrase and it could get Ugly!
- Avoid at all costs arguing with a media person.....you will not win!
- Be courteous when calling the media and always ask if they have time to talk.....professional courtesy can go a long way!



# Action Plan

- Understand a media person will not stick to a script.....anything can happen during an interview!
- You should never blame anyone for anything!
- Be in the habit of contacting a media person as soon as possible after they've left you a message.

# Summary (What did we talk about???)

- 1) Dealing with the media and how it can be a positive resource.
  - a) The Good - Benefits.
  - b) The Bad – Liabilities.
  - c) The Ugly - Dealing with it/Action Plan.

Questions?????

“Go Ahead, Make my Day!”

