Hennes Communications | Top Tips

DO:
• Tell the truth; tell it all; tell it first
• Get their deadline, get away & prepare
• Return media calls promptly
• Speak in soundbites
• Repeat key messages
• Be concise and clear
• Stay on message
• Stay positive in thought & word
• Tell stories
• Tell your story directly to key audiences
• Bridge frequently to key messages

DON’T:
• Say “no comment”
• Just answer questions - make your points
• Be boring
• Use jargon
• Speak to the media unprepared
• Speculate
• Repeat negative phrases
• Place blame
• Let your guard down
• Lose your temper

Social Media Tips
• Correct misstatements of facts in real time
• Don’t get in debates with online trolls
• Offer to resolve issues offline
• Remember you’re talking to people reading the comments, not the commenter
• Know how to contact managers or editors of online sites
• Make liberal use of hotlinks to supportive info
• Resist the urge to delete negative posts

Bridging Phrases
“Let me add…”
“It’s important to emphasize…”
“Another question I’m often asked…”
“It’s too early to talk about that, but what I do know…”
“Let me put this into perspective…”
“I’m glad you asked that…people have that misconception, but the truth is…”
“I can’t speculate on what might happen. What I can tell you is…”

Because the Court of Public Opinion is always in session.
Pre-Interview Checklist

- Reporter’s name
- Media outlet
- Reporter’s phone #
- Reporter’s email
- Story topic/angle
- Your desired headline
- Your key messages
- The most difficult ?’s
- Reporter’s deadline

Try To Determine:

- Does the reporter have bias?
- How knowledgeable is the reporter?
- Has reporter done anything else on topic?
- Is the reporter friendly/antagonistic?

For Television / Radio

- Will interview be live, taped or satellite remote?
- Will there be call-ins or emails?
- If live, how long is broadcast?
- What’s the format?
  - Interviewer/guest; interviewer/2 guests?
  - Do guests debate? Who speaks first?

For Social Media

- Where did the threat originate (social media or conventional)?
- Who is the source? Is the source an “influencer”?
- Is it catching fire online?
- Are conventional media involved?

Interview Preparation

Establish ground rules
- On/off record?
- Not for attribution?
- Length of interview?

What are my key messages?
- Support with examples, stories, anecdotes
- Create sharp, crisp soundbites
- Compassion for victims (if appropriate)

Suggest third-party experts

Write down questions I’ll be asked (and questions I dread)
- Develop responses

Do I tape the interview?

Practice Q&A

What are people saying on social media?

Provide bios, fact sheets & articles before the interview

Monitor & correct misinformation quickly

Pre-Interview

- Who is calling?
  - Name, media outlet?
  - Phone, email, fax, Twitter I.D.?
- What is the topic/angle?
- What kind of story?
  - News, profile, feature, Q&A?
- Will story be on the web, in print or both?
- Is anyone else being interviewed?
- How much time do you need for the interview?
- Are you sending a photographer?
- May I provide visuals?

Hennes Communications

www.crisiscommunications.com