



Life Science Marketing Group

North Carolina Biotechnology Center

February 11, 2020

Agenda

12:00–12:15

Greetings & lunch

12:15–12:20

Announcements

12:20–1:00

Media Training & Message Delivery

1:00

Wrap up

Media Training & Message Delivery



Karyn Ostrom
G&S Business Communications

Interview
preparation
and message
development

Interview
management and
message delivery

1

How to prepare for a media interview

- Knowing your media
- Practicing the art of storytelling
- Refining key messages
- Anticipating tough questions

2

How to manage a media interview

- The physical
- The verbal
- The content
 - Flagging
 - Bridging
 - Clarifying
- What not to do

3

Putting interview management and message delivery techniques into practice

Preparation: Know your media type

Understanding what different media types want

Headline:

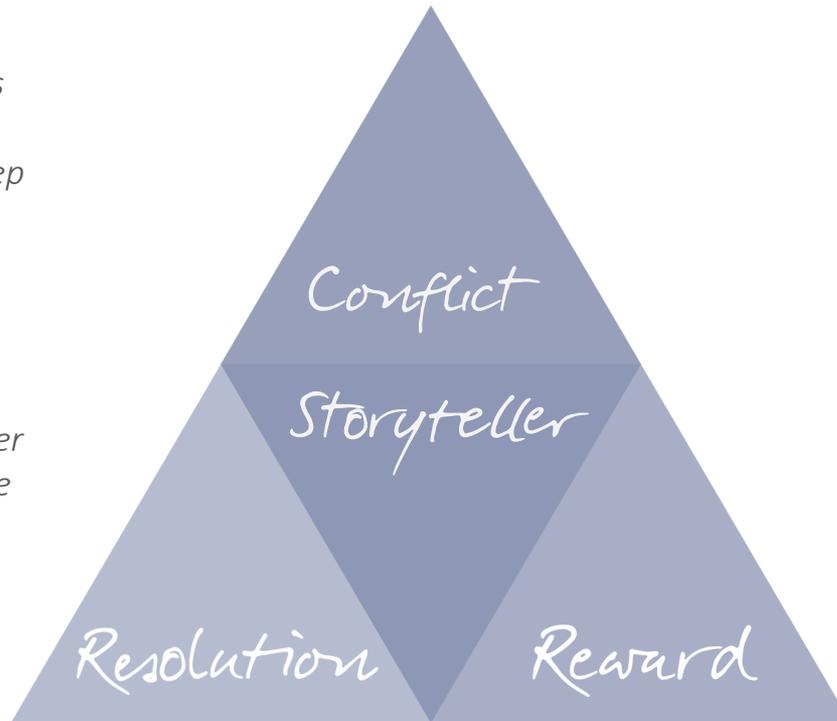
**Scientists Discover One-step Genome-editing
Technique That Accelerates Seed Breeding**

How it was reported:

Practicing the Art of Storytelling

CONFLICT gives us a reason to care, makes room for new ideas, and compels us to keep reading/viewing.

Facts, figures, logic, and technology answer the question, solve the problem, and bring **RESOLUTION** to the conflict.



The **STORYTELLER** gives voice to our brand persona, conveys credibility, and builds a following.

The **REWARD** is the emotional pay-off: It makes us feel smarter, more capable, amused or satisfied. It keeps us coming back for more.

Key messages

- Tailor for your audience
- Focus on positive communication, even with negative subject matter
- Avoid internal language/acronyms
- **Proactively share anecdotes and tangible information to illustrate messages**
- **Speak in quotable quotes**



Key messages: Making your content relevant with anecdotes



Breeders have to predict which genetics will perform best in different environments to meet our customers' varied needs. It's like what Netflix does every day when it's helping customers figure out which movies or shows are going to become new favorites.

Scientists Use Innovation to Accelerate Seed Technologies

Mathematics and analytics provide growers with yield stability



Seed selection technology advances

Pulling in massive amounts of information about hybrids, soils, fields and conditions can help fine-tune seed choices. Here's one company's perspective.

Key messages: Speaking in quotes

Hallmarks of quotable quotes

Strong, confident language

- “The next big thing in Ag is moving from a state where we tested products that we had created largely by chance, to where we now are able to create the specific genetic variation we desire.”

Honest, sincere insight

- “We’ve been guilty in our industry of using data as our source of defense. What we’ve lacked is the ability to connect with people’s emotion – why they have opposition. If we connect with the heart and show people we care, we really have a chance to connect all of us with what we’re trying to do with technology.”

Relatable context

- “one blade of grass on a football field”



“I didn’t use him in the article, although I tried. He was a smart guy but didn’t speak in quotes.”

– John Markoff, New York Times reporter, in reference to an antitrust attorney he interviewed

Anticipating tough questions

- Most tough questions can be anticipated
- Active listening is critical when it comes to potential negatives
- Reporters commonly use techniques to pose questions in challenging ways
- Don't repeat the negative
- Reject the premise of the question, if needed
- Say what you DO believe rather than what you DON'T BELIEVE

Reminder: What an interview is... and what it is not



An interview is not:

- ✗ A casual conversation
- ✗ A debate
- ✗ An interrogation



An interview is:

- ✓ Your opportunity to deliver specific business messages to key audiences

Mindset: 3 Keys to Successful Media Interviews

- 1 You are in control of the interview
- 2 You are talking to your target audiences through the interviewer
- 3 You are not doing the interview to answer questions... you are doing it to deliver a message and tell a story



Managing the Interview

Flagging

Simple tool to help the media follow you and reinforce the key point you want to make:

- Emphasize most important points
- Improve your chance of being quoted
- Capture attention of viewers / listeners in broadcast segments

Planting flags

“The most important issue is...”

“We see four key trends driving the market...”

“There is one point you need to understand...”

“Many people think XX, but the real news is YY...”

Bridging

Simple phrases that take you from one place to another:

- 1 For building on a point being made
- 2 For transitioning to a new point or topic
- 3 For dealing with tough and out of scope questions

Bridging Examples in Action

“I can’t speak on behalf of the competition, but at [my company] what I can tell you is...”

- Strong, all-purpose option for moving to another point
- Particularly useful in handling “unanswerable” questions

“Let me step back for a moment and offer context...”

- Excellent bridge at start of an interview to set the stage
- Helpful when reporter gets too far into the weeds

“That’s a good point, but what’s even more important...”

- Allows you to be responsive, even if you want to move away

Clarifying

- Don't over-accommodate the interviewer by answering out-of-scope questions
- Don't assume that an interviewer meant x when he/she said y

What NOT to do

- Speaking off the record
Anything you say can be reported
- Rapid-fire questions
Focus on addressing one question at a time
- Speculation
Focus on your facts and message for your business
- Assuming comprehension
Ensuring the journalists gets it right is your responsibility as a spokesperson
- Filling the void
Embrace the awkward silence; stay on-message

Thank you

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Keep in Touch

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Learn more about our
communications approach at
www.gscommunications.com

Business Communications in Practice

- Branding & Purpose
- Creative & Storytelling
- Demand Generation
- Digital & Social Engagement
- Media Relations
- Reputation Management
- Research & Insights
- Crisis Communications

Thank you for
participating



See you at our March 10 program!