



The last several Modules were about communication.

Our interactions may not stop with employees, peers and contractors.

***There may be a time when we have to deal with the media.
Module 9 will help you meet this responsibility.***

0



Module 9 Media Communications

Objectives

- Understand how a crisis may arise and what necessary steps to take with respect to media.
- Demonstrate proper media communication techniques during a crisis.
- Understand the media and different tips for print, studio, and broadcast interviews.
- Develop spokesperson skills and the confidence to be effective with the media, if necessary.

2



Lamar "Bubba" Woodham, PE/PLS

Deputy Director, Administration

Role of Communication

Leaders have one chance to make a good first impression.

Media Exposure

Great media coverage:

- Publicize ALDOT.
- Portray your work positively.



Poor media coverage:

- It is a damaging experience.
- It can take years to repair.



4



Anatomy of a Crisis

Definition of a Crisis

--a serious incident affecting, for example, human safety, the environment, and/or product or corporate reputation—and something that has either received or been threatened by adverse publicity.

In short, it is “unexpected bad publicity.”

6

Anatomy of a Crisis

Politics
Finances
Environment
People's lives
Safety
Other unique situations



7

Anatomy of a Crisis



- Someone is to blame.
- Something is at stake.
- Someone finds out.

8

Anatomy of a Crisis

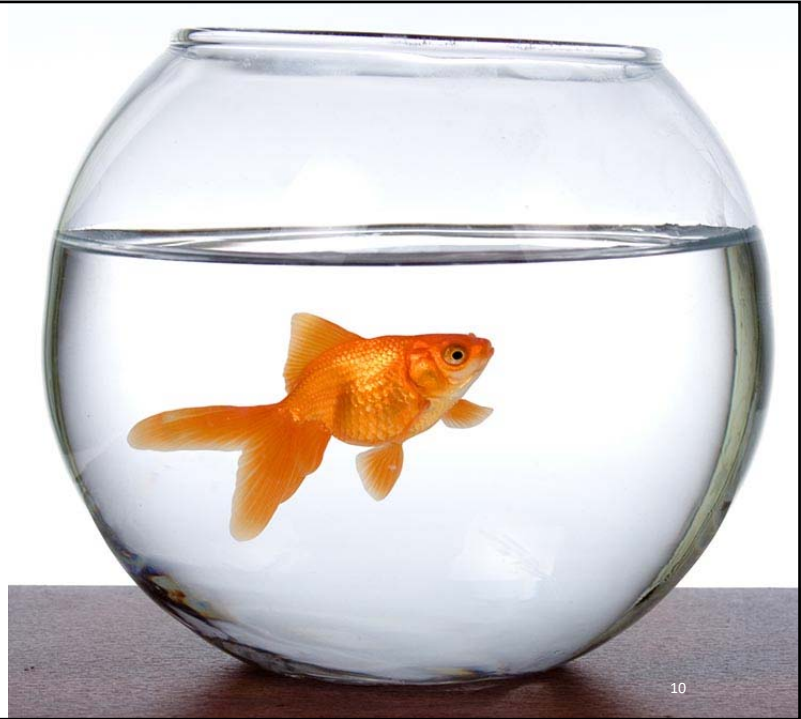
*In most cases
(except major political and financial scandals),
the publicity is much bigger if:*

- It concerns the person on the street.
- It occurs geographically close to home.

9

Anatomy of a Crisis

- It's a moving picture.
- Perception is reality.
- We operate in a goldfish bowl.
- Turn crisis into opportunity.



ALDOT Preparation

Preparation is the key.

- What kind of management notification system do we have in place if a crisis occurs during non-business hours?
- What is our departmental emergency response plan?
- What internal problems or other vulnerabilities do we have that could be damaging if they were made known to the public?
- Who would be our spokesperson(s) in a crisis?
- How much information would we give out if we had a crisis?

12

Preparation is the key.

- People always want to see a human face during a crisis.
- From that face, the public wants reassurance.
- They want the reassurance that ALDOT will:
 - make it right
 - make any amends
 - ensure (or try to) that the crisis will not happen again

13



Handling the Crisis

Handling the Crisis

- Holding action
- Assess the situation.
- Decide on the strategy.
- Identify the audiences.
- Decide on the messages.
- Prepare and effect a plan.
- Brief relevant people.
- Centralize information.
- Give reassurance.
- Resist conflict.
- Be flexible.
- Think long term.

Instructions for Media Communication

- Do not give any details—even your name.
- Do not be drawn into conversation.
- Assure the journalist or reporter that you will pass the inquiry to an informed spokesperson who will call back immediately.



16

Instructions for Media Communication

- In taking their information, establish the following:
 - Who is calling?
 - What is the person's job or title?
 - Which publication or program?
 - What is the telephone number?
 - What specifically does the person want to know?
- Pass the inquiry and details on to an authorized person immediately.
- Be polite always.

17

ALDOT Message: Positive Influence

- *Details*
 - Deliver the pre-planned specific of the given situation.
- *Human Face*
 - Express emotion and concern through nonverbal facial expressions.
- *Background Briefs*
 - Brief the reporters on related background information.

18

ALDOT Message: Positive Influence

- *Reassurance*
 - People want to be comforted in a crisis.
 - Provide what ALDOT is doing currently doing to address the situation.
 - Provide what ALDOT will do soon to remedy the crisis.
 - Provide what ALDOT will do to keep this from happening again.
 - Provide a synopsis of ALDOT's positive track record.
- *Further Information*
 - End the interview with where people can go for additional information.

19



Overall Successful Media Interviews

Overall Successful Media Interviews

Appearance and Manner

- Sit up straight, and lean forward slightly.
- Use a facial expression that “looks alert” and attentive.
- Be sincere in your wording.
- Demonstrate an emotion that is appropriate for the crisis.
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter or interviewer.

Overall Successful Media Interviews

Handling the Interview

- Say what you want to say, not what they want you to say.
- Use the questions as a “bridge” for your message.
- Do not let the interviewer butt in.
- Do not get sidetracked.
- Refute any incorrect statements.



22

Overall Successful Media Interviews

Handling the Interview

- Never go “off the record.”
- Ask the interviewer to read back what you will be quoted as saying.
- If the media get it wrong, make sure they are made aware of it.
- Be positive, and stay away from being defensive.

23

Interview Ground Rules

For the Spontaneous Interview

- Ask the reporter's name and affiliation.
- Ask, "What's the story?"
- Ask that cameras, lights, and microphones be kept at a reasonable distance.
- Keep the interview confined to the original subject.
- Remember that the reporter is looking for information and a good quote.

24

Interview Ground Rules

For the Spontaneous Interview

- Never say, "No comment."
- Do not go "off the record" at any time.
- Ask for a re-take on a fumbled answer.
- Break off the interview after a reasonable time.
- Ask when the interview will be broadcast or appear.

25

Interview Ground Rules

For the Office or Studio Interview

- Know the subject or topic, so you can do research.
- Find out the format of the show or article.
- Prepare quotable “selling points” and supporting facts.
- If possible, ask ALDOT’s Media and Communications representative to be present.

26

Interview Ground Rules

For the Office or Studio Interview

- Make the physical environment as comfortable as possible.
- Make your own tape of the interview.
- Make yourself available for follow-up questions if needed.



27

More Interview Ground Rules

For the Office or Studio Interview

- **False Choice or the A/B Dilemma**

There are times when reporters may try to trick an interviewee. In such a case, they may ask a question but provide a false choice or a multiple choice answer. Pause and think through the question.

28

More Interview Ground Rules

For the Office or Studio Interview

- **Multi-part Questions**

It is important to listen carefully during an interview. The reporter may ask you a series of related questions. Remember as much as you can about the questions. Answer them succinctly. If you cannot remember a question, simply ask that it be repeated.

29

More Interview Ground Rules

For The Office Or Studio Interview

- **Hypothetical or “If” Questions**

On rare occasions, a reporter may seek answers to “what if” scenarios. If you are familiar with what is being described, then it is fine to answer. However, scenario questions can be something that has not been planned. It is fine to simply suggest that this “scenario” has not yet occurred or did not occur and repeat what actually has occurred.

30

More Interview Ground Rules

For the Office or Studio Interview

- **Negatively Phrased Questions**

Especially if the topic is contentious, a question may be phrased in a negative manner. It is appropriate to pause, think about the answer, and answer with a positive spin.

31

More Interview Ground Rules

For The Office Or Studio Interview

- **Absent Party Comments**

Rarely, but at times, an interviewee might be asked to speak in place of someone or be asked what someone else may have said or thought. It is appropriate to defer that answer to the person. Do not attribute anything to anyone on camera.

32

More Interview Ground Rules

For The Office Or Studio Interview

- **Needling**

If a reporter or interviewer becomes sarcastic or reports false information, simply restate what was said previously and support it with additional information, if possible.

33

More Interview Ground Rules

For The Office Or Studio Interview

- **False Interviewer Statements**

If the interviewer's statements are known to be incorrect, point that out. If unsure, reiterate the ALDOT messages and state that you are happy to get back to them about the other issues.

34



Print Media

Print Interview Tips

- Do not get drawn into an interview unwillingly.
- Know who you are speaking to.
- Respect journalists' deadlines.
- Do not be elitist.
- Be prepared.

University of Leicester, Media Class



36

Print Interview Tips

- Mention the name of your company or business.
- Avoid “off the record” comments.
- Accept that you cannot control what is written.
- Keep in touch with the reporter/publication after the story has gone out.

University of Leicester, Media Class

37

More Print Interview Tips



- Set the stage.
- Take the initiative.
- Flag your selling points.
- Stay on track.
- Summarize.

38



Broadcast Interview Tips

Broadcast Interview Tips

1. Define Your Message:

What's the issue, and what do you want to happen?

2. Know the Interviewer and your Audience:

Who is going to see and hear you; what is the most effective way to communicate your message to them?

40

Broadcast Interview Tips

3. Simplify:

Keep it simple and clear, in both concept and context. Hold on to one theme and two or three central, reinforcing points.

4. Practice the 3 R's:

Rehearse, roleplay, and revise.

41

Broadcast Interview Tips

5. *You are the Message:*

Focus your words, voice tone, facial expressions, and body language. Emote without shrill attacks.

6. *Control the Interview:*

Stay on target with your message. Use “bridging.”

42

Broadcast Interview Tips

7. *Being Nervous is Normal:*

“Reframe” your fear into excitement and enthusiasm. Use breathing, centering, and other relaxation techniques you know work for you.

8. *Create a Relationship with the Interviewer and the Audience:*

Use interviewer’s first name, anecdotes, and succinct, colorful sound bites to connect.

43

Broadcast Interview Tips

9. It's OK not to be the "Know-It-All":

Say "I don't know" in a way that adds to your credibility instead of detracting from it.

10. Be Prepared:

Repeat Step #4.



44

Broadcast Interview Tips

11. Anticipate:

Be ready for hostile questions and questioners.

12. Remember:

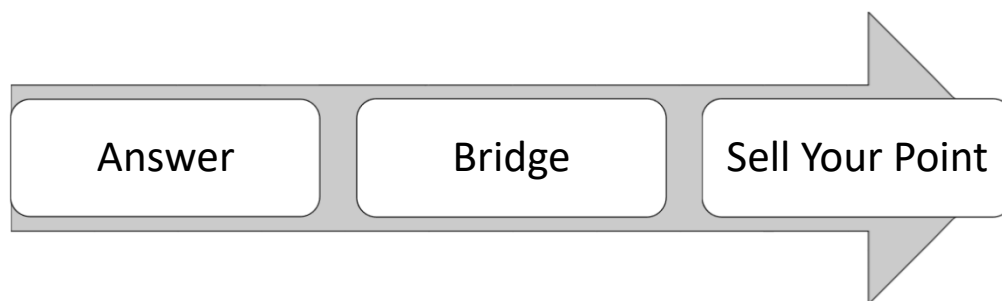
Your point of view is the most important thing at the moment. You are being interviewed because of what you know and what you think is of value. Stay centered, and stay focused.

45



Bridging Technique

Bridging Technique



Ensure that what needs to be said is said regardless of what a reporter may say or ask.

Bridging Technique

- “I hear what you are saying, but the real issue is...”
- “Perhaps, but the most important point to remember is...”
- “You first have to understand that...”

48

Bridging Technique

- Be prepared.
- Anticipate what questions or comments may be made.
- Practice pausing after a question.
- Never echo negative words after the reporter states them.
- Do not go full circle to the negative question premise.



49

Bridging Technique

- Answer the question, but do not over answer.
- Bridge to specific, positive information that contains facts, evidence, and anecdotes to support your selling points.
- Instead of just voicing an opinion, back up your opinion with facts and figures because reporters like facts and figures.

50

Crisis Situation Exercise: Develop Talking Points

You have 8 minutes.

- There's been a crash on the I-10 bridge over Mobile Bay.
- The crash involves multiple vehicles, including a fuel truck.
- The truck is burning and actively spilling into the bay.
- Cars are stuck on the bridge following the fuel truck.
- You are on your way to the incident and know reporters will be present.

51

Interviewer and Interviewee: Bob Newhart



52

Final Thoughts

“I believe in equality for everyone,
except reporters and photographers.”

--Mahatma Gandhi

“The AP has only so many reporters and CNN only has so many cameras,
but we've got a world full of people
with digital cameras and Internet access.”

--Howard Rheingold

53