

How to Prevent Bad News from Becoming a Crisis

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Today's Agenda

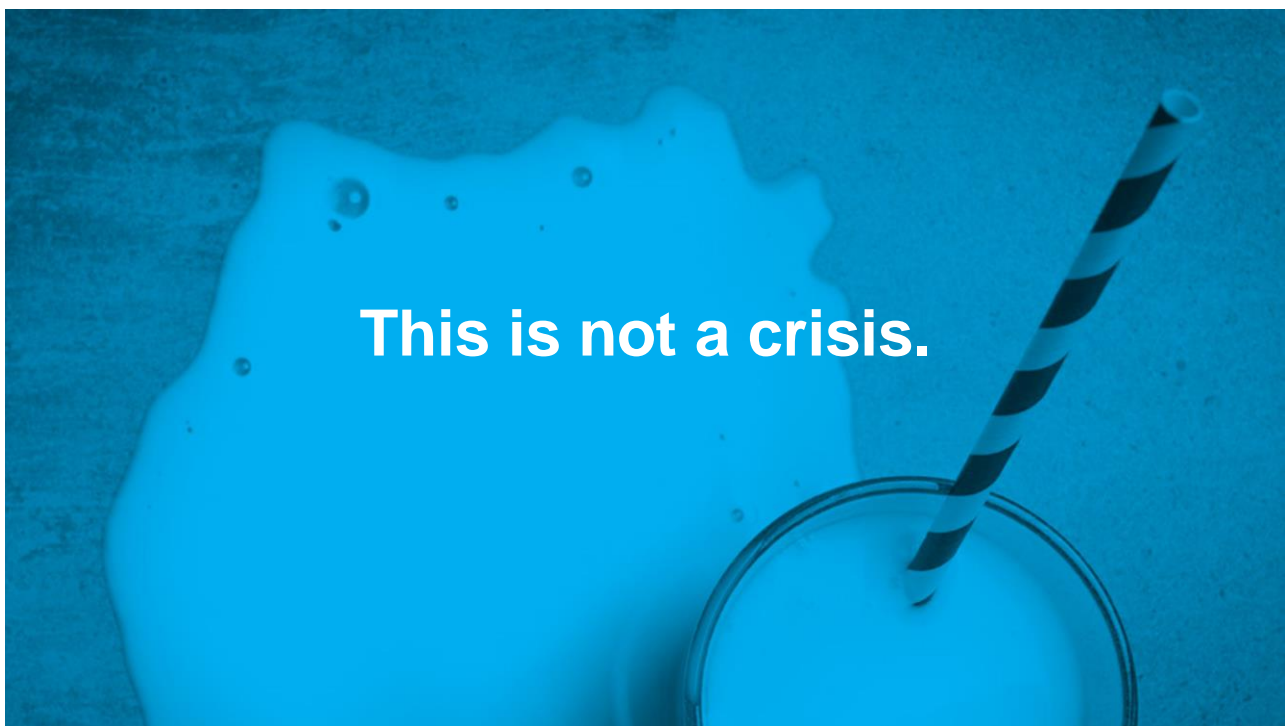
- Crisis:
 - What is a crisis, what isn't and why it matters
- Planning:
 - Create Your Crisis Plan
 - How the crisis team operates
 - Roles and Responsibilities
- How to manage a crisis
 - Rules
 - Prevent bad news from becoming a crisis
- Managing social media
- Delivering Your Message:
 - How to communicate during times of crisis

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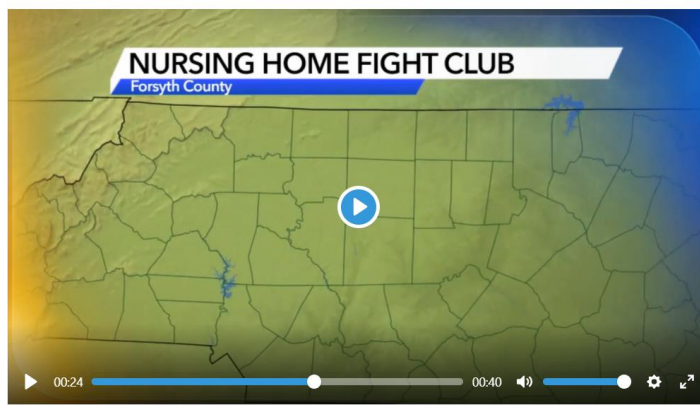


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North Carolina nursing home staff encouraged residents to fight, police say



This is a crisis

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What is an organizational crisis?

- Any event that interrupts normal operations and simultaneously threatens your reputation.
- It prevents “business as usual.”
- Simple out-of-the-ordinary events are *not* crises.
- Real crises come with big potential impacts. And sometimes big price tags.
- Events are, at least initially, out of your control.

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Types of Crises



- Legal actions
- Constituent disputes
- Accident with death or injury
- Fiscal crisis
- Layoffs/shutdowns
- Legislative challenges



- Rumors/whispering campaigns
- Labor issues
- Environmental problems
- Breach of contract
- Irresponsible, careless activity



- Spills/leaks/odors
- Whistleblowers
- Employee thefts
- Regulatory actions
- Criminal wrongdoing
- Strikes, picketing or boycotts

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Typical Healthcare Crisis

- Patient abuse
- Financial misconduct
- Unsafe facilities
- Staffing issues/shortages
- Labor relations
- Cyber hack/confidential data leak
- Financial misconduct

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Where crises come from

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Six risk categories of crisis triggers

- Operating or business failure
- Legal and ethical issues
- Individual misconduct
- Political fights
- Environmental mistakes
- Safety and security

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Beware of smoldering crises

- Buzzing grapevine, rumors
- Employee actions, exodus
- Negative social media postings
- Pending lawsuits
- Government investigations
- Negative news coverage

Worst decision: Ignore problems

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“It takes 20 years to build a reputation ...

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“and five minutes to ruin it.”

-Warren Buffet

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How are reputations ruined?

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How are reputations ruined?

Through silence, inaction and lack of planning.

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The Consequences of Silence



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The Importance of Trust

- People support only organizations they trust.
- Support and trust are directly determined by public and media opinion.
- Without trust, you cannot determine your own fate.
- You can make a mistake and cause a crisis, but maintain trust.

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Your crisis management objective

End the crisis as quickly as possible and return to business-as-usual—with credibility and reputation intact.

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**A crisis is
all about time**

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The damage caused in a crisis is a function of time. The longer the crisis, the greater the damage.

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Planning

Have a crisis plan ready

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What to do When a Crisis Hits

- Identify the situation as a crisis.
- Enact your crisis communications plans.
- Wait – what's a crisis communications plan?

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Our Disaster Recovery Plan Goes Something Like This...



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If you try to create a Crisis Communication Plan in the middle of the crisis, you'll muck up both.



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Crisis Planning:

**Simple steps
to take in
advance**

- Define audiences and know how to reach them.
- Determine who communicates on behalf of your organization or facility during a crisis.
- Always know basic facts about your organization or facility.
- Identify your vulnerable areas.
- Create a crisis team.



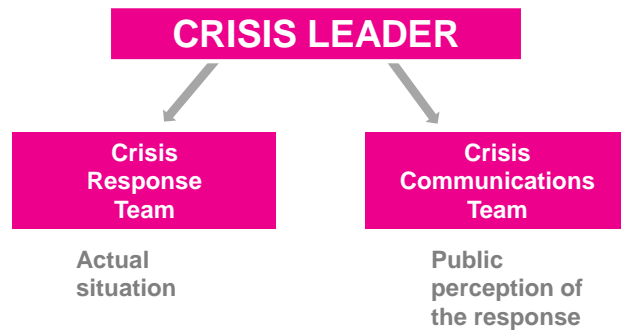
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Organize crisis teams for fast facts

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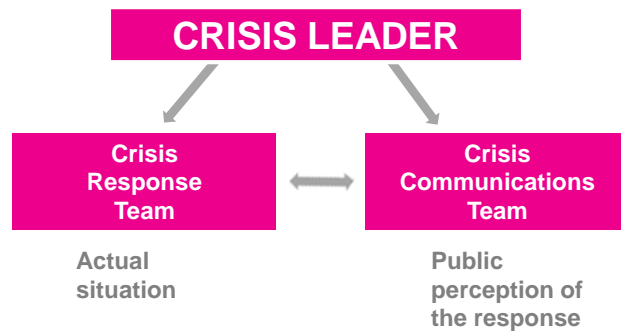


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Organize crisis teams for fast facts

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Assemble critical resources

- Everything at crisis team's "virtual fingertips."
- Contact lists, notifications, phone trees, templates for first-response statements, directory of "Who Knows What?"
- Relevant background, reference, legal documents, environmental permits, media materials, etc.
- Website / Social media account credentials.
- Squeeze wasted time out of your response.

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Build an "early-warning" system

- Conduct "what-if" planning.
- Schedule regular crisis plan reviews.
- Brainstorm with team members to identify potential trouble spots.
- The best way to manage a crisis is to prevent it from happening in the first place.

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Make friends NOW

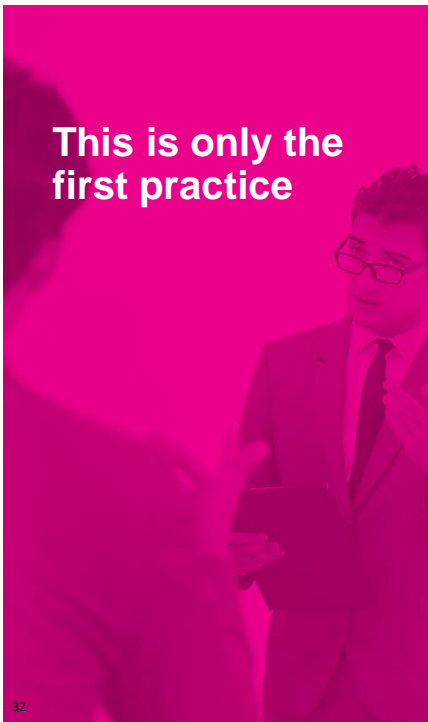


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- You can't buy fire insurance during a fire.
- Which outside third parties – media, political and other key relationships can help you during a crisis?
- What outside experts would help you reassure and explain to the public?
- Always inform your own people first.
- Include law enforcement and first responders on your list of friends.

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This is only the first practice



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- Perform drills.
- Train leaders.
- Understand your roles, your communications paths – internally and externally.

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**Every crisis has two dimensions:
reality and perception.**

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**Every crisis has two dimensions:
reality and perception.**

A crisis team must manage BOTH.

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**How you handle yourself
in the first few hours of a crisis
determines how you will ultimately
be viewed in the “Court of Public
Opinion.”**

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How you handle yourself
in the first few hours of a crisis
determines how you will ultimately
be viewed in the “Court of Public
Opinion.”

It's all about time.

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What people are
looking for when
a crisis hits

Your audiences want to know:

- You've **NOTICED** the problem.
- You **CARE**.
- You're in **CONTROL**.
- You're **DOING SOMETHING** about it.
- You're **MINIMIZING** the damage.
- You're **TAKING STEPS** to make sure it doesn't happen again.
- You're **SHARING** information fully.

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Crisis team must get answers ASAP

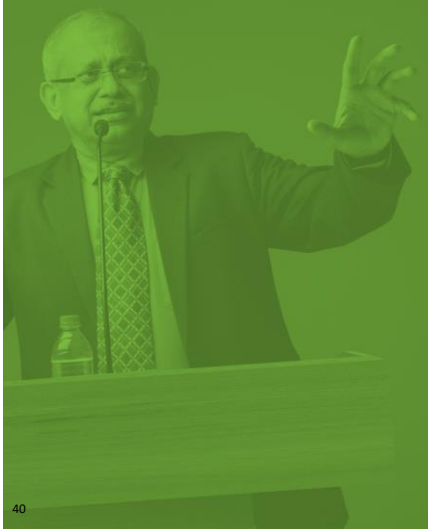
- What happened?
- How do we know?
- Who is responsible?
- Who is affected?
- Where did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- What should we do?
- What should we say?
- Who should we say it to?
- Who knows?
- What are the stakes?

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Be the source of news



- Designate one spokesperson
- Acknowledge events
- Present facts
- Communicate when, how, where next bulletin
- Templates save critical time

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Crisis Management Credo:
Do what's right. Over and over.

**“That will gratify some
people, and astonish the rest.”**

– Mark Twain

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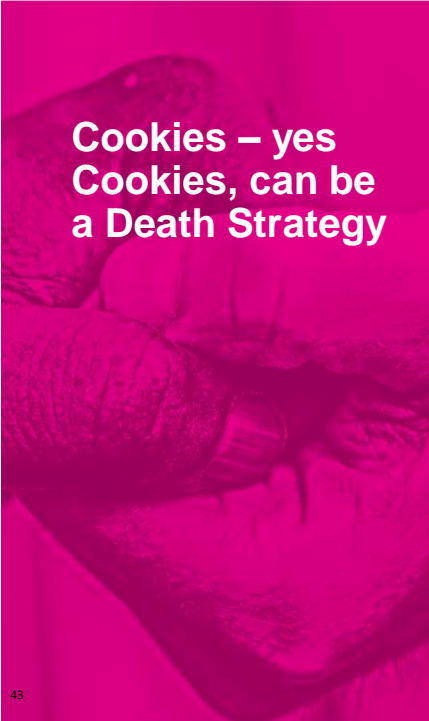
**Avoid the 3-D
death strategy**

1. Deny
2. Delay
3. Deceive

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**Cookies – yes
Cookies, can be
a Death Strategy**

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**Five rules for
handling a crisis**

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Rule #1

If bad news is going to come out anyway, you should release it, proactively and preemptively.

You only get one chance to make a good first impressions.

- Admitting mistakes can earn forgiveness
- Defuses anger, suspicion
- Helps the story fade
- Increases your credibility
- If you don't fill in the blanks, someone else will

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Rule #2

Share bad news with your own people first.

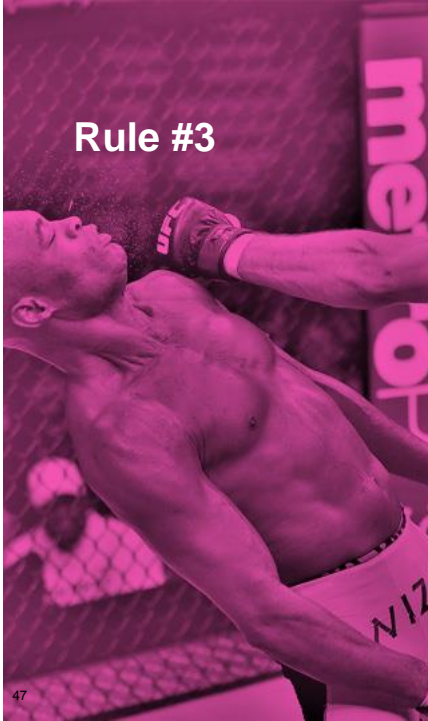
- Give them full permission to share the news and your response to it whenever and wherever they encounter concerned people.
- Understanding employees defend and support their own organization.
- Today, all employees communications should be considered public statements.

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Rule #3



Take all your hits in one round.

- When news or your crisis response comes out piecemeal, the story lingers and damages your reputation more.

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Rule #4



Answer tough questions before they're asked.

- Anticipate the most uncomfortable questions, and answer them completely in your opening statement.
- You'll defuse anger, suspicion and hostility because you won't appear to be trying to hide or evade responsibility.
- You get respect from media and public for honesty.

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Rule #5

Facts dissolve rumors and speculations.

- Speculation creates uncertainty. Who will provide facts if you don't?
- Actions count far more than your words.
- Show you know what the problem is, and you're working on it, reassuring people that you are not ducking or hiding.

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Facts are your friends



Powerful facts, not generalities or platitudes, make strong messages.



People deal with bad news far better than they deal with uncertainty.

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The Best Strategy



FAST RESPONSE + PLENTY OF FACTS

When the press sees you behave this way...

- By providing everything you know as soon as you know it
- By operating in a truthful, open manner

The crisis atmosphere will transform...

- Reporters will be much less likely to be suspicious, skeptical and hostile, because they are now depending on you to be their primary source for news and information.

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**The truth—
always the best
answer.**

“I don’t know” can often be the best/smartest answer—especially when it’s the truth.

- It buys you time.
- It keeps you from guessing/bluffing.
- Don’t let your ego/pride/emotions prevent you from using it.
- Commit to finding out the answer.

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<http://twitpic.com/135xa> - There's a plane in the Hudson. I'm on the ferry going to pick up the people. Crazy.



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Use of social media in crisis

- Twitter – news travels fast.
- Facebook – comments and video based on personal situations.
- Instagram – first choice for images.
- YouTube – aggregates video media coverage and personal video footage.

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Dealing with social media

- Control negative emotions – use even tone, resort to facts
- Show authentic concern, compassion
- Aim to take public posts offline
- Correct factual errors
- Apologize when warranted
- Redirect to the appropriate channel – a website, customer service line, etc.
- Provide frequent updates

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Dealing with social media

- It's unregulated (No Lifeguard On Duty)
- Monitor social platforms continuously
- Use to listen more than engage
- Can be used to allow you to adjust how you address the crisis
- Don't believe everything you read

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Monitor your reputation online

- Google
- Use alerts, RSS
- Bloglines
- Check/search Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, other social media sites
- Monitor/participate in blogs, message boards
- Respond when it makes sense
- Correct erroneous statements with facts
- Reach out and fix problems when possible
- What's out there is out there forever

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NEXT: It's time to deliver your messages...



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Delivering your messages...

Media and Messaging Training



11/13/2019

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Messaging Agenda

- Messaging
 - What is it
 - How to Prepare it
- Message Delivery
 - Rules
 - How reporters works
 - Dos and Don'ts

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Your **ONLY** Communications Goal:
Deliver Your Messages



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Whether it's in interview or a conversation, you're not there to answer questions, you're making a presentation



One that is only occasionally interrupted by a reporter's questions.



Not a deposition.



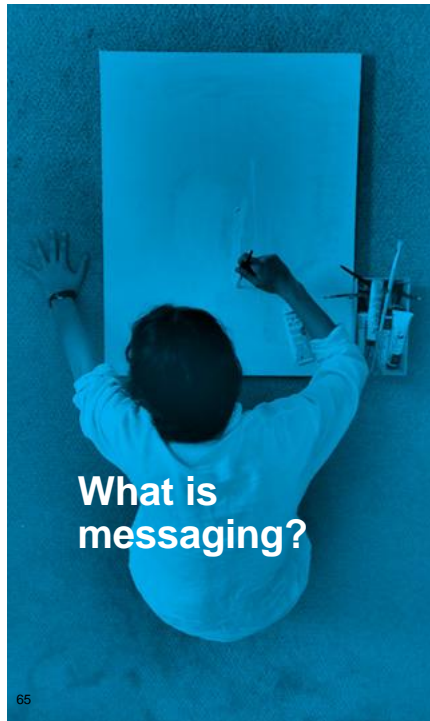
It's really an opportunity to make a presentation about what you want to say.

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Key Messages
Know your messages
and how to use them.



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- **It's what we always say:** It's always safe to say, and you always say it, no matter what.
- **Using messaging is not natural.** Not preparing it, saying it, or fielding questions with it. But:
- **You can use it to manage any challenging conversation – *if you master the techniques.***



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Key Message

- A fully supported assertion that leads the recipient to a persuasion, information, or empathy-based conclusion

Strong Messages

- Human, not corporate
- Simple and clear
- Sounds like you care because you do
- Provides your audience with powerful concepts they realize they must remember

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The 3P formula



Point

Always conclusions first: “What’s your point?”



Proof

Then offer as proof examples – anecdotes that tell a story; facts that surprise, support and explain.



Payoff

Finally, “what it all means to you/us.” It’s the way people comprehend best and the way reporters write their stories.

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Claim

I think the market is going up.

Message

Evidence tells us the stock market is heading up [point]. We know the Fed is easing interest rates [proof 1], corporations are flush with cash [proof 2] and the S&P 500’s earning projections are up 3% [proof 3]. It’s a great time to add to your IRA [payoff].



Claim vs. Message

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Rehearsing three key messages prepares you for any situation.

- What do you want people to remember?
- Be relevant to the subject at hand.
- Support with facts/evidence/examples.
- Make them specific. No BS. Use active verbs and avoid jargon.

**When you
will use key messages**

- During a crisis
- In media interviews
- Speaking internally and externally
- Answering difficult questions
- Structuring a pitch
- In employee meetings, industry events, public meetings and hearings
- As your standard “elevator speech”

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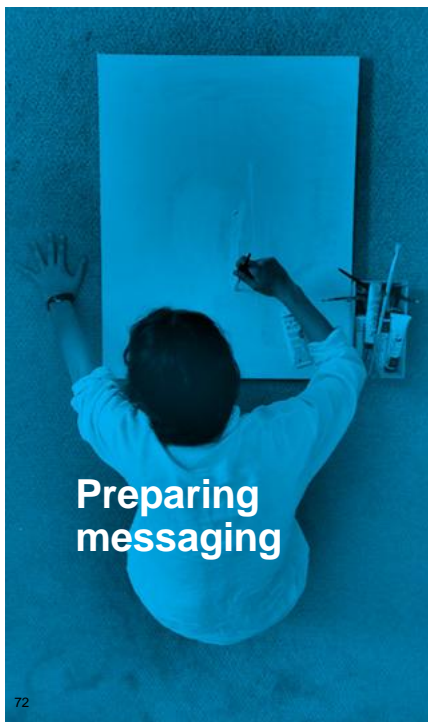
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How to prepare messaging

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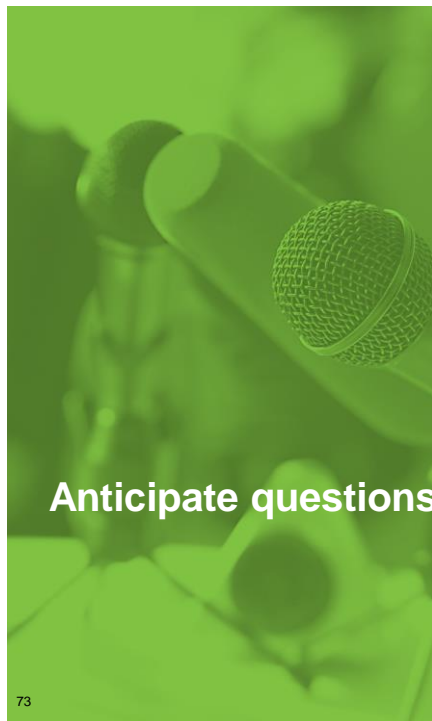
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- To be safe to use, and to serve you and your cause properly, messaging must be **written, honed, vetted, learned, and practiced**. That means:
 - ✓ **Write it** – then rewrite and/or edit it to make it briefer, tighter, snappier.
 - ✓ **Show it** to colleague, staff, bosses, and spouses for suggestions, review, and approval.
 - ✓ **Learn it** so well that you can recite it without sounding like you're reciting.



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1. Make a list of key questions—the ones you absolutely must answer. You can't anticipate everything; don't waste time trying.
2. Develop answers, which include how you will use A+1 to get to your key messages!
3. Remove/replace/restate all negative words and ideas.
4. Watch out for leading, loaded or hypothetical questions.



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- PR team must not compromise legal strategy or expose organization to needless risk.
- Legal team must not pursue legal victory in a way that leaves the organization's reputation ruined and irrevocably damages its future.
- Taking ownership of crisis resolution is NOT the same as taking blame.
- It is possible to apologize, express sorrow and sympathy—to be compassionate—without taking legal responsibility.
- "No comment" is not an option.



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- You're not there to answer questions. You are there to present your set of facts.
- Help the questioner do his or her job.
- Manage for clarity and credibility, and everything else will fall into place.

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Good
stories



Newsworthy
information



Accurate
information



Useful
quotes



Easy
access

What do reporters want?

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Understand the media's behavior...

Crises dramatically change the speed at which media comes at you.



Asking questions, demanding
details



Protecting the public as
its eyes and ears.



Treat them professionally at all
times.

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10 questions the media always ask

- What happened?
- Who is in charge?
- Has this been contained?
- Are victims being helped?
- What can we expect?
- What should we do?
- Why did this happen?
- Did you have forewarning?
- Could this have been avoided?
- Who is to blame?

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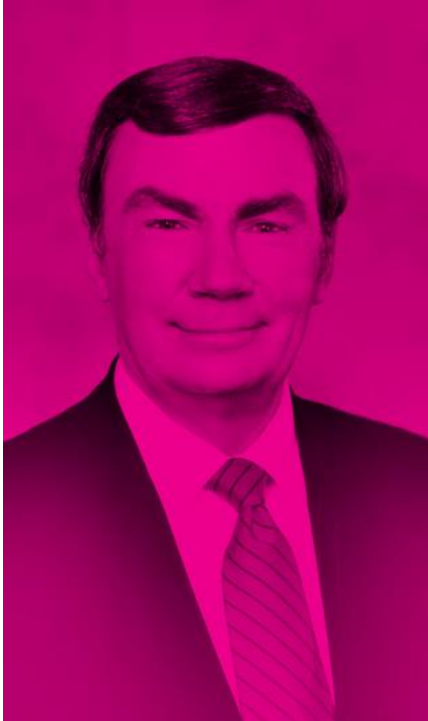
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“The questions don’t do the damage...”

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“only the answers do.”

-Sam Donaldson

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- Get your organization's key messages into the reporter's story and, thus, the audience's mind.
- Answer with facts first. Then your POV can be persuasive.
- Educate the reporter on your issues. It is your responsibility to be sure the reporter gets his/her story right.

The interviewee's job

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First “Q-UP” the meeting



Qualify yourself
as authoritative.



Quiz the questioner.

“Here’s what I
understand you’d like
to learn about today...”



Quickly preview your
key messages.

“I’ve got three things I
really want to tell you
about...”

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- What do you need for your story?
- What is your headline?
- What’s your angle (focus)?
- What have you written previously on this subject?
- What other sources have you contacted?
- What’s your deadline?

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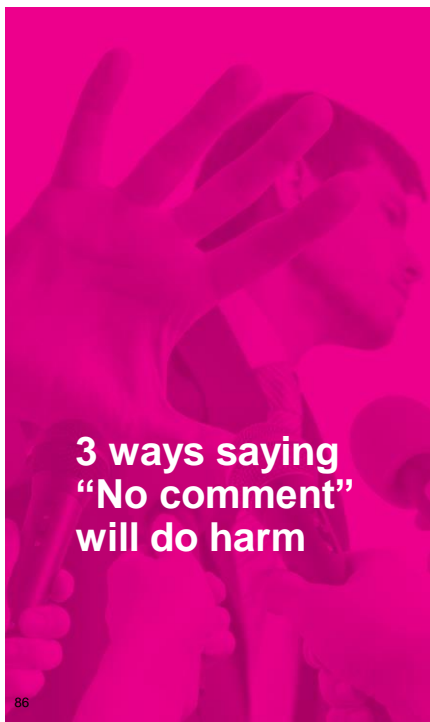
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**“No comment” is never
a good option.**

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**3 ways saying
“No comment”
will do harm**

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1. **Public Perception**—Appears you are guilty as charged.
2. **Media Perception**—You will be viewed as less-than-credible.
3. **Missed Opportunity**—Every conversation with a reporter is an opportunity to deliver your key messages.



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A+1

ANSWER the question briefly then add one point (+1) of your own.

- Give a short answer to question, then add :
 - “but the key here is...” or
 - “but keep in mind...”

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A+1 transitions



- Let's take a closer look at...
- While (A) is certainly important, don't forget (B)...
- I really don't know about that, but I do know...
- Before we get off that subject, let me add...
- That's a good point, but I think it's important for you to know...
- That reminds me...

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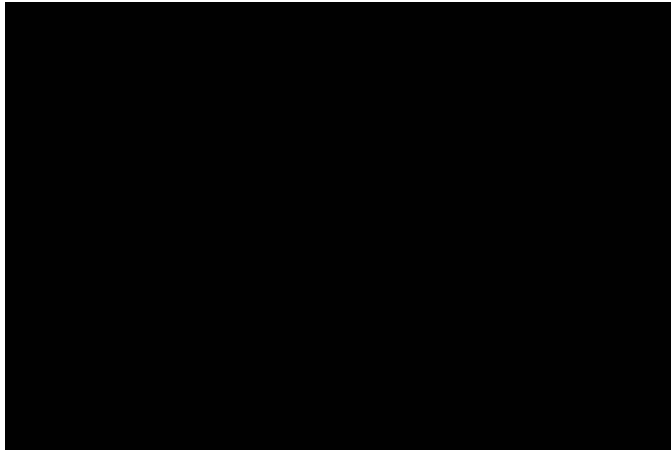
A+1 transitions



- I know I'm repeating myself, but this is really important...
- Yes, but it's not that simple. Let me put that in perspective...
- There are some other critical facts you really should know...
- Before I forget, I want to tell your audience...
- Yes, but it's also important to understand...

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A+1

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**Flagging****Wave your arms in front of the audience:**

- The key takeaway today is...
- I really want to emphasize...
- If I've left you with anything today it's that...
- Are we clear on how important X is?
- I know I've said this a couple of times already, but...

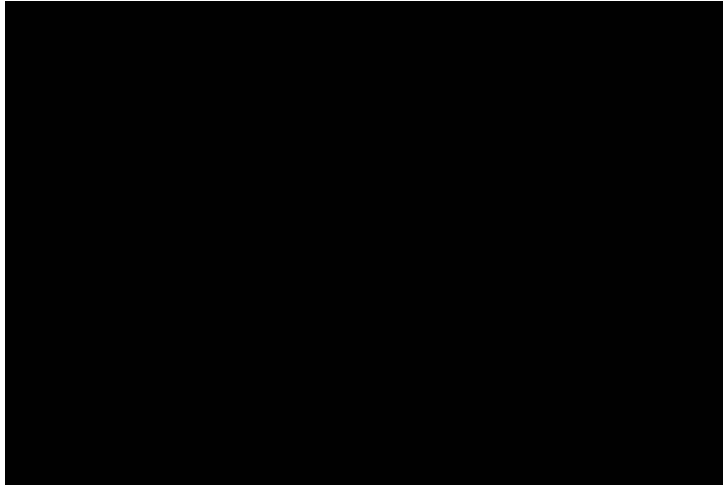
Then **REPEAT** your key messages.

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Flagging



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**Repetition equals
credibility**

- **Use different words, phrases, examples, but make the same key points.**
- **Interviews are NOT conversations. Give the audience context.**
 - 70% of people must hear a message more than three times before they believe it.
 - 14% more than 10 times.
- **Then repeat your key messages.**

Source: Edelman Trust Study, reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 31, 2011.

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Strong messages are your most important tools, and the most important technique to master is:

“STOP.”

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Deliver your message with the facts, make your point and **STOP.**

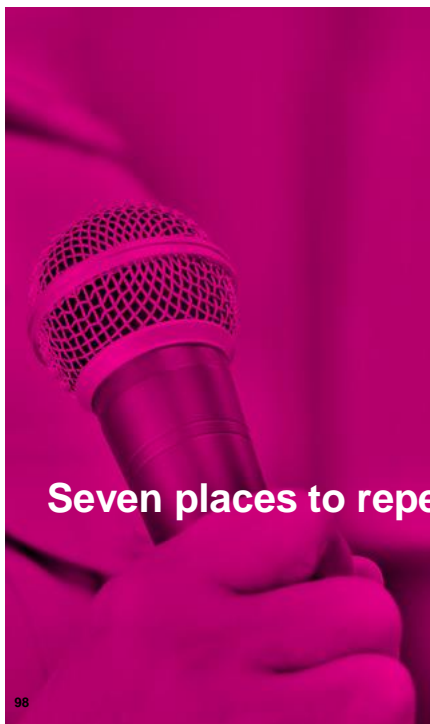
- People (especially reporters) appreciate candor and brevity.
- Short, information-packed responses work best and help you avoid being quoted out of context.
- Our “comprehension span” is 22 to 26 seconds.
- Embellishing to fill silence often gets you in trouble, taking you places you don’t want to go.

- Build drama.
- Create emphasis.
- Cause the audience to reflect and remember.
- Make you sound confident, comfortable and relaxed.

Pauses can be very useful

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1. Before interview begins
2. Introductory statement or first question
3. Any open-ended question
4. Restate a question
5. During pauses
6. Summary recap. "Anything we haven't covered?"
7. And make your own with A+1

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1. Tell the truth.
2. "I don't know, but..."
3. "I can't answer, and here's why..."
4. "I can't answer because your question contains a false fact/assumption. In fact..."

Four ways to answer any question

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Handling tough questions

- Expect challenges. Don't get defensive.
- Correct false questions before answering.
- Restate loaded question before answering.
- "If what you are asking is..."
- Repeat your facts and key messages.
- Tell the truth. Even if it hurts. Candor is positive.
- Acknowledge, admit or address negative questions to enhance credibility.

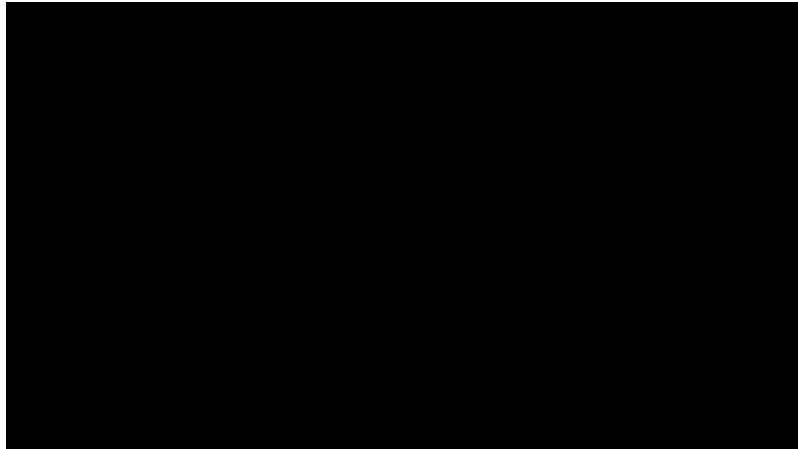
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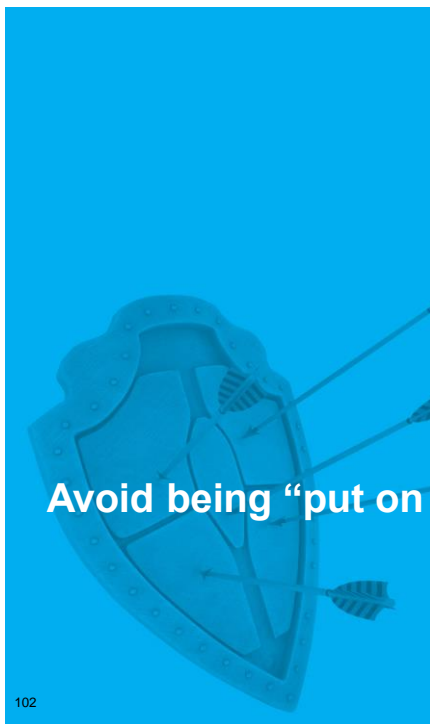
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Don't Get Defensive



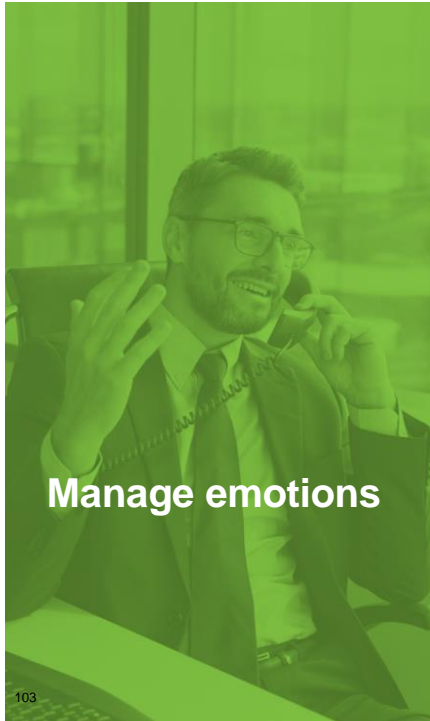
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- Do not repeat negative words in your answer.
- Restate negative question in a positive way, then answer.
- Object to line of questioning.
- Don't bluff. You'll get caught.
- Admit if you don't know something.
- Commit to getting the answer, and do so.

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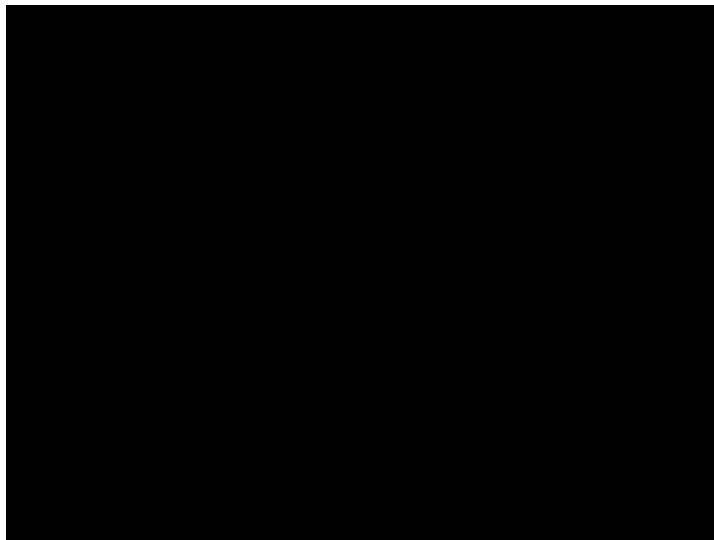


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- Be calm. Keep your tone low. Don't become combative.
- Choose crisis team members based on how they function under pressure.
- Audience reads body language, eyes, voice, demeanor.
- Preparation = confidence = control
- Unprepared = nervous = unsure
- Modulate your voice to convey emotion.

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Manage Emotions



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Watch for clues indicating confusion or lack of understanding and clarify if needed.

- Before I continue, would it help if I took a minute to explain...
- This is a complicated subject. May I give you some important background about how we...
- Explain the meaning and importance of what you're saying, using examples, picture words, comparisons.
- You're the expert, but avoid jargon, alphabet soup acronyms, too many details, minutiae.



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- Thinking about questions often reveals how to answer them.
- Take as much "think time" as you need to figure it out (except when live).

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Interview rules

01

If you start to garble or misspeak, stop and say so. It's OK to ask for a do-over.

02

Assume recording starts as soon as the microphone is present.

03

Qualify yourself on tape.

04

Use pauses to think.

05

Don't be thrown by reporter's silence.

06

If you prepare, you should have no surprises, no fear.

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- What do you need for your story?
- What should I know about your audience?
- What have you written previously on this subject?
- What other sources have you contacted?
- What's your angle?
- What's your deadline?
- Where did you get that information?
- Will you call me as you continue with the story?
- Can I call you with more information?

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**Avoid
being led**

- Listen completely.
- Ask for clarifications of complex questions.
- OK to question a fact, quote, or assumption. Ask about its context before you answer.
- Never speculate – listen for and redirect “what if?” questions.
- Use STOP.
- Don't rush to fill silence.
- Refuse to answer hypotheticals.

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When not to talk

- Always assume everything is “on the record.”
- The camera or tape recorder is always on.
- Don’t say it if you don’t want to read it in tomorrow’s paper or on social media.

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QUESTIONS?

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Thank you!

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