Mechanics of an Interview

If you want the highest chance of your topic or issue to get covered, explain to journalists how it is: Relevant, Timely, & Exclusive

Interview (#1: is not a casual conversation, #2: connect with your audience, #3: prepare 3 talking points)

Terminology

- On the Record = “Direct Quote,” said First/Last Name, Title
- Not for Attribution = “Direct Quote,” said general position
- On Background = Paraphrased for information and context
- Off the Record = You can’t use this information unless it is confirmed by some other legitimate source

When you’ve made contact with a reporter:

- Get back to them quickly
- Ask Questions = name, outlet, deadline, story, contact,
- Google them!
- Trust your gut— if something feels off, turn it down

Remember to:

- Connect with your audience by using emotion, stories, and common ground
- Write three talking points that are “sticky” in the brain (simple, concrete, credible, emotional, stories, metaphor) combined with facts

Pivot back to your talking points using these types of phrases:

- “The truth is...”
- “What it comes down to is...”
- “What’s important to remember is...”
- “The heart of the matter is...”
- “Of course...”
- “The real question is...”
- “What people are really concerned about is...”
- “Let me put that another way...”

Follow Up Immediately with:

- Any other contacts I can help with?
- When and where do you see the story running?
- Can you let me know when the story runs, because I’d like to promote it.
- To confirm, I like my title to be _______. Do you have that or is it easier if I send it via email?

After the Story Runs

- Thanks, this is great!
- Hey, this is great, but there’s one mistake I noticed
- Hey, this is great, but here’s some additional information in case it’s useful
- Hey, this is great, and here’s some other stuff that might be relevant in the future
- Start off polite and complimentary, don’t aggravate anyone unnecessarily and definitely don’t take it straight to their editor before it’s required.