

MEDIA INTERVIEWS: DO'S

DO BE:

- ✓ honest, candid, transparent, ethical, frank and open.
- ✓ visible and readily available.
- ✓ the first to share bad or good news.
- ✓ able to cite other credible sources of information.

DO COMMUNICATE:

- ✓ compassion, conviction and optimism.
- ✓ three concise key messages in response to each major concern.
- ✓ on a frequent basis.
- ✓ what is known, what is not known, what follow-up actions are planned, and where people can get more information.
- ✓ ownership of the issue or problem.

DO USE:

- ✓ clear non-technical language free of jargon and acronyms.
- ✓ visual material, personal and human-interest stories, quotes, analogies and anecdotes.
- ✓ short sentences at a 6th to 8th grade readability or comprehension level.

DO:

- ✓ remain calm and in control – think and take your time to answer questions.
- ✓ balance bad news with three or more positive, solution-oriented messages.
- ✓ find out who else is being interviewed and make appropriate adjustments.
- ✓ encourage partners in media outreach to speak with one voice or in harmony.
- ✓ repeat yourself and use bridging techniques to stay on topic.

DO:

- ✓ listen to and acknowledge emotions, fears, and anxieties.
- ✓ admit mistakes – be accountable and responsible.
- ✓ seek, engage and make extensive use of support from credible third parties.
- ✓ acknowledge uncertainties.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS: DON'TS

DON'T:

- ✗ attack those with higher perceived credibility.
- ✗ display mixed or inconsistent verbal and non-verbal messages.
- ✗ speak disparagingly of others, not even in jest.
- ✗ raise issues you do not want to see in print or on the news.

DON'T ASSUME THAT:

- ✗ the reporter will ask questions only about the agreed upon interview topic.
- ✗ your knowledge or position alone qualifies you to answer questions.
- ✗ facts speak for themselves.
- ✗ the reporter has background knowledge related to the interview topic.
- ✗ the interview will be easy.

DON'T:

- ✗ speculate recklessly, guess, lie, or use humor.
- ✗ offer guarantees, make false promises, or provide over-reassuring statements.
- ✗ say "no comment".
- ✗ repeat a false negative question ("is it true you have committed fraud?").
- ✗ use absolutes (e.g., "never", "nothing", "always", "all", "every") – they can be disproved with a single exception.
- ✗ try to answer all parts of a multiple-part question.
- ✗ accept a question that is improperly framed.
- ✗ volunteer more than you need to say or go "off the record".

DON'T:

- ✗ miss the reporter's deadline.
- ✗ play "favorites" among reporters.
- ✗ demand to review the reporter's story before publication.
- ✗ let the reporter put words in your mouth.
- ✗ let the reporter stray from the agreed upon interview topic.