Amplifying Our Voice: Leading Boldly for Our Students, Our Professions, and Our Union

COM112
Media 101: Using the Fourth Estate to Deliver Your Message
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NEA Leadership Competency: COMMUNICATION

- NEA Leadership Competency progression level(s):
  - Level 1: Foundational
  - Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building
  - Level 3: Agenda Driving
NEA Leadership Competency: COMMUNICATION

• NEA Leadership Competency themes we will address in this session:
  • Uses current media, technology and social networks to communicate
  • Develops communication approach and style to fit appropriate audience
  • Act as an effective speaker
  • Acts as a compelling advocate for the organization
  • Identifies appropriate messenger(s)
The NEA Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational Priorities

• NEA Strategic Goal
  • Strategic Goal 1: Strong Affiliates for Educator Voice and Empowerment
  • Strategic Goal 2: Empowered Educators for Successful Students

• NEA Organizational Priority
  • Early Career Educators
  • Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  • Institutional Racism/Racial Justice in Education
A Cautionary Tale: Miss Teen South Carolina
Media: Conventional (aka “old”)

Forbes  
BARRON’S  
CBS NEWS  
The New York Times  
CNBC  
The Wall Street Journal  
DOWJONES  
Bloomberg  
BusinessWeek  
The Boston Globe  
USA TODAY  
Los Angeles Times  
REUTERS
Media: Social (aka “new”)
Blurred Lines: *How media is colliding*

The top three U.S. newspapers by total average circulation (including print products, digital subscriptions and other papers that use their branded content)

- **USA Today** (4,139,380)
- **The Wall Street Journal** (2,276,207)
- **The New York Times** (2,134,150)

Combined, that’s 8,549,737 total readers

*Donald Trump’s twitter feed has nearly 3x their combined circulation*
Media Relations: Why it matters

• Media contact = Opportunity
• Think of the media as your “customers”
• There are no unimportant interviews, articles, comments, or quotes
• Don’t underestimate the power of the media (viral videos, 24/7 news cycle, social media, smart phone technology)
Media: *What they want*

- Simplicity (especially TV and radio)
- Change—better or worse
- Conflict, drama, tension
- Proximity (local angle)
- Wrongdoing
- Feel-good themes
- Timeliness
Media calls: *What to do*

- Tell them you are going into a meeting and you need to call them back.
- Before hanging up, start interviewing them!
  - Ask them on what they’re working, specifically the angle.
  - Ask them their deadline.
- Contact your local/state affiliate for guidance.
- Do your research.
  - Is this a legitimate media outlet? Are they “friendly”?
  - What stories has the reporter recently done?
  - Does your local/state affiliate or NEA have a position?
  - Do you have talking points based on the NEA message frame?
Before the interview

• Determine whether or not you should do the interview.
• Are you the right person?
• Who is the best spokesperson for this particular issue area?
• Who is best to represent your workplace or organization?
Prepping for interviews: *General tips*

- Communicate to audiences, not reporters.
- Get across the points you think are important, regardless of the question.
- Anticipate and prepare for questions.
- Feel free to ask questions to reporter.
- Pause before you speak if necessary to collect your thoughts.
Spotlight: Message discipline gone wrong
Prepping for interviews: More tips

• Stick to what you know (don’t lie or guess).
• Don’t let emotion rule your response.
• In person? Give materials.
• Not in person? Use your notes.
• Have water handy.
• Use your smart phone to record your interviews.
  - You have a record of what you actually said.
  - You’ll learn from your experience and it will help you in future interviews.
Put yourself in the audience’s shoes

Don’t assume they care — _make_ them care.

Avoid education jargon.

Tell stories about real people.

Focus on impact, not process.

Never overestimate knowledge or interest of audience.

Act human — _show_ empathy.
Perception: *For better or worse, it’s reality*

How audiences arrive at conclusions about you, your message

**What You Say**

? %

**How You Sound**

? %

**How You Look**

? %
Perception: *For better or worse, it’s reality*

How audiences arrive at conclusions about you, your message

- **How You Sound**: 38%
- **What You Say**: 7%
- **How You Look**: 55%
Message Traps: Don’t get tripped up

DON’T
✓ Be defensive
✓ Over-clarify
✓ Get lost in the complexity
✓ Say “No Comment”
✓ Use “silver bullet” answers
✓ Say things that can be taken out of context
✓ Pretend to know the answer

“Never wrestle with a pig because you both get dirty and only the pig really enjoys it.”
Quicksand: How NOT to do an interview
Bridge: *Getting you to safer ground*
Bridge & Pivot: Why it’s important

- Pay the toll. Acknowledge negative facts, then move on.
- DO NOT go in reverse. You already have acknowledged the “negative”... it’s very important to move forward.
- Move over to your message using a bridge.
- Pivot: Answer the question you want to answer.
- Restate and redefine the line of questioning using bridges.
Spotlight: *Repeating the reporter’s question*

“60 MINUTES” ANCHORS
PROMPTING PEOPLE TO
DELIVER THE EXACT
SOUND BITE THEY NEED
Spotlight: Repeating the reporter’s question
Bridge & Pivot: *How it works*

Their Story: what is the story *they* want to tell?

- That’s a good point, but I think your audience would be interested in knowing that…
- While _____ is certainly important, don’t forget that _____ is…
- That’s an important point because…
- What’s important to remember, however, is…
- What I really want to talk with you about is…
- What’s most important here is…
- Typically, here’s what happens…
- Before we get off on that topic, let me add…
- That’s not my area of expertise, but I can tell you…
- I see your point, but let me add…
- Look, the bottom line is…
- Here’s what our members are doing about that…

Our Story: what is the story *we* want to tell?

Bridge: Get to a safe place, and don’t forget to pay the toll.
Spotlight: *Top 11 common reporter techniques*

*Some ways how reporters can trip you up and prevent you from delivering your message...*

- Hypothetical
- Not the Expert
- False Facts
- Phantom Authority
- Dart Thrower
- Machine Gun
- The Interrupter
- Paraphrase
- Negative Questions
- A or B
- Silence
Homework: Practice, practice, practice!

- Practice makes perfect.
- Read, review and recite the message.
- Practice builds a level of confidence.
Project an Appropriate Image

Remember Who Your Real Audience Is

Be Message Driven... Not Question Driven

Project an Appropriate Image

Your key takeaways
Lastly... Thank you!

Keep in touch and let us know how you’re using the media to tell your story!

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Session Outcomes

The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

• Understand the role the news media plays in your work
• Provide tips and tricks in working with the news media
• Identify message traps and how to deal with them
• Give you confidence when a reporter calls
• Encourage you to become engaged and proactive with the news media
In Closing...

• Please complete the evaluation for COM112 by using the NEA Summit Mobile App!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment