COMMUNICATIONS, THE MEDIA & COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

![LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES logo]

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PERCEPTIONS MATTER

COMMUNICATION

❖People communicate in many different styles or methods. The burden of making sure they understand you, or you understand them is yours, not theirs.

❖It is up to you to make complex issues easy to understand.

❖Your biggest challenge may be your own intellect or pride or expertise. Remember to use the counsel of others.

❖Remember to truly listen to the other person, don't just think about the next thing you are going to say. "Listen" has the same letters as "Silent."

WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

WHY DO WE CARE?

- <u>The Bad Stories</u>:
  - ❖ Your bosses care…very, very much
  - ❖ Your staff will be embarrassed
  - ❖ Your spouse & children will be embarrassed
  - ❖ Your career will be harmed
  - ❖ Your project or program will be harmed
  - ❖ Your budget will be harmed
  - ❖ Your failure on this article will likely mean that you will be treated badly on future articles

WHY DO WE CARE?

- <u>The Good Stories</u>:
  - ❖ The public will have a better understanding of what you do and why it is important
  - ❖ Your bosses will be happy about the good press they receive as a result of your good story
  - ❖ Your project will be more successful
  - ❖ Your family will not want to disown you
  - ❖ You will likely get treated better on your next article
  - ❖ Your staff will be treated with greater respect
  - ❖ Your career prospects will be improved

TACT (BEING TACTFUL)

Talk
**A**fter
Careful
Thinking

WHAT IS THE MEDIA?

❖ Newspaper (print or online)

❖ Radio

❖ Television

❖ Blogs

❖ Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, SnapChat)

❖ Neighborhood Meetings

❖ Service Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis)

❖ Other Places Where People Get Information (coffee shops, kiosks, grocery stores)

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

❖ Newspapers are not in the business of news

❖ Reporters don't care about you, or about your problems, or about how hard your job is

❖ There is NOTHING off the record

❖ You cannot be an anonymous source and still keep your job

❖ The best you can reasonably hope for is to get the benefit of the doubt

TELEVISION INTERVIEWS

"The Front Fell Off" video clip:
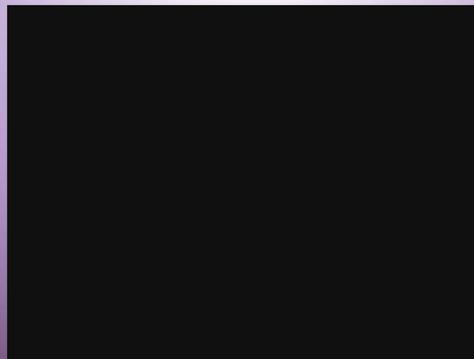
POSITIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

❖ Get to know the reporters who will write your stories, before the day you need them (Editors write headlines, not reporters)

❖ Understand their deadlines, why their job is hard, what they are interested in, and how to get in touch with them at all hours

❖ Have positive stories ready for them for slow news days (keep one in each manager's desk)

❖ Take them to lunch and make sure they know how to get in touch with you at all hours

❖ Establish clear protocol for your staff about who talks with the media

POSITIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

❖ Have a theme and stick with it (very important)

❖ Understand that you don't have to answer their questions the way they ask them

❖ Take your time and get prepared, then call back (TACT)

❖ Know their target audience, editors, etc.

❖ Give them a good quote or two

❖ Photo ops get you bonus points

❖ Help them with useful context (what **they** think is useful, not our boring crap)

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

❖ Articles are written with the most important information first, then in descending order after that, ending in background stories

❖ Include at least one quote so it will appear to the reader that they did the actual reporting

❖ Make sure they have a good contact identified and that the person is ready to be a good source for questions and information

❖ Have accurate distribution information: current names, addresses, etc.

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

Take 2 minutes and write a news release
about this project

NEWS RELEASE: "CITY SOLVES LONG TERM PARKING PROBLEM

Long term parking problems at the Community College will be solved in the next six months according to a City plan released today. A new type of parking structure will be installed that allows for a shortened construction schedule and significant cost savings. The steel structure is modular and quick to assemble, and will be built over an existing lot, so no property will need to be purchased. "This is a creative solution to a long term problem that adds parking quickly and cheaply. The steel modular design can be built for one third the cost and in half the time," said Mary Jones, the City's Public Works Director. Community College President, David Smith, said, "I am pleased with the results of the community effort and grateful to the City for stepping up."

For more information contact: Jennifer Stevens, Project Manager at 555-555-1234, or jstevens@city.org

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MAKING EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Public Speaker
November 15, 2011 - Regular Session

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ Understand your audience – how the Council works, what their job is while you present
- ❖ Anticipate the Council's questions and have answers ready (written materials also)
- ❖ Understand their politics, but don't get involved in their politics
- ❖ Figure out for each of them how they see their role as a Council Member
- ❖ Never get between a Council Member and the City Manager

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ Be clear up front what you are asking of them
- ❖ Plan your presentations and practice
- ❖ Be brutally honest with yourselves about the quality of your presentations
- ❖ Make sure the technologies are working – leave nothing to chance
- ❖ Make sure that you know how a microphone works so they can hear you
- ❖ Dress nicer than the minimum standard

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

❖ For big presentations, work as a team:

  ❖ Presenter, Moderator & Reader

❖ Don't read PowerPoints

❖ Don't feel the need to tell them everything you know

❖ Understand their time constraints and prepare an "accordion presentation"

❖ Use proper protocols at all times – respecting them will get them to respect you

❖ NEVER EVER LIE

THE LIFE PRESERVER

1. There is a real problem (or opportunity) that must be addressed. It cannot be ignored and it will not just go away.

2. It is our duty to solve the problem. It is not someone else's responsibility, and no one else is going to step forward to deal with it. Given your mission it would be irresponsible for you not to address this problem.

3. We have a good plan to resolve the problem, and one that we developed after carefully analyzing the issue, listening to the public, and looking at all options. Our plan is reasonable, sensible and responsible.

4. We are still listening and value your input. We care about the impacts and are working to mitigate those impacts.

➡ Special thanks to Hans & Annemarie Bleiker

OPEN DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS