

# Media Management

Taming the Hydra-Headed Beast



# Perception IS Reality!

- Message consistency is critical
- Without it, you hand reporters a “conflict” story
- Conflict stories trump all others

# Turning the Table

- Reporter wants to be your friend, to get you to say what you otherwise might not
- Be wary, and be aware
- You don't have to answer the question as posed!
- Be the Reporter's friend, but give them what YOU want them to have

# **RULE NUMBER 1**

**There is no such thing as  
“off the record”!**

# Recipe for Success

1. What's the single, overriding objective?
2. What are the 3 (maximum) message points?
3. KISS and write them down.



# Interview Tips (all formats)

- Listen to the question carefully, then pause before answering.
- Give a concise answer, then STOP.
- Don't speculate.
- Don't use jargon or acronyms.
- Don't be afraid to repeat messages, especially at the end of an interview.

# “Cash in” on tough questions: use ATM

“ATM”=Answer, Transition, Message

- **A**lways answer or acknowledge the question. It’s OK to say “I don’t know.” It’s NOT OK to say “no comment.”
- **T**ransition from the question to one of your positive key messages
- **M**essaging: Deliver the point YOU want to make!

# Transition techniques

*“What I can tell you is this:....”*

*“What’s important to remember is this:....”*

*“That’s an interesting point, but I think....”*

*“Before we get off the topic, let me add...”*

*“That’s not my area of expertise, but I can tell you that...”*

*“If I may, I’d like to finish my thought; it’s interesting that...”*



# Print

## Advantages

- Much more room for details and depth
- More likely to have knowledgeable reporters
- More credibility with our target audience

# Print

## Disadvantages

- Larger papers have tendency to reflect editorial bias
- Need “real” people
- Need lots of facts and details
- Depth required may mean longer interviews, need to research

# Print

Strategies when they call:

- What is your deadline?
- What is the gist/thrust of your story?
- Can I get back to you?
- Does the reporter need an expert?

# Radio

- Immediacy factor
- The bigger the station, the shorter the story
- Talk shows may reflect host's credibility and/or political views on you
- Small stations very community-oriented and usually looking for new stories

# Radio

Strategies when they call:

Is the interview live or taped?

Is it for a newscast, or a longer-form program?

If taped, avoid using interviewer's name, or "as I mentioned before."

Can I get back to you?



# What matters most is....

- You're never off the record
- Find your three best messages, and stick to them
- Keep it simple to drive your point(s) home

# Television

- A mile wide, an inch deep
- Reporters seldom have needed background or more than 80 seconds
- Visuals justify the story
- “Real” people
- Factoids...or mini-factoids

# Television

## Strategies:

- Stay focused on the reporter's eyes
- If you can see a monitor, ask that it be moved (especially if interview is live)
- Listen to entire question; keep answer simple, but make your point
- Sit or stand still; don't move around

# Television

## Strategies

Try to avoid black or white clothing; dangling jewelry; light-sensitive glasses

Need notes? Put messages and critical data on 3x5 cards, in **large print**.

It's a normal conversation; but it's not over until you (or the reporter) are apart.

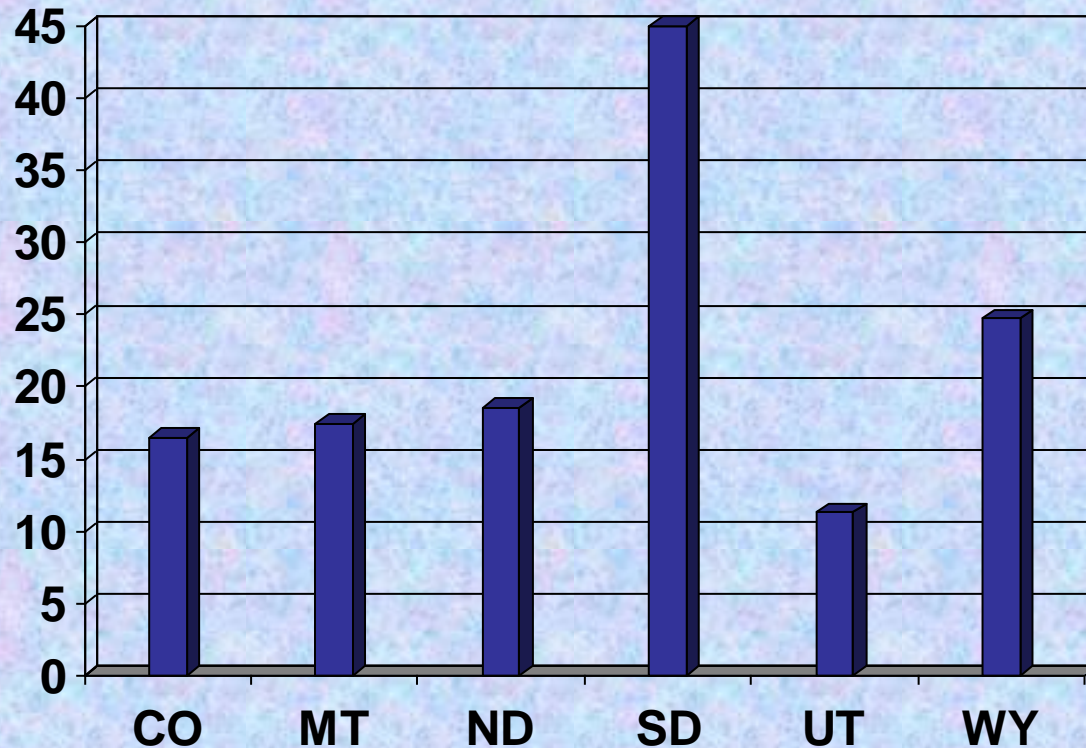
# Play to Your Strengths

- Use existing relationships for leverage
- Develop new ones, especially with new reporters
- Smaller markets = greater credibility in the community



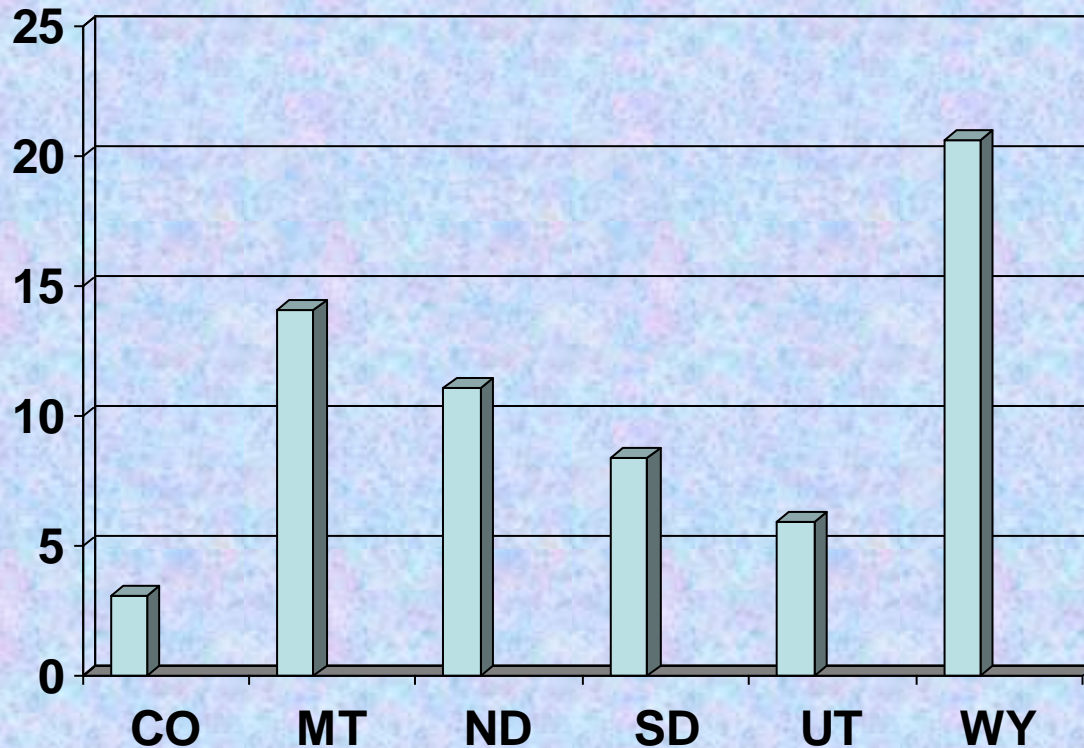
# Impressions via TV

Percentage of all impressions, 3/05 thru 5/06



# Radio Impressions

Percentage of Total Impressions, 3/05-5/06



# Promoting Your Event

- Emphasize urgency
- This plays into media need for story importance
- Makes advance publicity more vital – maybe even more critical than the event itself

# Promoting Your Event

- Three contacts: e-mail, fax, phone; fax is probably the least productive now, but don't leave it out
- Persevere, but don't be a pest.
- Suggest an “advancer” story, with an articulate staff member – how they've been trained, how facilities and equipment is mobilized, etc.

# Successful Event Stories

- Invite media to arrive at least 30 minutes **AFTER** the event starts
- Use time to identify an articulate “real” person with a positive story
- Make sure traffic flow is good, so event looks organized but busy
- Keep a count of people served/enrolled; a perfect factoid!



# Helpful Hints

- Gently remind photographers of HIPAA restrictions, respecting their professionalism
- Follow up with answers to unfinished business quickly. Find out what the deadline is, and don't miss it. You'll miss the story entirely – or you “didn't respond”
- Send tough questions or prickly reporters to your CMS Public Affairs person!

# Be a “be-keeper”

- Be prepared (for anything!)
- Be positive
- Be honest
- Be brief
- Be yourself
- Be focused
- Be confident, energetic, and in charge.
  - You know more than the interviewer. If not, you wouldn't be the one being interviewed!

# Oh, and one more thing....

- You're never off the record.
- Find your three best messages. Know them. Transition to them. Repeat them.
- Keep things simple. Use the limited time you have to the best advantage.