



# Talking to the Press without Getting Canned

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# Why am I talking

- ❑ Recent history of difficult press
- ❑ The way to engage with the press is through your comms team
- ❑ They're trained, they're professionals. Don't freelance!
- ❑ In my job, I try to influence outcomes
- ❑ Press is one tool, but also a constant presence
- ❑ I don't have a comms team
- ❑ I often don't have awareness or prep time before a reporter calls
- ❑ Sharing a few "road truths"

# Always go with your comms team

- ❑ The press is very powerful (like a live grenade)
- ❑ Impact press vs. Print / Online vs. Mass Market / TV
- ❑ Upstream sources, social media
- ❑ Success is more likely when:
  - ✓ Having a message
  - ✓ Having key bullets and talking points and sticking with them
  - ✓ Being brief and sticking to the subject
  - ✓ Being responsive and respectful
- ❑ Disaster is more likely when you don't have/do these things

# Seriously, use your comms team

- ❑ A call should never go over 15 mins
- ❑ What matters to reporters is a clear/concise story that has timeliness and relevance
- ❑ What is your message? What's its goal?
- ❑ Who are your stakeholders?
- ❑ What is most likely to produce a positive result?
- ❑ Who Is The Best Messenger? The person with the big title isn't always the best person to deliver the message
- ❑ Reporters are nice but they're not your friends
  - ◆ They remember everything
  - ◆ They talk to each other
- ❑ **What question are you scared to be asked**

# You're On The Record

- ❑ Types of interviews:
  - ◆ On the record
  - ◆ On background
  - ◆ Off the record
- ❑ It's okay to be recorded; you can record yourself
- ❑ Acknowledge that you're speaking from notes
- ❑ Ask about the angle, but...
- ❑ Things can be used in other stories
- ❑ What to do if you get misused

# Ways to go wrong! Don't:

- ❑ Predict or speculate
- ❑ Say everything you know
- ❑ Fill empty space
- ❑ Answer hypotheticals
- ❑ Continue an interview after it's over. You are still on the record
- ❑ Go down rabbit holes, use jargon, legalese, or acronyms
- ❑ Be ungracious

# How to make it your story

- ◆ **Blocking: Get off the negative**
  - ✓ What I can tell you is...
  - ✓ What I can talk about is...
  - ✓ That's not the main issue here. The main issue is...
- ◆ **Bridging: Leap to the positive**
  - ✓ Keep in mind...
  - ✓ Another important point is...
  - ✓ What I want to make sure you understand is...
- ◆ **Flagging: Start with the answer, end with the explanation**
  - ✓ The fact of the matter is
  - ✓ Here's what we know...
  - ✓ The most important issue/fact is...
  - ✓ What I really want to make clear is that...

# But seriously:

- Use
- Your
- Comms
- Team



**If you've got questions...**

**I'll try to answer them!**