

CONVEYING COMPLEX INFORMATION ABOUT INVASIVE SPECIES THROUGH THE MEDIA
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How can we...

- *harness*, better *focus* media interest in invasive spp. on prevention and action?
- *deliver* more effective messages?
- *position CCE and PRISMs* as key sources of information on invasive species?

What makes an invasive species story NEWSWORTHY?

- Extent
- Intensity
- Consequence
- Eminence or celebrity
- Proximity
- Timeliness
- Novelty
- Human interest

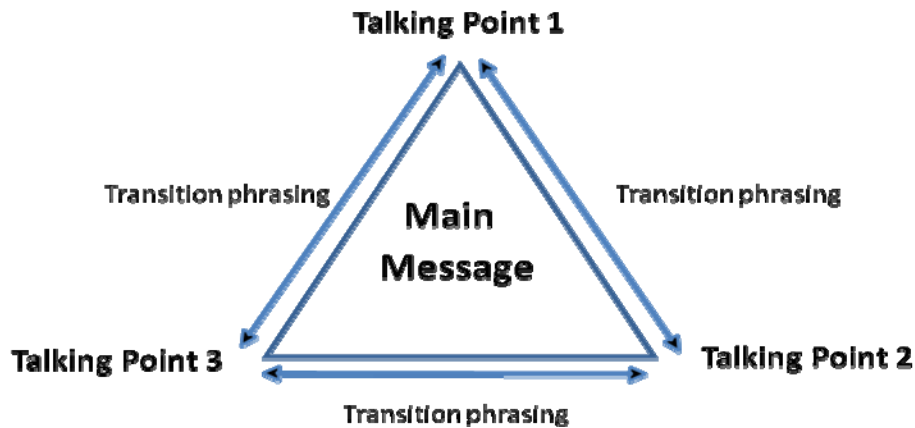
Understanding journalism and journalists

- Newsworthy – So what?
- Controversy and conflict
- Generalizations – BIG picture
- Time & preparation
- Human interest
- Things beyond the journalist's control
 - Editorial decisions & headlines
 - State of the news industry

Better positioning yourself for media outreach – Think strategically now before you have news to share!

- Know the news
- Have an Internet presence
- Do non-technical writing
- Share your news & events
- Get to know your local news reporters & editors
- Partner with professionals – Press conferences & photo opportunities

Developing a Message Framework



Important considerations:

- Understanding the audience and their values – Framing
- Overuse of fear tactics when communicating about invasive species

When a journalist calls, first ask some questions:

- When is your deadline?
- Why is he or she interested in interviewing you?
- What topic(s) will you discuss?
- Is there a news event driving this?
- For whom does the journalist work?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What type of interview will it be?
- When and where will the interview take place?
- Who else is being interviewed?

Remember the 5P's – Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

- If cold-called, ask to return the call and do so *before* the reporter's deadline.
- Outline your main message and 2-3 talking points.
- Anticipate and practice potential questions, especially the difficult ones.
- Provide a brief written summary of information, main points, and statistics.

Keys to Effective Communication:

- **Be brief** – Use short words and sentences, avoid fillers. Don't ramble.
- **Be conversational** – Avoid technical jargon. Explain things as you would to your grandmother. Speak slowly.
- **Be memorable** – Clever and colorful sound bites. Use helpful analogies, visuals, or alliteration.
- **Bridging, Flagging, Repetition**

- Additional tips:
 - Pay attention to questions and your response.
 - There is no such thing as “off the record.”
 - “No comment” is not a good answer.
 - Stick to your area of expertise. Be honest.
 - Be friendly – Stay positive and show enthusiasm about the topic.

Avoiding trouble when it comes to controversial topics:

- Preparation and clear understanding of audience and mindset of public is key.
- Anticipate arguments of opponents.
- Emphasize data and evidence, but avoid highly technical arguments.
- Be respectful and do not insult others.
- Clarify what is your opinion vs. those of the organization you represent.

Journalists get their info by:

- Putting you at ease
- The silent treatment
- Leading questions
- Pretend to have inside information
- Ask you about something outside of your expertise or knowledge

Tips for Television Interviews:

- Relax and be natural.
- Maintain a straight posture and assume an open appearance.
- Make eye contact with interviewer or camera.
- Keep distractions at a minimum – clothes, jewelry, nervous habits, head nodding, etc.
- Project your voice forward and be conscious of your tone.
- Avoid the “um”.
- Be aware of your facial expressions – it’s ok to SMILE!

Tips for Radio Interviews:

- Jot down a few notes to keep you on track, but don’t read!
- Warm up your voice.
- Speak clearly in short phrases – Be mindful of pace, pauses, and tone.
- Remember that sound is used to paint pictures – Suggest interesting background sounds.
- If an option, do the interview in a studio.
- If interviewed by phone, avoid cordless or cell phones. Eliminate background noise. Turn off call-waiting.

References & Communication Resources

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