

## Hennes Communications | **Top Tips**

### **DO:**

- Tell the truth; tell it all; tell it first
- Get their deadline, get away & prepare
- Return media calls promptly
- Speak in soundbites
- Repeat key messages
- Be concise and clear
- Stay on message
- Stay positive in thought & word
- Tell stories
- Tell your story directly to key audiences
- Factor social media into your strategy

### **DON'T:**

- Say “no comment”
- Just answer questions – make your points
- Be boring
- Use jargon
- Speak to the media unprepared
- Speculate
- Repeat negative phrases
- Place blame
- Let your guard down
- Lose your temper

## **Bridging Phrases**

- “The real issue is...”
- “Let me add...”
- “It’s important to emphasize...”
- “The most important point to remember is...”
- “Another question I’m often asked...”
- “That deals with one aspect of a larger issue...”
- “Yes, and in addition to that...”
- “It’s too early to talk to you about that, but what I do know is...”
- “Let me put this into perspective...”
- “I’m glad you asked me that...people have that misconception, but the truth is...”
- “Here’s what we did and what we’re going to do about it...”
- “I can’t speculate on what might happen. What I can tell you is...”

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## Pre-Interview Checklist

- Reporter's name
- Media outlet
- Reporter's phone #
- Reporter's email
- Story topic/angle
- Your desired headline
- Your key messages
- The most difficult ?'s
- **Reporter's deadline**

## Pre-Interview

- Who is calling?
  - Name, media outlet?
  - Phone, email, fax, Twitter I.D.?
- What is the topic/angle?
- What kind of story?
  - News, profile, feature, Q&A?
- Where will interview run?
  - Front, metro, business, lifestyle, web, etc.?
- Is anyone else being interviewed?
- How much time do you need for the interview?
- Are you sending a photographer?
- May I provide visuals?

## Try To Determine:

- Does the reporter have bias?
- How knowledgeable is the reporter?
- Has reporter done anything else on topic?
- Is the reporter friendly/antagonistic?

## For Television / Radio

- Will interview be live or taped?
- Satellite remote?
- Is there an audience? How selected?
  - Will there be call-ins or emails?
- If live, how long is broadcast?
- What's the format?
  - Interviewer/guest; interviewer/2 guests?
  - Do guests debate? Who speaks first?
- Are visual props okay?
- Will video clips be inserted?
  - Can I review first?



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## Interview Preparation

### Establish ground rules

- On/off record?
- Not for attribution?
- Length of interview?

### What are my key messages?

- Support with examples, stories, anecdotes
- Create sharp, crisp soundbites
- Compassion for victims (if appropriate)

### Suggest third-party experts

### Write down questions I'll be asked (and questions I dread)

- Develop responses

### Do I tape the interview?

### Practice Q&A

### Get update on hot issues before the interview

### Provide bios, fact sheets & articles before the interview

### Monitor & correct misinformation quickly