



# Meeting the Press

Tips & Tactics for dealing/working  
with the media



A reporter once said....  
“A good newspaper quote is  
like a crouton in a salad. It  
is there for accent, flavor and  
a touch of texture.”



# Robin Hood Steals The Show

At a press conference, a lawmaker denounces a proposed ballot initiative that would “use severance tax money from rural residents to offset heating bills for low income families in the city.”

His opponent: “My friend Tom Calder may fancy himself a big-city Robin Hood, but for those of us in rural Colorado this sounds an awful lot like highway robbery



# The Printing Press...

- Preparation

- Develop your key messages and talking points before the interview to control the conversation, never “wing” it
- Get to know the outlet you’ll be speaking with, research previous articles the reporter has written and relevant topics and stories the paper has produced Ex: Who is its readership? Is the reporter sympathetic to my cause?
- ROLE PLAY
- Create “cheat sheets” for interviews over the phone

- Delivery

- Speak in sound bites and repeat, repeat, repeat
- Remember the person you are communicating with is not the reporter but the people who will read the paper the next day, your potential voters
- If a reporter asks you a detailed, multi-part question, focus on answering the one question that leads you back to your key messages
- “The single most important thing to remember is....”



Thanks to Fenton Communications for tips and tactics media outlines



# Taking on TV

- **Preparation**
  - Watch the show beforehand. What is the format? Will it be live? Live to tape? Call-in? One on one interview? A panel? Read previous transcripts
  - **ROLE PLAY**
  - Always choose an in studio interview over something remote
  - Do relaxation exercises



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# Taking on TV

- **Delivery**

- Don't look at the camera, look at the host/reporter— camera angle is critical
- Smile and relax
- Become comfortable with the host, especially if they are combative
- Interrupt with a smile
- Don't be distracted by your surroundings
- Refer to reporter/host by their first name and any panelists
- Assume EVERYTHING is being recorded



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- Grays, blues and browns
- Do not wear whites, its glows on TV, don't wear black, it's harsh at times and can suck up light
- Wear pastel shades for shirts/blouses
- Do not wear patterns, plaids, floral, checks, strips or dots
- Avoid big jewelry, especially dangly earrings. Do not wear buttons or slogans
- If you wear glass most of the time, then wear your glasses
- BE COMFORTABLE



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# Talking the Talk– Talk Radio

Radio audiences change every 15 minutes; if you are on a one-hour show, repeat your messages often

- **Preparation**

- Listen to the show beforehand. What is the format? Will it be live? Live to tape? Call-in? One on one interview? A panel? Is it liberal? Is it conservative? Read previous transcripts
- **ROLE PLAY**
- Always choose an in studio interview over something remote
- Bring a tape with you to the interview so the production team can get a copy for you, or record online
- For call in shows, use this as an opportunity to engage your supporters



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# Talking the Talk– Talk Radio



## Delivery

- In studio- maintain eye contact with the host
- For call in- use listener’s name in your response
- Refer to station’s call letters when you can
- Assume EVERYTHING is being recorded
- On the phone- ALWAYS use a landline, cell phones or cordless phones may have static or can get cut off; disable call waiting; have the studio phone number on hand at all times
- Treat the host and listeners with respect. “I’m sorry you feel that way”
- Use your organization or campaign name at least twice. Do not use acronym



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# Homework....

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  - **Tonight, Stump Speech for Master Class**
  - Fill out your work sheets in Communications & Messaging section (Why I am running, What I bring to office)
  - In Master Class section review and use Rule of Three outline & worksheet to develop the first draft of your stump speech
  - **Blog at [thewhitehouseproject.org](http://thewhitehouseproject.org) “Change everything blog”**

