

Amazon Watch Media Training Workshop

Table of Contents:

1. Why Do Media
2. Media Jargon
3. Who and What is the Media
4. Other Forms of Communicating your Message
5. You Are the Media
6. What is Newsworthy
7. Types of Stories and News Coverage
8. Understanding How the Media Works
9. Tips: Media Do's and Don'ts
10. Building Good Relationships with the Media
11. Developing Your Media Strategy and Media Plan
12. Framing Your Story
13. Developing Your Message
14. Being a Good Spokesperson
15. Writing Good Press Releases
16. Distributing Your Press Releases
17. The Pitch
18. Press Packets
19. Press Conferences / Media Events
20. Media Briefings
21. Letters to the Editor / Op Ed

Appendix:

- Sample Press Release
- Types of News Agencies
- Tips for Writing Columns, Opinion Pieces, and Op Eds



1. WHY DO MEDIA?

- One of a number of tools to influence the outcome of a situation
- An opportunity to bring your message and opinions to key decision makers, the people in your country and people all around the world
- Give the world an opportunity to bear witness along with you to what is happening in your communities
- Give your NGOs & other partners information (images and narratives) they can use to help tell your story

2. MEDIA JARGON

SOUNDBITE

SPIN

"NO COMMENT"

ON/OFF THE RECORD

PITCH

HOOK

FRAME

LEAD

PHOTO OP

OP ED

PSA

B-ROLL

WIRE SERVICE

DAYBOOK

ACTUALITY

MEDIA CYCLE

HEADLINE



3. WHO (AND WHAT) IS THE MEDIA?

- Pay close attention to who owns the media! Media outlets are often owned by transnational corporations, with a variety of other industries and development interests or by families. Often one entity controls many different media outlets. Often they have a number of interests to protect
- A high stress job, with not enough financial resources to really do a decent job!
- The media serves many purposes and differs greatly from country to country (entertainment, selling advertisements, propaganda tool of government, etc)
- Remember the media is comprised of a number of individual people, many of whom care a great deal about the stories we want to share, and we can work with them to make their job easier.

4. OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE

- There are many other means of disseminating your message including:
Stickers
Flyers, Newsletters
Banners
T-shirt slogans
Public Service Announcements
Web site, email lists

5. YOU ARE THE MEDIA!

- Form your own news team in order to bear witness, document abuse, capture the truth, get evidence
- What to do if the News Media doesn't show up to your event
- Distribute your own photos to Wire Services and Web sites
- Film the event, and supply video to television stations
- Record your own interviews, and distribute via Web sites and radio stations
- Write your own articles and submit them to local, national, international and alternative media outlets

6. WHAT IS NEWS WORTHY?

- News must be "new"
- New announcement (bigger, better, faster)
- Localize national story
- Dramatic human interest
- Controversy / Shock
- Fresh angle on old story
- Milestone
- Humor



- Calendar hook
- Profiles and personnel
- Special event / Outdoors
- Powerful Images
- An event that has been covered before
- Festivals and Anniversaries
- Respond and react
- Celebrity
- Children
- Some thing that is exemplary of a trend
- Violence, war, scandal, intrigue, crime
- If it bleeds it leads, if it is on fire, it goes higher (up at the front of the newspaper)

Common reasons why the media may not cover an event:

- The event is located far from the offices of the media outlets
- The event is happening inside (dark or visually uninteresting)
- A boring event (long, boring speakers)
- The event is solely for personal/product promotion
- Complex logistics
- Unknown participants
- The event is taking place at a time that is bad for the media

7. TYPES OF STORIES AND NEWS COVERAGE

- News – Breaking news can be covered by general assignment reporter or reporters who cover regular “beats” or areas such as city hall, health, transportation, trade, Latin America, etc. – decisions of whether a story is done is made by the editors.
- Features – Personality profiles, pieces with an historical or national angle, (the hook may be a hobby, where you live, some other personal detail, etc)
- Columns – Regularly-schedule opinion pieces written by staff writers, freelancers, or syndicated columnists
- Opinion Pieces – Written by guest writers, regular columnists, and members of the general public (op-eds and letters to the editor)
- Editorials – Written by the newspaper staff
- Special Sections – Including arts, book reviews, sports, travel, consumer issues, business, weekend, and datebook/event.

8. UNDERSTANDING HOW THE MEDIA WORKS:



- You email or fax a press release and what happens on the other end?
- Someone reads perhaps only the headline and first few sentences of your release and decides whether or not to deliver it to the assignment editor, or the reporter you addressed it to reads and decides whether or not to propose the story to their editor -- this is why it is important to spend a significant portion of your time writing the headlines and the first paragraph of your release!
- An editor (or perhaps an editorial board) decides whether or not to do your story
- The reporter writes (sometimes calling on you for comment, other times not—unless you make contact with them!)
- The story that the reporter writes is edited according to the editor's decisions of how much space is available, the slant (these can at times be politically motivated and influenced)

9. TIPS: MEDIA DOs and DON'Ts

- Be a student of the media—read, watch and listen to the media outlets you plan to pitch, see what they cover and how and which reporters are writing the subjects important to you
- Strive for diversity, resist homogeneity in your spokespeople
- Support and participate in alternative/independent media
- Never lie to a reporter
- Respect reporter's professionalism
- Never wing it
- Don't presume reporter knows what you're talking about
- Do speak in sound bites
- Always return reporter's calls
- Meet reporter's deadlines
- Always appear more reasonable than your opponents
- Three is a trend
- If it bleeds it leads; cries it flies
- Visualize a story for television
- Personalize stories
- Think strategically
- Don't answer reporter's questions, respond to reporter's questions

10. BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

- Before you call, practice describing the who, what, where, when and why in just a few sentences
- Each conversation is an opportunity to 1) get the current message out 2) build a feature story (longer with more details and a more personal approach) and 3) a chance to build relationships!



- When you talk to them ask them: Is now a good time to talk? What form of communication do you prefer (phone, fax, email)? What are the best times to reach you? What are your deadlines? When does your show go on the air, or how often does your newspaper come out and at what time of day? When are assignments made(how far in advance and what time of day) What kinds of stories are you able to do? Are there other journalists you could suggest we talk to?
- Be friendly, and sensitive to their needs
- Be prepared in advance
- Never assume the reporter (or anyone else for that matter) knows what you are talking about
- Reference their prior work if you know it
- Let your enthusiasm show though
- Never lie or exaggerate
- Have lots of approaches to the story (hooks) to offer them
- Ask them if they will do a story
- Let them know who else (especially their competition) is doing a story
- Offer them video, audio, photos if you have them
- Practice! Role play an interested reporter, a busy reporter, a disinterested reporter, getting a reporter's answering machine

11. DEVELOPING YOUR MEDIA STRATEGY AND PLAN

- Exploring a media strategy in the context of a campaign :
- Determine the following for your campaign:
 - Goals – long-term goals, intermediate goals & short-term Goals
 - Organizational considerations
 - Constituents, allies, and opponents
 - Targets – primary and secondary
 - Tactics
- Then weave together with this a media plan that may include a series of media cycles, ranging from media releases about actions and other events, reports, briefings and press conferences, etc.
 1. Identify your goals
 2. Plan for your media
 3. Define your news
 4. Frame issue
 5. Form key messages
 6. Train spokespersons
 7. Identify and pitch stories
 8. Host media briefings
 9. Stage media events
 10. Drop op eds and letters

SPIN!



12. FRAMING YOUR STORY

- What are your goals in attempting to get media attention at this time?
- Who do you want to hear your message? Who is your target audience?
- For example: Decision makers, key players, Achilles heal & fence sitters, local, national, international
- Those who define the terms of the debate will win it
- Know your audience, who they are, where they get their news, what types of words and ideas will work with them & if necessary divide your audience into different segments, and choose different approaches to reach them
- Know also what else is being told to these individuals, what are the words, slogans etc of those offering a different opinion

13. DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE / SPIN CONTROL

- What is your message? What do you want to happen? What would you like to change? What is newsworthy?
- To determine this, first identify clearly the issues you are dealing with, and determine the elements of your message and themes, isolate a small section of the broader campaign or goals that you will be working with for this media cycle.
- Think about articulating a message not only focused on what you don't but also focused on what you want
- Meta messaging – the concept of placing your particular situation in a greater context
- Condense your issue into two or three strategic key message. (A few sentences each)
- Many messengers, One message
- Start with the dream headline, images, imagine you get just one photograph in the paper, what do you hope it would convey? Build from there, imagining pieces of the story, people, images, signs, messages etc
- Always Stay On Message
- Consider including:
 1. the issue (problem)
 2. the way you propose to resolve the issue (solution)
 3. a call to action (what you want people to do in order to get there)

14. BEING A GOOD SPOKESPERSON

- Remember your community is depending on you to deliver the message they have worked so hard to develop. You have something important to say. Build up your self-confidence.



- Image is very important. Be conscious of how you look and the impact of your appearance on your message.
- Have key messages in your mind before the interview.
- Don't be thrown off by the question; "discipline" the message.
- Don't respond to the question, speak your sound-bytes.
- Practice the art of Bridging—Build a bridge from the question you are asked to the talking points you have ready to deliver.
- When preparing to answer: Stop, Breathe, Pray, Think, Speak!
- Remember that you set the pace and tone of the interview.
- You can often determine the time, place and length of an interview.
- You can ask in advance what topics will be discussed during the interview, and who else the reporter has interviewed or plans to interview.
- Have your key messages, talking points or "sound-bytes" in mind and always speak them.
- If you are not doing a live broadcast, it is ok to start over if you make a mistake (let them know you would like to begin again).
- It is ok to ask the reporter to repeat the question
- Don't try to explain everything; stay on your key messages.
- If you goof, that's ok. Ask the reporter to go again (unless it's live).
- Don't worry, the movement will not collapse if you mess up your sound byte!
- Once you and your group have developed your message, practice over and over delivering it (in front of the mirror!)
- Consider getting the opinion of someone outside the immediate group about the clarity of your message. Does it make sense to them, what other details may be important, etc.
- Keep love in your heart, and let it come through in your interview.

15. WRITING GOOD PRESS RELEASES

- Media advisory/press release
- "For Immediate Release" or "embargoed" (followed by correct date)
- No typos
- Contact name and phone number
- Catchy headline
- First paragraph most important (invest 75% of time)
- Who, what, where, when, why
- Punchy, direct lead
- "hook" at beginning (the "news," the "first," the "largest," the "only")
- Short sentences, paragraphs
- No manifestos, no jargon



- List of speakers at event (if any)
- Sound byte quotes (press releases)
- Keep it to one page (rarely 2 pages)
- Use letterhead
- A brief mission statement as last paragraph
- For more info/website?
- Key to good release: write good headlines, be brief
- Write "# # #" or "30" at the end

16. DISTRIBUTING YOUR PRESS RELEASE

When to send out your press releases

- 10 days out by mail
- 3-4 days out by fax (don't forget daybooks)
- 1-2 days out by phone/email

Ways to distribute your media release

- -via fax
- -via email
- -via mail
- -by hand
- -by satellite (video news releases)
- -how to address your releases
- -daybooks

Timing:

- When to send a media advisory
- When to send a media release
- Times of days, deadlines

17. THE PITCH

- Target your reporter
- Be timely, not obnoxious
- Be friendly, sensitive
- Reference prior work of reporter
- Express enthusiasm
- Who, what, where, when, why
- Hooks galore
- Answer questions



- Have one or two back-up pitches
- Close the deal

18. PRESS KIT

- Right pocket: press release, statement(s) report/research, fact sheet on issue, bio of speakers
- Left pocket: statements of support, press clips, sheet on organization, photo

19. PRESS CONFERENCES / MEDIA EVENTS

- Hold only when you have news
- Timing (mid-morning, mid-week)
- Competing events happening?
- Duration: between 15-45 minutes
- Location: appropriate, convenient, a/v, compatible, directions
- Check in, press kit distribution
- Speakers line up:
 - Limit to 3-4 people
 - 5 minutes max each
 - Moderator, expert, testifiers
 - Diversity
- Decorate tastefully and appropriately
- Hold questions to the end
- Spin and schmooze
- Aggressive follow-up (courier press kit)

20. MEDIA BRIEFINGS / MEDIA DELEGATIONS

Why do Media Briefings

- Educate reporters, producers and editors
- Provide Deeper Understanding about issues
- Pitch story ideas, hooks

Scheduling the briefing:

- In the middle of the week, late morning before lunch and after the morning newsroom staff meetings.
- Call the managing editor, key reporter contact, or section editor (for example, Metro section) to schedule the briefing.
- Schedule a briefing only when you have important news; don't waste the reporters' time.



Invite appropriate reporters and editors:

- "Beat" reporters (reporters covering your issue)
- Reporters with whom you have developed a relationship
- Political reporters
- News editors
- "Page" editors (Example: Religion, Editorial, Metro, Lifestyle)
- Managing and/or executive editors
- Producer and executive news producers (TV/radio)

Identify who should attend from your side:

- Bring diverse group of people (5 max)
- Examples: executive director, community members, expert on issue, author of "report," individuals personally affected by issue, celebrity/famous person supporting issue.
- Be friendly and cordial; welcome everyone at the beginning and thank them at the end for coming.

Prepare packages (Press Kit) to hand out at the briefing:

- Contact information of participants and organizations
- Clips of previous coverage
- Background fact sheets on issues
- List of additional contacts
- Recent news releases
- List of story ideas

"Rehearse" briefing:

- Identify lead speaker who starts briefing
- Assign role to each participant; each should speak 3-4 minutes
- Clearly state purpose of media briefing; suggest story ideas as you speak
- Review past coverage (good and bad); point out errors, offer praise
- State your requests for the type of coverage (beat reporter, op ed, general coverage, integration, reflect diversity)

Keep in Mind:

- Media briefings should last one hour or less
- Allow time at the end of briefing for reporters to ask questions
- Schedule follow-up meeting
- Schedule media briefings once or twice a years with major local daily newspapers and/or key TV/radio stations
- Whatever you say is on the record may be used in the story



21. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OP EDS

Letters to the Editor

- Short and concise (150-200 words)
- Three short paragraphs, three lines per paragraph, max
- Respond to specific issue/reference
- Personalize it!
- Name, date and location
- Send to letters editor
- Follow-up

Op eds

- More personal
- Concise (500-800 words)
- First person, second person
- State specific point of view clearly
- Timely
- Send with cover letter and/or pitch before
- Target editorial page editor

21. BECOMING MORE VISUAL

Submitting video and photographs

- Build a relationship with the photo department or photo editor
- Find out what format they want the photos (color or black & white, if digital is ok, what size)
- Write a caption for every photo. Include the names and titles of the people in the photo, the location, a brief description of the action, dates, the name of the photographer, and a way to contact you for more information. If you want them returned, write an address on the tapes or photos you submit.
- Establishing shots and WIDENING THE FRAME!
- Vertical vs. Horizontal photographs – look at the papers to see what they like to print!

Homework!

- -Practice developing sound bytes
- -Practice delivering sound bytes to one another, and in front of a mirror
- -Write letters to the editor
- -Write media releases



Appendix: Types of News Agencies

I. International News “Wires” Services

AP ("Associated Press")
REUTERS
UPI ("United Press International")
AFP ("Agence France Presse")
IPS ("Inter-Press Service")
EFE (Spanish News Agency)

- They have a national and international reach.
- Any news organization can subscribe -most do, particularly daily and weekly publications.
- A media organization, as a beneficiary, can send or receive news from the news service. The news can be in the form of communiqués, articles, information about events, and in some cases photographs and video recordings.
- They rely on a small group of reporters, and sometimes photographers that can travel to the place of events.
- THE NEWS SERVICES ARE THE FIRST TO BE CONTACTED.
- It is possible to hand over images to them directly, and they are always ready to receive press releases.

II. Opinion Leaders Newspapers

IMPORTANT MEDIA THAT FORM OPINION, TO WHICH OTHER MEDIA REFER FOR THE FACTS:

"INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE"
"WASHINGTON POST"
"NEW YORK TIMES"
"MIAMI HERALD"

- These media have a Latin American department in Washington DC and Miami.
- They have offices in the major cities of most Amazon countries.
- They can be very important if the realization of our objectives depends on the transformation of opinions and on reaching those whom lead public opinion.

III. TV Networks (International)

TELEVISION NETWORKS IN LATIN AMERICA
BBC TV
AP TV
REUTERS TV
TELEMUNDO
UNIVISION
SPANISH CNN
DISCOVERY LATIN AMERICA
GLOBO (BRAZIL)



- They keep in contact with TV stations throughout the world and in Latin America. They can use registered material for their news.
- They are prepared to travel to remote areas to cover a story (especially Discovery), but they need advance notice. They would want an in-depth story.
- They will be willing to use material that you have registered, if it has enough impact. They could also pay postage costs.

IV. Radio Networks

- Alternative radio stations
- Radio communication (for example, CB)

MAJOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RADIO NETWORKS INCLUDE:

- BBC
 - PRI ("PUBLIC RADIO INTERNATIONAL")
 - NPR ("NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO")
 - TWO WAY RADIO
 - "PIRATE" RADIO
- They usually do in-depth interviews by telephone.
 - Sometimes they send reporters to remote areas (to do in-depth articles).

V. Local News Media

Local newspapers

Radio

TV

VI. Electronic News Media

- Web (including independent media center sites)
- Email
- Allies

VII. Alternative Media/Your own media

Progressive press / issue press (Nature, Cultural Survival)

VIII. Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

