

*Bonus Section C*

**PRE-INTERVIEW PLANNING**

**Seven Steps to Success**

**PREPARING FOR A MEDIA INTERVIEW IS A SYSTEMATIC EFFORT**

**Remember: You start out in a position of strength because you have something they want -- the Information.**

**AS AN EXECUTIVE, YOU SHOULD ALSO RECOGNIZE THIS PLANNING PROCESS IS ABOUT CONTROL -**

- Control of the media to the extent you can
- Control of yourself throughout the interview process

**THE SEVEN STEP APPROACH:**

**Step One: BASIC NEGOTIATIONS**

**A. When a reporter calls, establish a rapport.**

**B. Determine the reporter's agenda.**

**Questions To Ask:**

**(Background Information: Usually consists of a tightly written fact sheet which gives background, key facts, organizational policy, current status. THIS IS NOT A PRESS RELEASE.)**

**C. Determine Your Purpose.**

**D. Consult With Trusted Agents.**

**E. Ask Yourself The Key Question: Am I The One Who Should Really Be Doing This Interview?**

**Step Two: POSITION YOURSELF FOR SUCCESS**

**A. Target Your Audience.**

**B. Prepare Messages. (REMEMBER: Your goal is to be message driven, not purely question driven.)**

- Being Message Driven Means:
  - Knowing What Your Messages Are
  - Being consistent In Delivering Them
  - Assertively Bringing Them Into The Interview
  - Not Merely Responding To Questions; Answering Them, Then Moving To Your Messages
  
- What Is A Message?
  - A Concise Point You Want To Know And Remember
  - Tells Why The Issue/Program/Policy Is Important
  - Tells What It Will Accomplish In The Real World
  - Is The Key Point(s) You Are Going To Get Across  
**NO MATTER WHAT!**

**C. Prepare A Positioning Statement.**

- Positioning Statements Are:
  - General Statements Which Help You Get Started
  
  - Door Openers To Your Message
  
  - A Means To Introduce Your Message Either From Your Perspective Or That Of Your Target Audience
  
  - A Way To Put the Issue Into Its Proper Context
  
  - Are Accepted By Your Audience As Reasonable

**- Are Platforms To Begin Your Message Track**

**D. Develop A Theme.**

**- A Theme Is A Word Picture To Frame Your Message In A Memorable Way. Reinforcing It Throughout An Interview Keeps You Focused and Becomes A Means For Tying Your Messages Together.**

**Step Three: BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL QUESTIONS**

**Step Four: ANSWER QUESTIONS IN WRITING**

**Step Five: REHEARSE OUT LOUD**

**Step Six: THE CALL BACK: ESTABLISHING THE GROUND RULES**

- A. Reiterate The Subject Of The Interview.**
- B. (Possible) Establish Those Areas Not Open For Discussion In the Interview.**
- C. Determine Your Deadline.**
- D. Establish Interview Length, Location, Day/Time.**

**- Do's And Don't's Of Ground Rules:**

- Do Tape The Interview**
- Do Ask For Topic Areas In Advance**
- Do Determine a Reporter's Background On The Topic And Offer To Provide Supporting Information**
- Do Terminate An Interview (With Proper Warning) If The Ground Rules Are Violated**
  
- Don't Demand The Questions In Advance**
- Don't Ask To Proofread Or See A Story In Advance**
- Don't Ask For Copies Of The Story Or Tape**
- Don't Argue Or Question A Reporter's Motive**

## Step Seven: CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

- With Confidence
- With Control
- With Professionalism

## UNDERSTANDING THE "ON THE RECORD"/"OFF THE RECORD" MAZE

A. On The Record - Everything You Say Can Be Reported Verbatim And You Can Be Identified By Name And Position. (NOTE: This is the preferred way to do business.)

B. Off The Record - The Reporter Agrees To Take Information From A Protected Source Without Writing The Story Or Identifying The Informant In Any Way. (NOTE: This does not preclude the reporter from obtaining the same information from other sources and reporting it.)

C. On Background - The Reporter Can Use The Information But Not Directly Name The Source.

D. On Deep Background - The Reporter Can Use The Information But Cannot Name The Source Or Agency. (NOTE: This is nothing more than a leak.)

## WHAT MAKES A "QUOTABLE QUOTE?" 5 Keys:

- It's Brief.
- It Stands On Its Own.
- It Uses Common, Everyday Language.
- It's Colorful Or Metaphorical.
- It's Passionate Or Energetic.