

NASAA Assembly 2018: Media Training Session



Why do you need media training?

- You are the face of your SAA - a principal, spokesperson, and expert in all things relating to increasing public access to the arts - you bring people together in the communities you serve.
- For some people, you may be the first impression they will have of your SAA
- Being featured in the media is one of the most powerful forms of marketing and PR
- Helps you develop confidence and to learn how to use your words, tone, and body language to deliver your messages effectively

Basic Do's and Don'ts

1. Be Prepared –
 - Know Your Host – do a little research to find out about the media outlet and your reporter's style and reputation
 - Know Your Story - find out the focus of the interview and select three relevant and clear key messages to speak about
2. Commit your key messages to memory and Practice
3. Use facts and concrete examples to reinforce your key messages – this will help make your interview memorable and also help turn it into an educational experience
4. Remember Your Audience – make your response(s) or story compelling and don't use jargon, buzzwords, or slang they might not understand. Explain technical terms or processes.
5. Brand your message – mention your SAA/stakeholders/principals whenever relevant

Basic Do's and Don'ts

6. Turn negatives into positives – never, never, never repeat negative language! Don't be provoked. Rather use negative questions as opportunities to deliver positive messages.
7. Be confident – you know more about your “the situation” or story than the reporter you are speaking with.
8. If you don't know, say so on background when working with print reporters - you are an expert but don't have to have all the answers. It's okay to say “I'll get back to you on that” – don't guess or speculate. In a live broadcast interview situation, pivot or punt where it makes sense. It is also okay to say you are still gathering information/data if you don't have the info requested during a live interview.
9. Stay focused – use every opportunity to deliver your key messages and grab the audience's attention with the most important information you want to share. Return to the key messages consistently – repetition is OK.
10. Try to relax and enjoy the experience!

TV Tips

- Focus on bringing a high level of energy to your interview right out of the gate.
- Engage the interviewer (and the camera/audience) with your eyes, lean your head in to answer questions you are particularly passionate to answer.
- It's okay to gesticulate to reinforce or demonstrate your enthusiasm – just don't overdo it.
- Practice makes perfect but remember your facial expressions should match the descriptive words you are using during your interview. (i.e. “sunny” should correspond with a smile, etc.)
- If seated, sit erect but not ramrod-straight, and slightly forward or toward the interviewer.
- If you are standing, do so with arms at the side or one hand in a pocket. Planting one foot slightly in front of the other will help you avoid swaying.
- Lean forward slightly and modulate your voice to bring attention to key points.
- Avoid obvious signs of discomfort or nervousness, e.g. foot tapping, clenched fists, shifting back and forth.
- Don't nod your head to indicate that you understand or are ready to answer the question. Inadvertently, this may convey agreement with the questioner's premise when you don't mean to do so. Remain neutral and become animated only when you begin to speak.

Radio Tips

- Prepare no more than three bullet points to state your case and cement an effective argument in a crisis situation
- Visualize how the story will play on the radio. This will help you prepare concise, quality answers.
- Use words that create a picture in the listeners' mind and stay away from using a passive tone with your words. Use active verb tenses to really engage the listener.
- Prepare sound bites. Answers should generally be about 15-30 seconds in length. Less editing for the reporter means potentially airplay of the interview in its entirety.

Social Media Tips for Crisis Management

- You should already be interacting with journalists/editors on social media by retweeting their articles (at a minimum). These “Twitterrelationships” can prove beneficial in a time of crisis.
- You will find yourself going “social” sooner rather than later as an issue emerges.
- Be informative, without being defensive, as quickly as possible. Share the facts as you know them and leave it at that.
- Draft and publish that one tweet that can be used as a reference point in a crisis. This is so others can point to you as the “expert” in the situation.
- Everything you publish on social is considered on the record. Approach all your social media communications as if everyone will read what you write.

Pro Tips

- Make sure to create a Dropbox or similar file sharing folder with hires images of your principals, SAA logo and other relevant creative assets for on-air and online use.
- Label each image with the one word that clearly describes the image.
- Always offer images when speaking with producers or writers before you close the booking or wrap up the interview.
- When submitting images, always remember to include attribution info. (i.e. who to credit the photo to)

Don't forget to...

- Seriously, take a deep breath. Or two. Or three.
- Stretch your muscles, this helps to develop awareness of your own body and movement.
- Remember to tell yourself that you are in control of the interview.
- Continue to breath during the interview.