



Effective Communications

Michigan Association of Mayors

Nov. 16, 2023

What We Do at Martin Waymire



Strategic Communications



Media Relations



Issue Management



Social & Digital Media



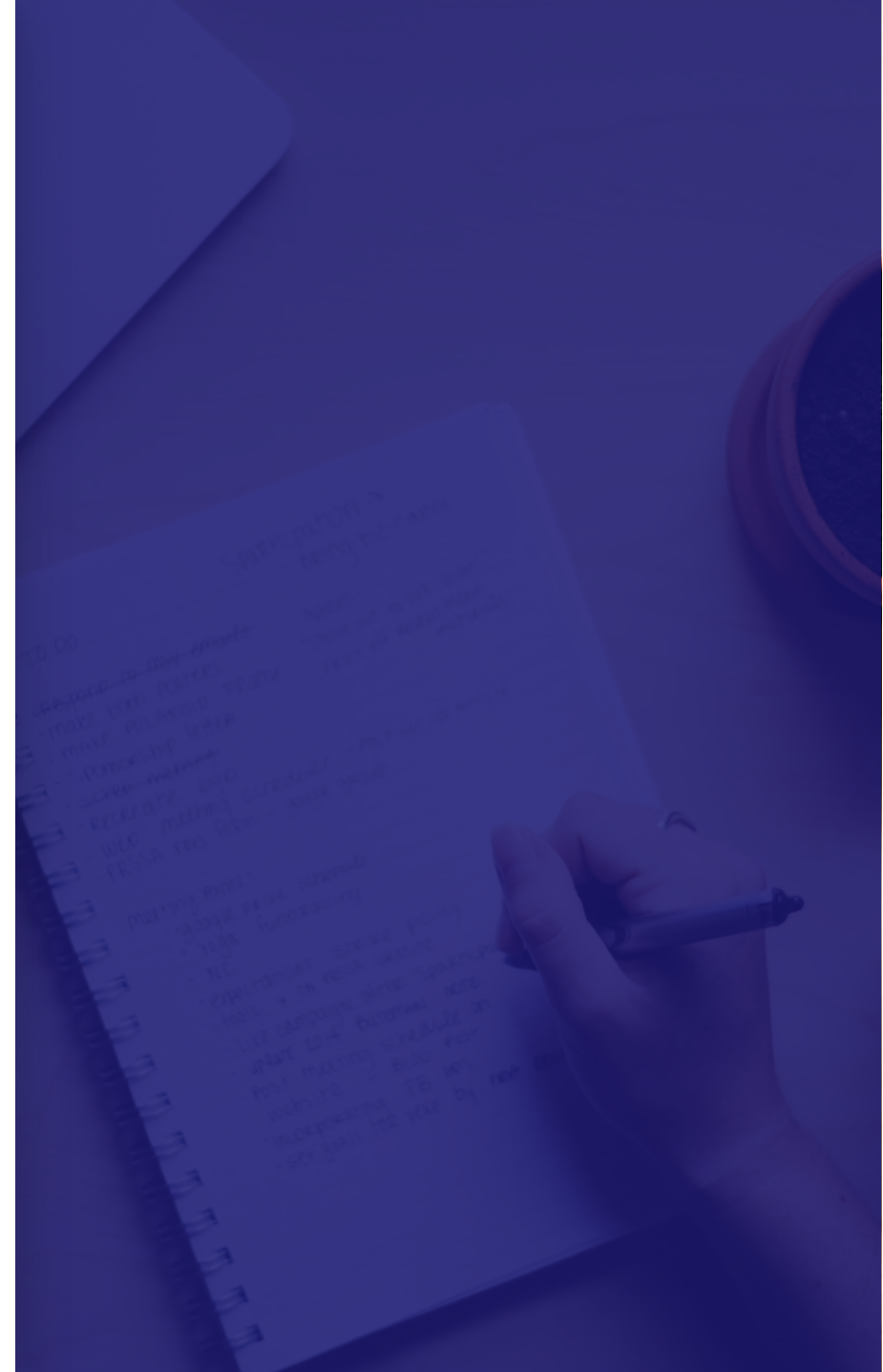
Graphic Design



Multimedia Services



Event Planning



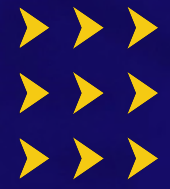


WV WATER CRISIS

LIVE

GARY SOUTHERN

PRES., FREEDOM INDUSTRIES

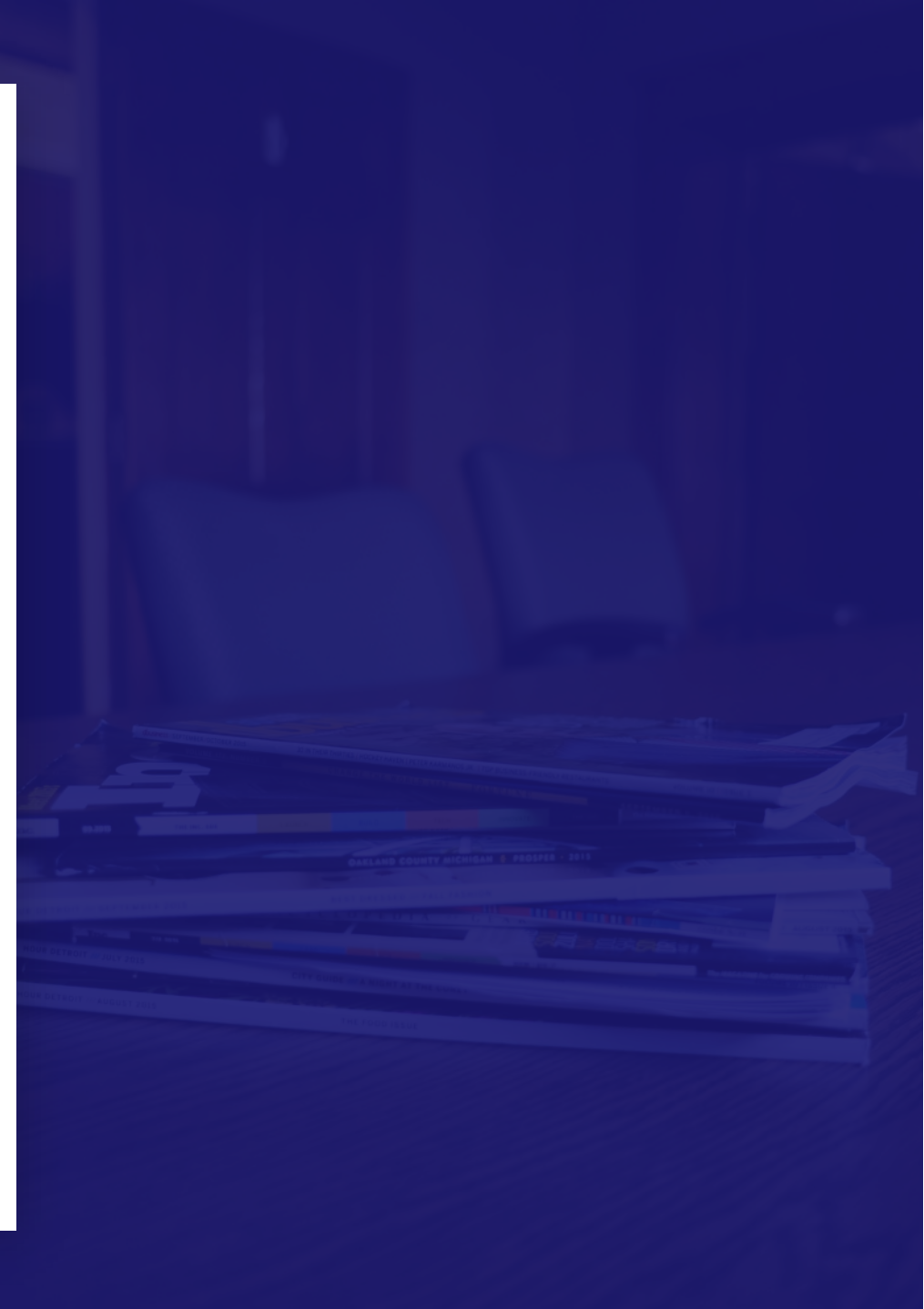


Understanding the Media Landscape



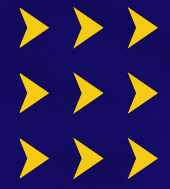
Today's Newsroom

- Fewer resources means less time to fact check and less time to investigate.
- The news cycle is 24/7. Outlets can post online and on social media channels any time of day.
- More paywalls.
- Concerns over being labeled “fake news.”



Bottom Line

- A reporter is going to do the story – with or without you.
- Reporters have limited resources and tight time constraints.
- Working with the media is still an effective way of generating positive news.
- **A call from a reporter is an opportunity to communicate.**

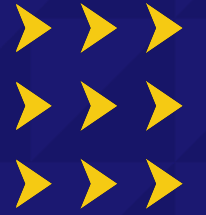


What To Do When a Reporter Calls



Your Checklist

Before you answer any questions from a reporter:



1. Gather information: WHO, WHAT, WHEN
2. Thank the reporter for reaching out and let them know you'll be back in touch shortly
3. Start your research
4. Craft the message
5. Follow up

WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Step 1: Gather information

WHO is the reporter and what is their outlet?

Name, email address, cell phone. Then look up their past work.

WHAT is their story about? **WHAT** do they want from you or your organization?

Can you get a sense of the story angle? Ask what they are hoping their audience will learn from the story.

WHEN do they plan on running the story?

What is their deadline?



WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Step 2: Thank the reporter and end the conversation

Let them know you'll be back in touch shortly.

Hang up before you answer questions.

Take time to do some basic research and craft your messages before you give any sort of statement.



WHAT TO DO WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Step 3: Start your research

Consider the reporter and outlet.

Ideally, you know the reporter and outlet. If not, do a Google search.

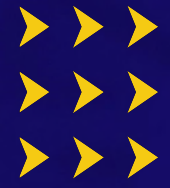
Research what region the outlet covers, if you are unfamiliar.

Are there any issues or statistics specific to the region that you should know and include in your messages?

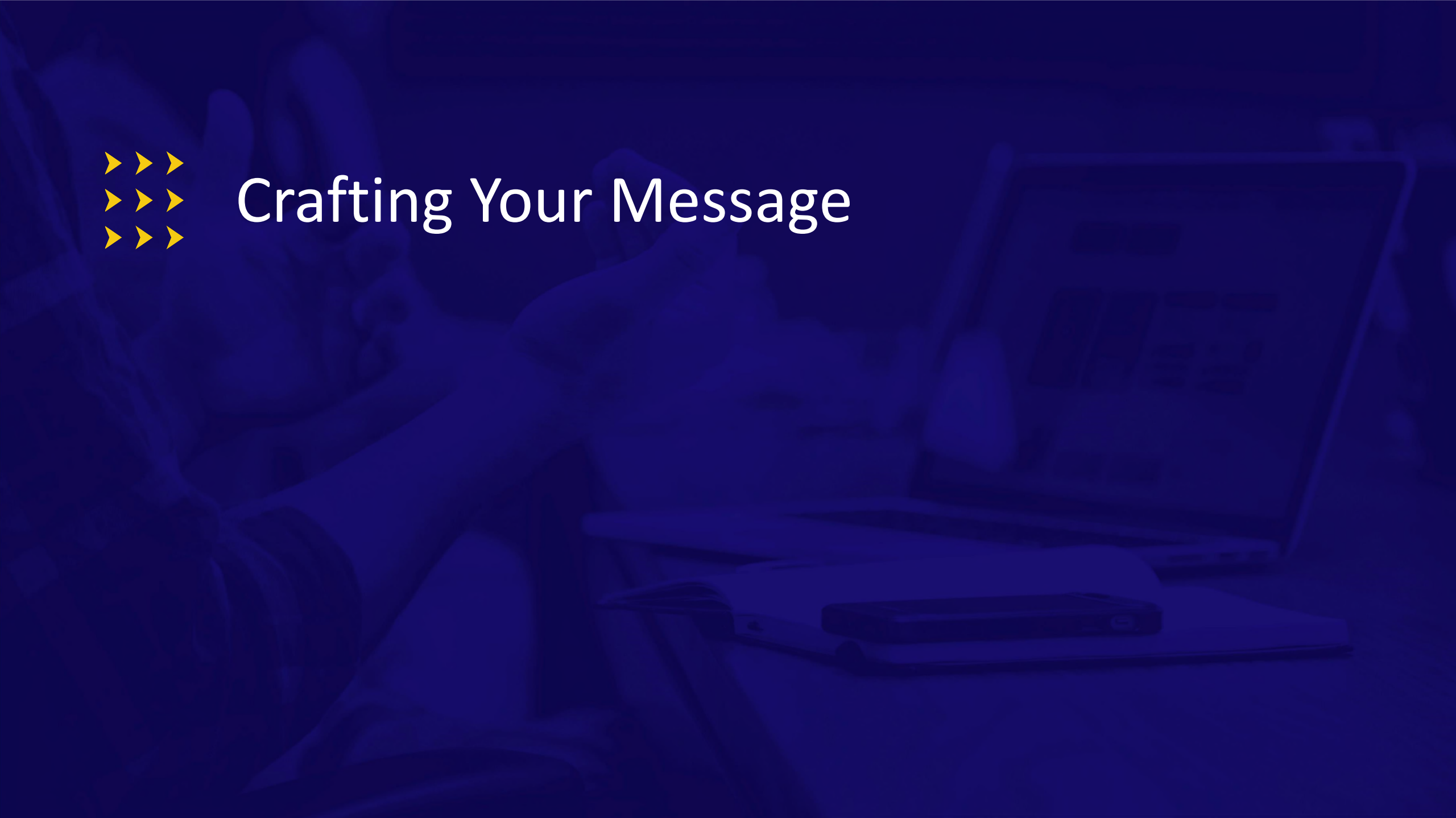
If you have communications staff, loop them in!

They can help you craft your messages or provide more background on the reporter and outlet.





Crafting Your Message







Flash Flood Watch
Milam

BAYLOR
FALLOUT

KEN STARR INTERVIEW INTERRUPTED AFTER VICTIM E-MAIL QUESTION

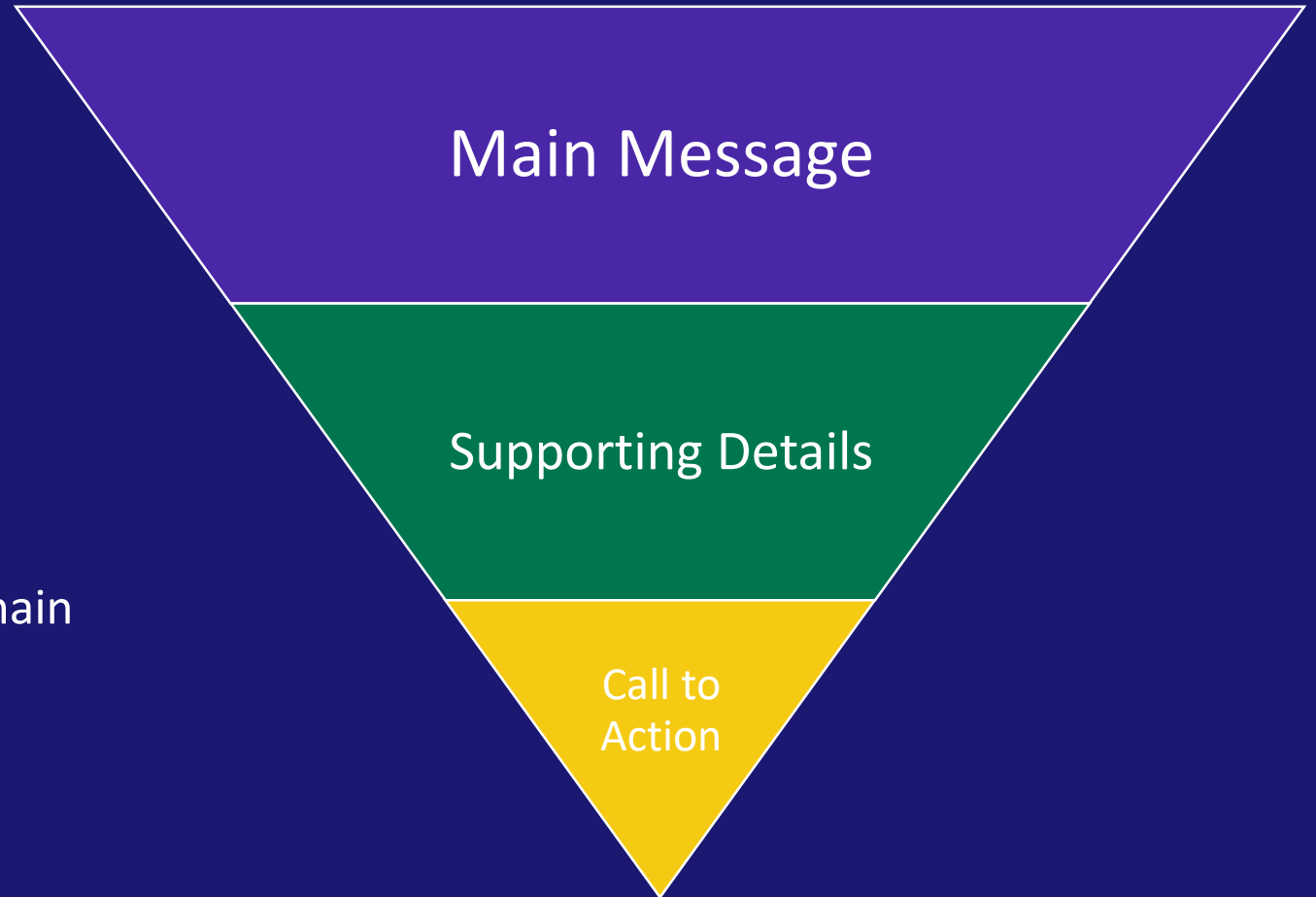
10
NEWS
8:57
PM

News Truck overturned at a low water crossing near Lake B

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Inverted Pyramid

- **Main Message:**
The #1 takeaway for your audience.
- **Supporting Details:**
Messages or facts that help drive the main message home.
- **Call to Action:**
What you want people to do.



Anticipate & Prepare

- **Have a single communications objective** – the key point you want to make – in mind.
- Anticipate the questions you are **likely to be asked**, including follow-up questions to your key messages.
- Anticipate the questions **you are nervous about** being asked and practice pivoting to your key messages (see next slide for **sample pivot phrases**).
- **You do not have to answer every question.** It's okay to say, "I don't have that information at this time, but I can follow up with you on that."



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Prepare to Pivot

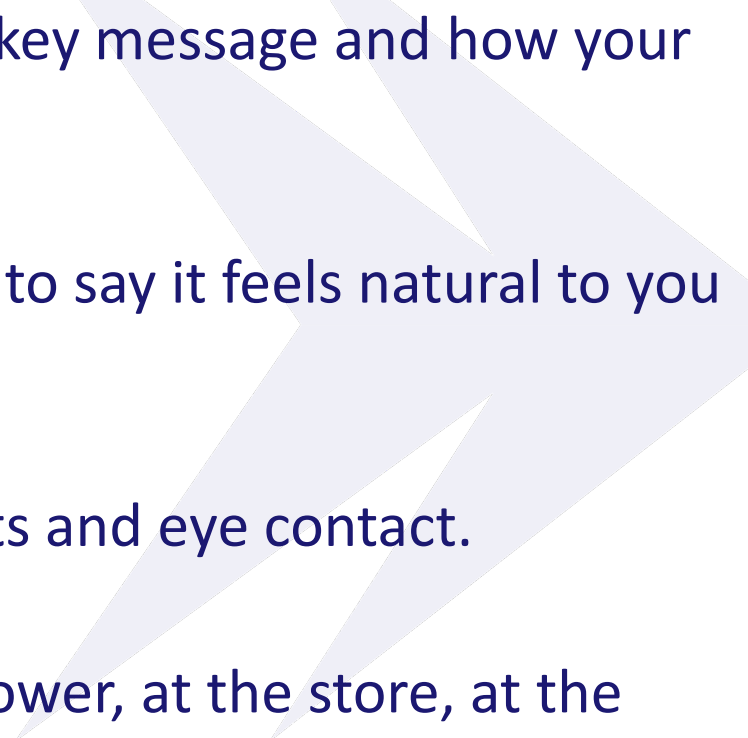
“What’s important to remember is...”

“Let me share some relevant facts to that point...”

“We’re here today to discuss...”



Practice Makes Perfect

- **Don't memorize; internalize.** Understand your key message and how your secondary messages support that key idea.
 - **Practice out loud** — make sure the way you plan to say it feels natural to you (see **short statements tests** on next slide).
 - **Practice your delivery** — timing, body movements and eye contact.
 - **Practice while doing other things** — in the shower, at the store, at the gym, etc.
- 

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Be Short & Sweet

(But don't sacrifice clarity for brevity)

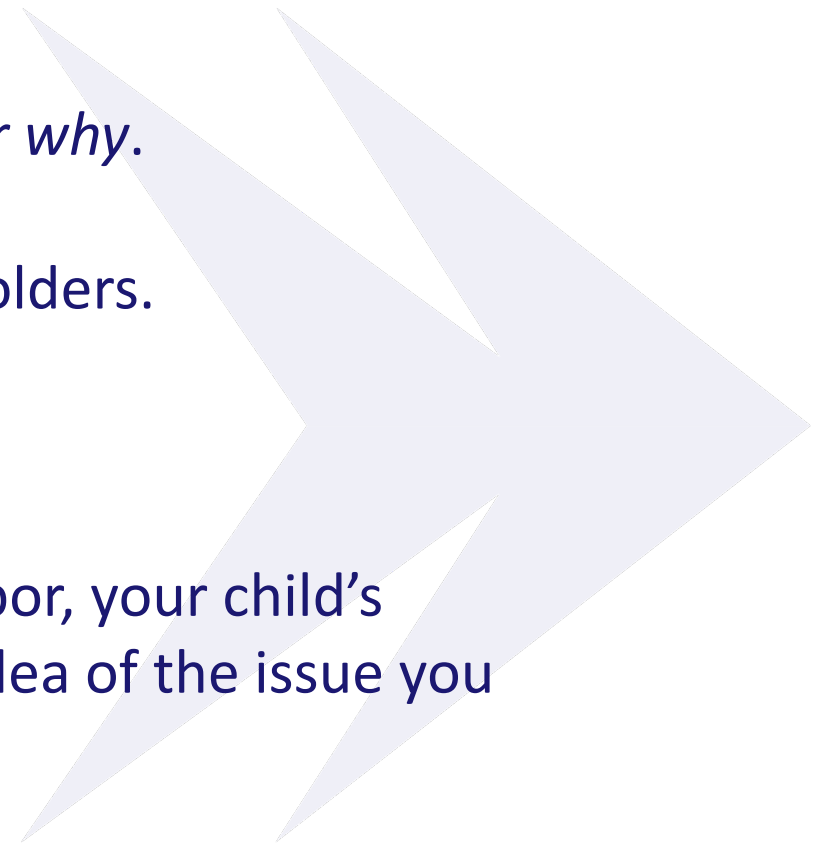
One Breath Test: Can you say your statement in one breath?

35-Word Test: No sentence should be longer than 35 words.

5th Grade Test: Is your message simple enough for a 5th grader can understand.

Rely on the ‘Why’

- You are in this position because you care: *that’s your why*.
- Always connect the message back to the key stakeholders.
- Be mindful of tone.
- Talk to reporters like they are your aunt, your neighbor, your child’s teacher – someone you respect, but who has little idea of the issue you are discussing.



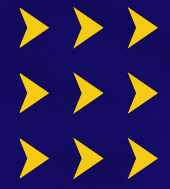


CityNews

DOCTOR DRESSED AS CLOWN DELIVERS GRIM UPDATE

THU
6°

420, PEEL REGION (169), YORK REGION (95), AND OTTAWA (58). THERE ARE NOW 73,819 CONFIRMED CA: 6:44 PM



Interview Tips & Tricks

Execution Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Provide fact sheets, FAQs or other helpful information
- Include visuals
- Identify and leverage real stakeholders

DON'T

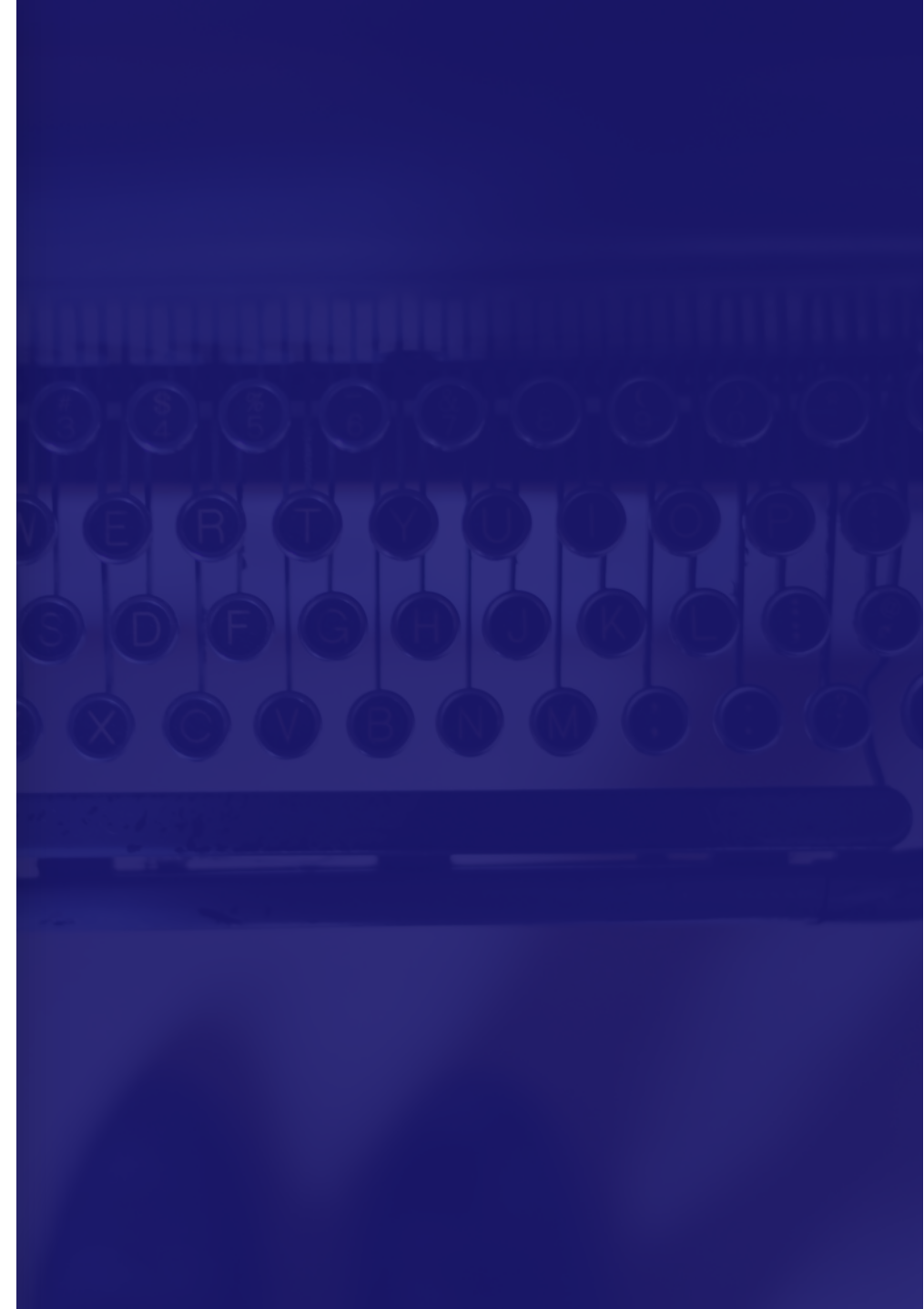
- Speculate — should be “just the facts”
- Editorialize on unrelated topics
- Use sarcasm or jokes

Don't Forget Mental Readiness

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Schedule buffer time before the interview
- Breathe

General Interview Tips

- Always tell the truth. NEVER lie to a reporter!
- Be empathetic, not bureaucratic
- Respond to the question you WISH you were asked (use your pivots)
- Repeat your messages before you conclude
- If you feel you're being misunderstood or misinterpreted, pause and clarify
- Never, never, never say “no comment”



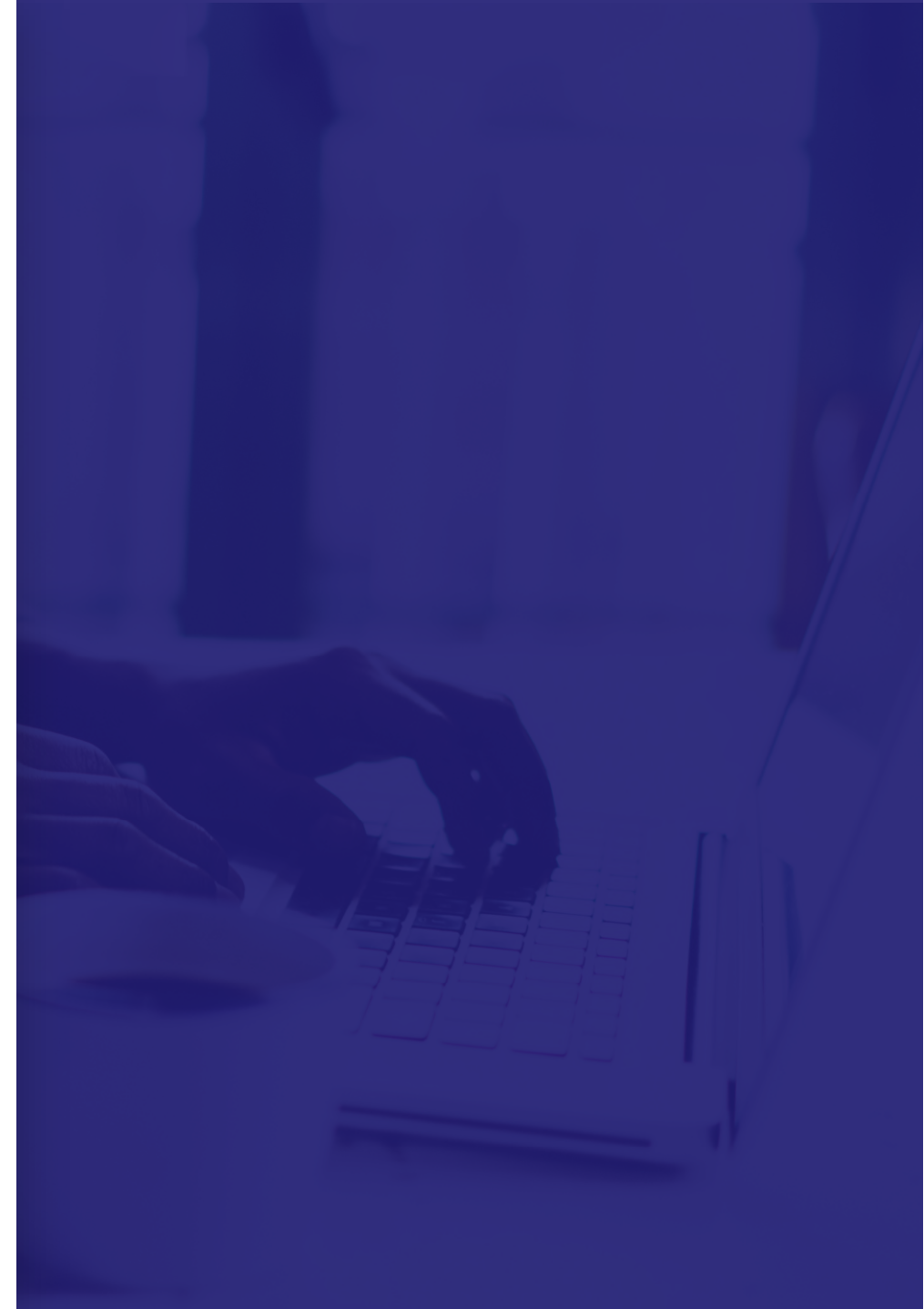
Television Interviews

- Look at the reporter's eyes, not the camera.
- Consider visuals to make the interview more interesting.
- Know the show format
 - In a talk show format, you may have 6 to 20 minutes to deliver your message(s).
 - In a typical TV news or feature story, you have about 8 to 12 seconds to deliver your message(s).
 - That means you better know your message and be able to deliver it, regardless of the question.
- Avoid distracting patterns, jewelry, etc.



Virtual Interviews

- Find a quiet place to limit distractions
- Be mindful of your background and surroundings
- Try to find good lighting
- Prop the camera or computer/laptop up on books or a box for a better angle
- Test your audio and camera ahead of time
- Wear plain clothing (no patterns or logos)

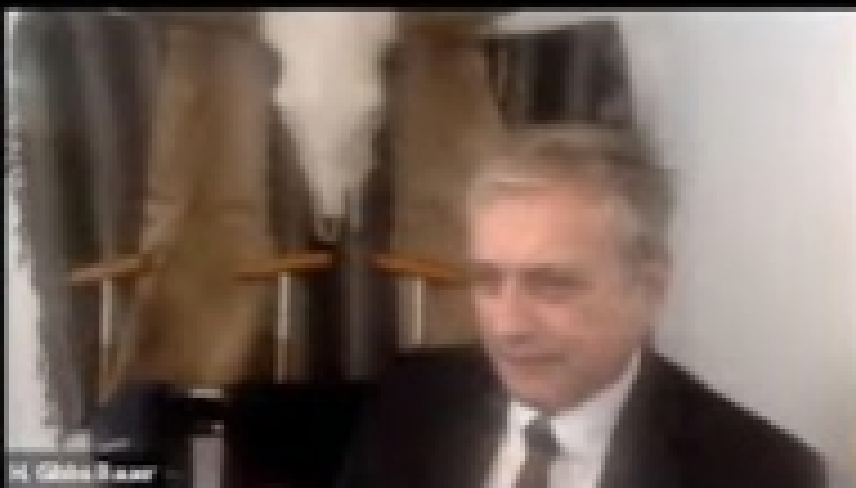


394th Judicial District Court

Recording of this hearing or live stream
is prohibited.

Violation may constitute contempt of
court and result in a fine of up to \$500
and a jail term of up to 180 days.

394th Judicial District Court





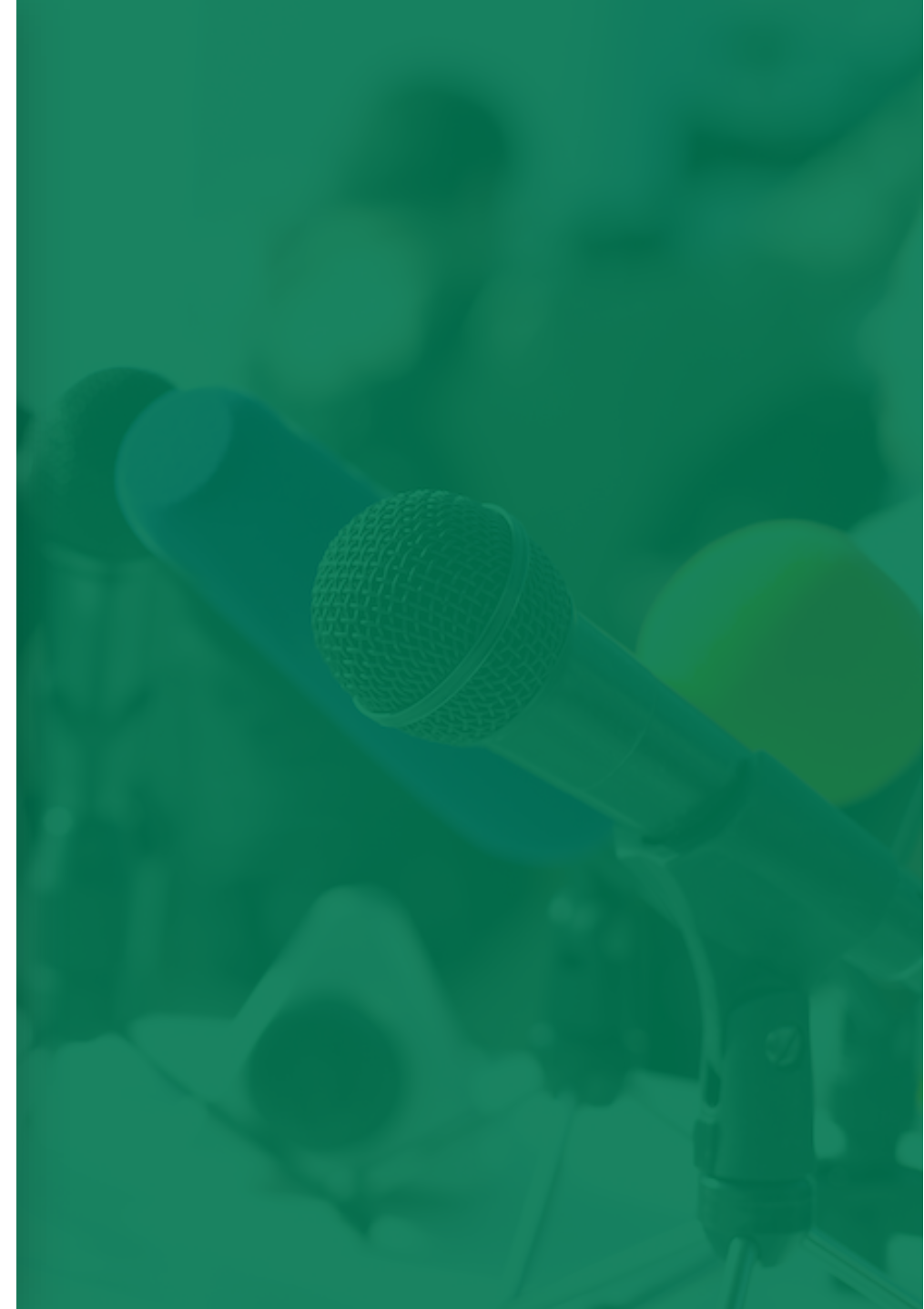
Print Interviews

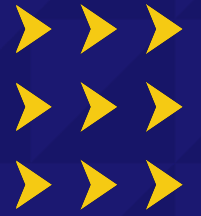
- Generally, there's more time.
- There's also more questions (including more "in the weeds" questions)
- Help the reporter by sharing any infographics, video, research, etc..
- Share statistics or facts that help the reporter localize the story.
- Off the record? Don't.



Radio Interviews

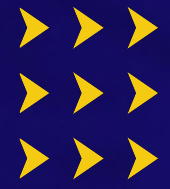
- News interview
 - Pre-recorded
 - 6 to 10 seconds per question to deliver your message(s)
 - Producers will edit into a short soundbite.
- Talk show
 - More time to deliver your message.
 - The host matters!
 - Ask if other guests will join and who is on before/after.
- Call from a landline, if possible, to avoid interference or a dropped call.





Read, Listen, Watch & Improve

- Read your clips, listen to the broadcast, and watch newscasts.
- Check for accuracy. Request corrections, if necessary.
- Commend accuracy — follow up with the reporter and thank them, especially for accuracy on an issue.
- The more you do, the easier it gets!

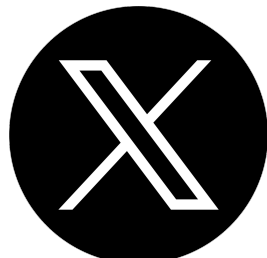


What About Digital Media?



Why use social media?

- Amplify positive news
- Educate voters / citizens
- Reach key stakeholders
- Engage reporters





Steven Overly

@StevenOverly · Follow



People will roll their eyes at President Biden spending time with TikTok influencers this week. But this is the gag: The eight of them have 67M+ followers. By comparison, about 1.5-2.5M watch Fox, CNN or MSNBC in prime time. More from [@taylorlorenz](#).



washingtonpost.com

Inside Democrats' elaborate attempt to woo TikTok influencers

The creators with a combined following of 58 million on the app met with President Biden and former president Barack Obama.

3:21 PM · Oct 27, 2022



3.8K



Reply

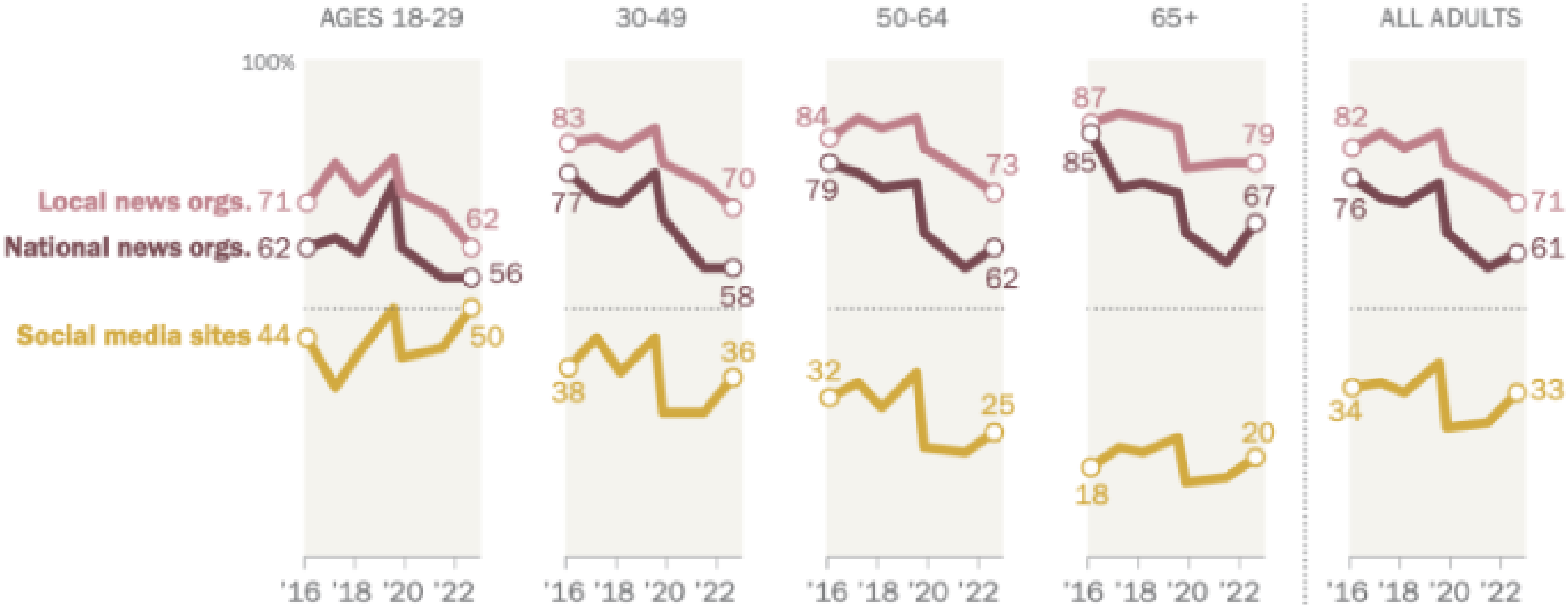


Share

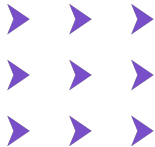
[Read 273 replies](#)

U.S. adults under 30 are now almost as likely to trust information on social media sites as information from national news outlets

% of U.S. adults who say they have *some or a lot of trust* in the information they get from ...

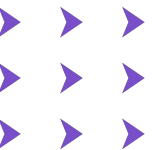


Note: In 2016, trust of information from social media was only asked of and based on internet-using U.S. adults. In the question on trust in the information from social media sites, the examples used have changed over time; for more detail on the specific wording, see the topline. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 18-Aug. 21, 2022. For dates of other surveys, see the topline.



Positives of Social Media

- Allows two-way communication with your audience
- Builds and engages communities
- Detailed audience targeting
- Cost-effective advertising
- Easier to measure than broadcast communications

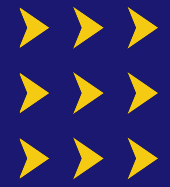


Drawbacks to Social Media

- Misinformation / disinformation
- Trolls
- Negative reviews
- Impact on mental health

AMERICANS ESTIMATE THAT 39% OF THE NEWS THEY SEE ON TV, READ IN NEWSPAPERS OR HEAR ON THE RADIO IS MISINFORMATION. THEY VIEW 65% OF NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS MISINFORMATION.

Source: Knight Foundation



Social Media Do's and Don'ts

Planning Your Content

Do

- ▶ **Use strong visuals**
 - ▶ Photos
 - ▶ Infographics
 - ▶ Videos
- ▶ **Highlight the good news in your community**
- ▶ **Include links, and have a strong landing page**
- ▶ **Monitor your accounts regularly**

Don't

- ▶ Block your citizens
- ▶ Engage in comment wars
- ▶ Attack people or engage in nasty behavior
- ▶ Share sensitive content
- ▶ Use sarcasm



Detroit Police Department

about 7 months ago



From before the first pitch to after the final out, our officers were there on Opening Day, ensuring all could enjoy it safely. Thank you to our officers, and shoutout to our Mounted Officers who were out keeping everyone safe and interacting with the public. 🐎🚓🚒

📷 Joe Maroon Photography



👍 623 💬 36 ➡ 62

trafficser... [View profile](#)

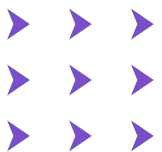
Toronto Police Tra...
TORONTO POLICE TRAFFIC SERVICES
#ASKaTrafficCop

[:h more exciting vic](#) [Watch now](#)

@trafficservices

#Inverted

🎵 original sound - Toronto Police Traffic Unit



Voice/Tone

Do / Aim For

- Establish a Brand Voice
- Be Polite
- Keep it Professional
- Occasionally Be Light-hearted
- Show Some Personality

Don't/Avoid

- Go Negative
- Be Overly Formal or Overly Informal
- Be Offensive
- Use All caps

**Don't forget to proofread! You can't edit tweets... yet.

#Hashtags

- ▶ Hashtags work as links that can help people search posts with the same hashtag.
- ▶ They help you start or join a conversation.

2X

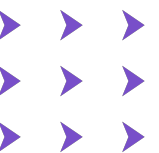
Tweets with hashtags receive 2X more engagement than those without hashtags.

21%

Tweets with one or two hashtags have 21% higher engagement than those with three or more hashtags.

17%

Tweets that use more than two hashtags actually show a 17% drop in engagement.



Hashtags

Do's

- ▶ Use hashtags that are easy to read
- ▶ Use hashtags that are relevant

Don'ts

- ▶ Spam with hashtags
- ▶ Use a bunch of different hashtags – less is more
- ▶ Use unknown hashtags



Hashtags are used less on LinkedIn.

But Remember:
Social Media is ONE TACTIC

