



## **Quick Tip Media Guide**

**Prepared for**

### **Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors**

- **Do's and Don'ts**
- **Preparing for Interviews**
- **Interview Techniques**

**OEB International  
595 Bay Street, Suite 1201  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C2  
Tel: 416-260-6000**

---

# **Working with the Media**

## **The Do's and Don'ts**

---

## OVERALL ADVICE WHEN TALKING TO REPORTERS

### The Do's

- Listen carefully.
- Be polite.
- Try to be helpful.
- Be positive.
- Try to be well organized and prepared.
- Answer only questions that are asked.
- Stick to the facts.
- Repeat messages.
- If you don't know an answer, say so, but offer to find it.
- Respect reporters' deadlines.
- Call back when you promised.
- Keep track of what was said during the interview.
- Give the reporter facts/background information if possible.

---

## **The Don'ts**

- Never lie, or mislead the media.
- Don't use statistics or facts unless you're certain of them.
- Don't speculate.
- Don't speak for others.
- Don't be sarcastic or give smart-aleck responses.
- Keep your opinions out of the interview.
- Don't speak "off the record".
- Don't be forced into an interview you are not prepared for.
- Never lose your temper.
- Don't buy into a question you don't agree with.
- Don't let a reporter put words in your mouth.
- Do not allow interruptions.
- Avoid jargon.
- If you can't tell the truth, don't be evasive.
- Don't ask a reporter to kill a story and don't go over a reporter's head to have a story changed.

If you follow these rules, a reporter would find it almost impossible to put words in your mouth. Departing from these rules means you risk ending up with a story that, at the very least, features none of your key messages, and potentially damages your company/client/organization.

---

# **PREPARING FOR A MEDIA INTERVIEW**

---

**The goal in an interview is  
to be  
message-driven  
not  
question-driven**

Being message-driven means:

- Knowing your messages.
- Beginning where **you** want.
- Consistently delivering your message(s).
- Being proactive not passive.
- Not merely respond to questions.

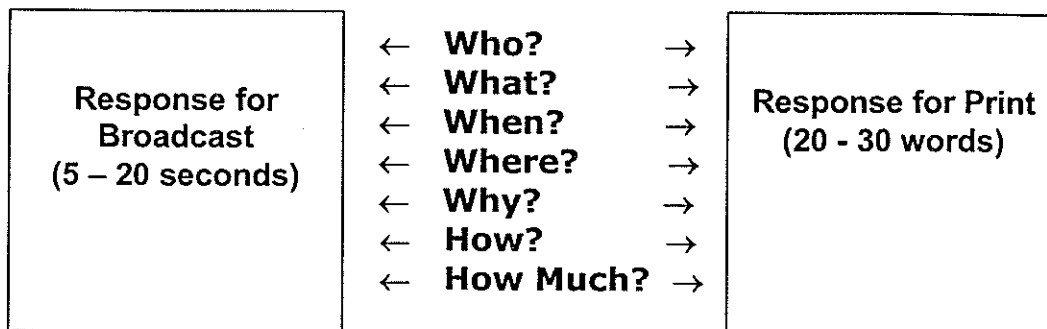
### **What is a Newsworthy Message?**

- A key point to be stressed/repeated throughout the interview.
- A point you want the audience to know and remember.
- Criteria the media will use to evaluate its newsworthiness:
  - Is it new and significant?
  - Does the message tie-in to a current issue?
  - Is it a spin-off or a trend or event?
  - Does it add a new "wrinkle" to a current news story?
  - Will the audience be interested in it?

**Ask yourself: Is the message worth repeating?  
It should be.**

---

## Preparing to Answer



- ♦ A response for broadcast media should be between 5 – 20 seconds in length (which is the length of a clip or a sound bite.)
- ♦ The equivalent for print is an average of 20-30 words.
- ♦ Obviously you can't answer all 7 questions in a 10 second sound bite. But, to prepare for an interview you need to anticipate the way a reporter writes a story: the 5 W's and 2 H's. Always try and prepare responses that will answer each of the questions.

---

## How to Structure Answers: WEDGING

### 1. Initial Brief Answer (stating your message)

- ♦ Begin the interview with an initial brief answer. It could be a **positioning statement**, a **theme** underlying your message, or your **key message**.
- ♦ Examples of initial answers:
  - "This is part of a larger problem facing many organizations today." (positioning statement)
  - "The issue is fairness." (theme)
  - "Our goal is to ensure that consumers will get the best deal." (key message.)
- ♦ The initial answer should be no longer than 30 seconds.
- ♦ Encourage the reporter to follow you by throwing out a "hook".
- ♦ A "hook" is a word or phrase such as "we have a new approach" which ensures that a reporter has to ask you a follow up question.



---

## 2. **Elaborate (supporting it)**

- ♦ The initial brief answer is followed by your rationale, explanation or supporting evidence.
- ♦ This may include: key facts and statistics, a description of a specific program, or an explanation of what you are doing.
- ♦ This is the opportunity to persuade the viewer, listener or reader with a supporting point.
- ♦ This is where you explain why you made your initial statement, or what your initial response meant specifically.
- ♦ This is also where you can introduce another message and then briefly explain it.
- ♦ Maximum: 30 seconds.
- ♦ Example: "Consumers will benefit because they will have a wider range of merchandise from which to choose."

---

### 3. Further Expansion (illustrate it)

- ◆ Either provide additional supporting evidence or plug in your prepared example or analogy to illustrate your point.
- ◆ Example: " For instance, if a consumer is dissatisfied with the product, this law will allow him or her to return it within 10 days of purchase."

- ◆ **Analogy:**

"It's like when you're in a line-up for a movie and someone butts in ahead of you. It's annoying – and it's the same with this situation."

- ◆ Or bring in another message and briefly explain it.
- ◆ Maximum: 30 seconds

Remember, a successful interview is one that allows you to get your messages across. By following these three steps it encourages the reporter to track you, so that you are in control of the interview.

---

## **Controlling The Interview: Bridging**

When you find that a reporter is steering the interview away from the subject area that you want to discuss, you can bring it back by using bridges or bridging phrases that lead to your message.

### **BRIDGES:**

- \* "We can't lose sight of the real problem, which is..."
- \* "Let's look at that from a broader perspective..."
- \* "I think the real issue here is..."
- \* "That's a good question, but have you considered what if..."
- \* "There is another more important concern, and that is..."

### **WHEN USING BRIDGES:**

- \* Use words that you are comfortable with
- \* Keep your tone sincere
- \* Don't blatantly ignore the question, answer briefly, and then bridge over to your message
- \* Your goal is to keep the interview message-driven, not question-driven