



Media Tutorial

Association of Fundraising
Professionals



Today's Goals

- Educate ourselves on the COVID-19 media environment
- Review and discuss the mechanics of media relations
- Transition to the optimistic headspace of media relations
- Get creative
- List your stories
- Identify ways to share those stories
- Q&A and trouble-shooting session



About me

- Public relations practitioner for 20+ years in metro Detroit
- Specializing in media relations and crisis communications
- Background:
 - North American International Auto Show – Account Lead (2001-2008)
 - Detroit Symphony Orchestra – Director of Public Relations (2008-2010)
 - Ford Motor Company – Dealer & Safety Communications (2010-2018)
 - Weigandt Communications – Principal (2018-present)
 - The War Memorial of Grosse Pointe
 - The Furniture Bank
 - Bees in the D
 - Detroit City Distillery



The media and COVID-19

- Top media topics:
 - COVID-19 infection rates
 - Reopening
 - Donald Trump
 - Election
 - Education
 - Economy, unemployment and jobs
 - Social injustice
- Media challenges:
 - Staff reductions
 - Work from home
 - Furloughs
 - Fatigue



How the media work

- Stories fall into two categories:

- **Urgent - Hard news** (i.e. breaking news)
 - COVID – infection rates, reopening, etc.
 - Politics – Donald Trump, election, etc.
 - Business – Stock prices, sales, closings, jobs, unemployment, etc.
 - Education – Reopening
 - Weather – Tornados, storms and other natural events
 - Social injustice – BLM, racism, loss of life
 - Crime – Car accidents, loss of life, theft, etc.
- **Evergreen - Feature stories** (trends, general interest, etc.)
 - Seasonal – Gardening tips, Christmas shopping
 - Entertainment – Restaurant and movie reviews
 - Wellness – Diet, exercise, recipes, etc.
 - Shopping – Product reviews, new stores, etc.



How the media work

- What makes a compelling story?

CONFLICT

Controversy

Uncertainty

Problems

Danger

Loss

Fear



Why is conflict important?

- Which story are you most likely to read?

Jack and Jill met, fell in love and lived happily ever after.

Jack and Jill met, fell in love but became separated by war.

A business leader had a pleasant evening Sunday night.

A business leader suffered a heart attack Sunday night.

The weather will be average tomorrow.

A storm is on the way.



Happy stories have conflict

- People are inspired by triumph over difficulty.

Busy Mom of Three Balanced Night
Classes to Get Dream Job

How I Lost 200 Pounds
In One Year

Lost Hiker Found After
Three Week Search



How do reporters find stories?

- Media tips and Pitch letters
- Friends, family, and contacting sources.
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Help a Reporter Out (HARO).



Media Relations Mechanics

- Staying current with the news
- Following reporters who cover your industry
- Offering help that relates to their needs
- Utilizing media relations tools:
 - News release
 - News advisory
 - Pitch letter
 - Interviews



Attitude is Critical

- Two attitudes drive successful media relations:
 - **Win-win** – Finding the common ground between your need and others' needs and striving toward success for both parties
 - **Optimism** – Envisioning success and working backward



Attitude is Critical

Each day is an opportunity to demonstrate what your organization is about and be true to your brand and purpose; people are paying added attention to how organizations are responding, and purpose-based companies will likely emerge as leaders.

– Deloitte Monitor Institute –

Responding to COVID-19; Resources for Nonprofits



Getting Creative

Do:

- Clear your physical and mental space
- Enter workshop mode
- Envision recovery for your organization
- List three things you have already done differently
- List three things that would be energizing and fun to try
- Star items you would like to tackle in the coming months



Getting Creative

Don't:

- Focus on what hasn't worked
- Consider what others will say
- Engage in negative self-talk
- Engage with pessimistic people



Sharing your story

- Create a short list of media who cover your sector
- Follow those media on Twitter
- Check in daily or weekly
- Engage positively with media on your feed (compliment them on their stories and hard work)
- Offer ideas and insights on what you think would interest them, based on what they've shared
- Subscribe to Help a Reporter Out (HARO)
- Subscribe to the Poynter e-newsletter
- Engage a public relations professional for news releases, formal pitches and interview scheduling



Social media

- Stay calm and collected.
- Be a good citizen; always positive and polite.
- Add to conversations in a helpful way.
- Reward good behavior.
- Ignore bad behavior.
- Avoid getting into debates with strangers.



Elizabeth Weigandt

Principal, Weigandt Communications

elizabeth@weigandtcommunications.com

Phone: 586-209-0602

Twitter: @WynterEM



Q&A Session