



**Advancing your message &
handling the media with confidence**

Presented by

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Overarching Communications Strategies

- Be strategic and “planful”
- Know your organization
- Know your publics (stakeholders)
- Know your issues
- Establish realistic goals
- Track outcomes
- Know communications channels and technologies and adapt to new ones
- Establish and grow relationships

Develop a Communications Plan

- **Derive from overarching strategic plan**
- **Align with Mission/Guiding Principle**
- **Include core elements**
 - Goal
 - Stakeholder(s)
 - Message(s)
 - Communications channel(s)
 - Activities and/or materials/approaches
 - Outcomes assessment
- **Frame practices/approaches that reach multiple stakeholders**

Considerations in...

- **Identifying your stakeholders**
 - Recognize breadth and diversity of stakeholders
 - Recognize their interconnectivity and influence over one another
 - Build “credibility banks” with each
- **Developing Messages**
 - Deliver important information about issues
 - Compel targeted stakeholder(s) to think, feel and act
 - Be culturally relevant and sensitive
 - Be memorable

Develop Educational Materials

- Create succinct piece (s) on organization with updated statistics
 - Do not use jargon
 - Explain practices, policies, procedures
 - House on user-friendly web site

Essential Media Relations Components

- Be prepared
- Recognize reporters have a job to do
- Be respectful of deadlines
- Whenever possible - make it easy for reporters to access information

Essential Media Relations Components

- **“Written” materials**
 - Electronic press release template/ masthead
 - Contact list including name, phone and e-mail address for print, radio, and TV media outlet contacts
 - Prep sheets with stats, summarization of programs and initiatives
 - Standardized press kit
 - Crisis plan
 - Disaster plan

Essential Media Relations Components

- **Standard processes**
 - Develop media policy and protocol
 - Formalize reporting chain
 - Internal
 - External, including provider agencies
 - Identify and train potential spokesperson (s)
 - Create media-request tracking system
 - Devise and implement system to analyze media coverage

Proactive Media Strategies

- **Decide, is it newsworthy?**
- **Capitalize on events, awareness campaigns, special projects (think visuals)**
 - Promote a “new or different face” of child welfare
- **Maximize use of web site**
- **Utilize best method to reach media**
 - **Advisories (PSA, news release, RFQ)**
www.press-release-writing.com
 - Press conference
 - Phone call (pick up the phone and pitch)
 - Media availability/subject matter expert
 - Editorial board
 - Op-ed and letter to the editor

Reactive Media Strategies

- Be Proactive – the more proactive you’ve been, the easier a “call out of the blue” will be
- Be calm, honest, sincere and responsive
- Never lie
- Educate through hypotheticals
- Decide if you should use a “statement”

Crisis Communications

- **Develop crisis plan that outlines what to do**
 - **Convene a response team**
 - Create and maintain open communication
 - Gather accurate information
 - **Formulate media response**
 - Nature of crisis, timeframe, affected stakeholders, confidentiality concerns/privacy matters
- **Engage stakeholders – may/not defend – won't add to “feeding frenzy”**
- **Accept responsibility; act; commit to change**

Disaster Communications

- **Predicated on Agency disaster plan**
- **Important elements**
 - Open lines of communication with families, staff, providers, media, emergency management personnel
 - Back-up contingencies – records, information systems, work locations
 - Service delivery continuity a/o expansion
 - Staff/volunteer coordination

Tips for When the Media Calls

- Know what you want to say
 - Be clear, concise, not hyperbolic
- Use “prep” sheet (especially for statistics)
 - Don’t guess if you don’t know
- Do not ramble
- Talk with reporters “on background” to educate, correct preconceived notions, and determine their story angle
- Use caution when speaking “off the record”

Investigative Reporting

- **Often involves use of public records**
 - Know Right-to-Know Law/Open Records Law including exceptions (e.g., confidential records)
 - Prepare business process to retrieve records and involve the Law Department
- **Requires close attention and involvement**
- **May be particularly intense before “Sweeps Week”**

On-camera Interviews

- **Be prepared**
 - Rehearse, know what you want to say
 - Have assistant to set ground rules
- **Consider appearance**
- **Chat first**
- **Ask that introduction include contact number a/o website**
- **Look at reporter, not camera**
- **Use “we, us, our” – embody your organization’s identity**
- **Repeat key message – use bridging statements**
- **Correct misspeaks**

Radio Interviews

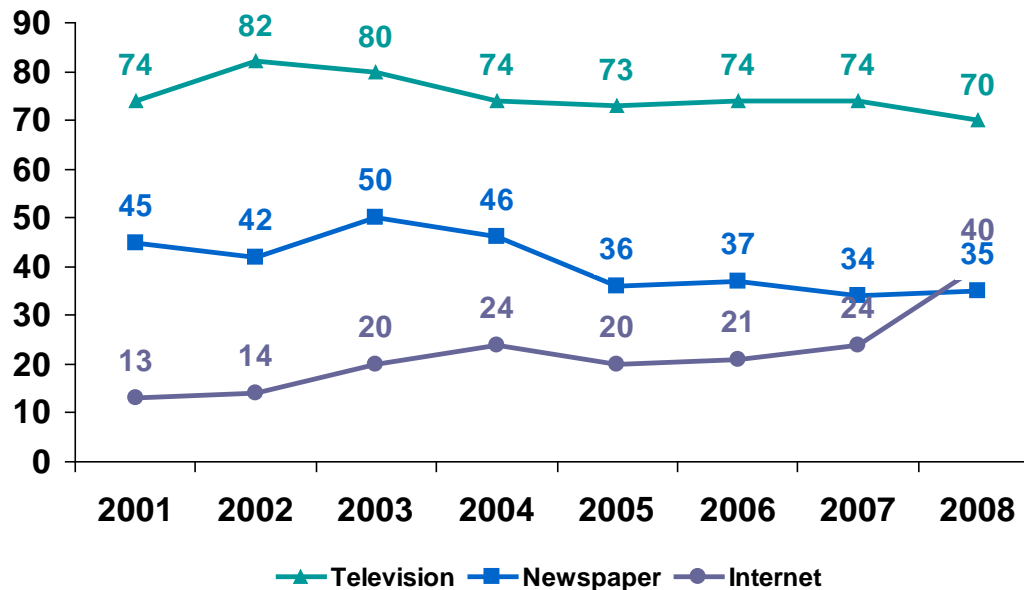
- Find out if it's taped or live
- Ask that introduction include contact number a/o web site
- Breathe
- Stand or sit up straight
- Remember, your microphone is your phone, beware of incoming calls
- Keep answers short – use everyday language
- Use “prep” sheet for statistics

Caveats

- Don't forget to engage other important stakeholders (clients/consumers, staff, providers, elected officials, general public)
- Keep abreast of emerging trends and new communications preferences

Emerging Trends

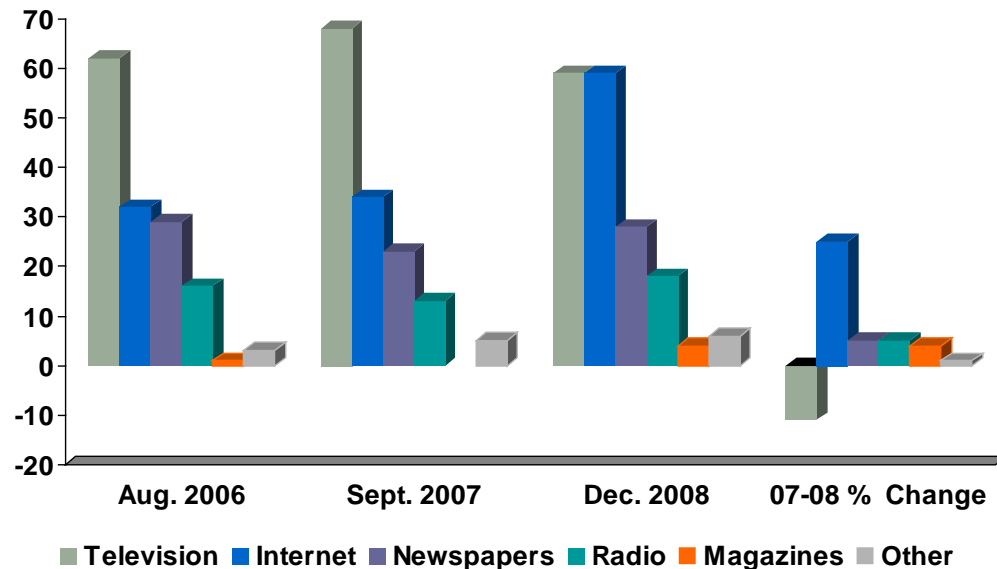
Where do you get most of your national and international news?



From the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Dec. 23, 2008
Percentages add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

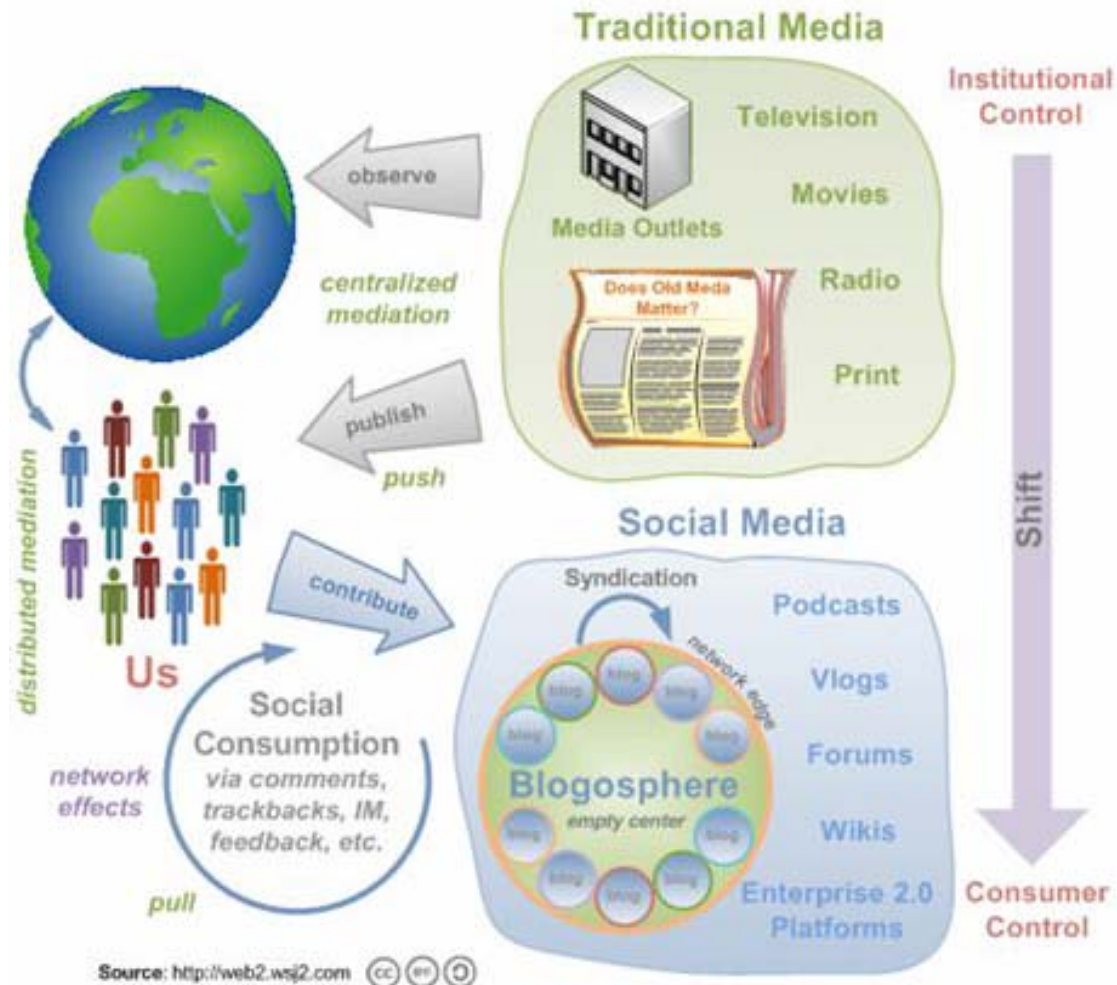
Emerging Trends

Internet rivals TV as main news source for persons ages 18-29.



From the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Dec. 23, 2008
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The Emergence and Rise of Mass Social Media



Resources

- **NAPCWA - Positioning Public Child Welfare Initiative (PCCWI)**
www.napcwa.org/PPCWI/ppcwi.asp
- **PPCWI Communications Guidance**
www.allegHENYcounty.us/uploadedFiles/DHS/PPCWI-CommunicationsChapter.pdf
- **Coping with Disasters and Strengthening Systems - A Framework for Child Welfare Agencies**
www.chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/12C87EC7-CD13-4820-86B612DC3049927D/0/copingwithdisasterschildwelfareagencies.pdf
- **Basic style guide to developing a media relations strategy for child welfare agencies in rural areas**
www.ruralsuccess.org/mediaguide.htm
- **Tips for writing advisories (PSA, news release, RFQ)**
www.press-release-writing.com

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