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# WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

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**Tips and Strategies for  
Effective Interviews**

## DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES

Before any media interview or presentation, it is important to identify the key messages you want to communicate to your audience. One or more of the following questions should guide your message development.

- What do you want your audience to know?
- What does your audience need and want to know?
- What do you want them to understand?
- What action do you want them to take?
- What do you want them to remember?

### Writing Your Messages

1. What is your goal? (Use questions above as a guide.)
2. Write short, simple messages that capture your needs and the audience's needs. Messages should not exceed three sentences.
3. Identify facts, stories and statistics to support your key messages.
4. Do not use acronyms or jargon.
5. Use easy-to-understand language

### Types of Messages

Most messages fall into four categories:

- Action/Result
- Call to Action
- Problem/Solution
- Benefits

# ROUTINE MEDIA INTERVIEWS

## Before the Interview

- Clarify the topic.
- Ask the reporter what the story is about.
- Ask the reporter what information he needs.
- Confirm the reporter's deadline.
- Confirm time and location, as appropriate.
- Contact the communications department.
- Research the topic as needed.
- Develop three key messages.  
*Tip: See "Developing Key Messages" on page 2.*
- Identify supporting talking points. (Facts, stories & stats)
- Anticipate difficult questions.
- Rehearse your messages and answers aloud. Are they easy to understand? Are they short and to the point?

**TIP:** When choosing an interview location, be aware of the backdrop. Do not choose a backdrop that will be distracting or create a new story.