

Advisor

THE Newsletter of Effective Communication

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How to Avoid an Off-the-Record Problem

When Clayton Williams ran for Texas governor in 1990, he made an off-the-record comment so infamous it made national news.

It was a rainy day in March, and the press had gathered at his ranch outside Midland to watch some cattle roping. When one of his ranch hands mentioned to him that the reporters were getting restless, Williams tried to make light of the situation by comparing bad weather to rape: "If it's inevitable," he said, "just relax and enjoy it."

After that comment, Williams' 20-point lead over Ann Richards plummeted, and she went on to win the governorship.

Off-the-record comments to reporters have damaged or destroyed many a career or reputation, (see "Oops!," p. 2.) And they remain one of the most frequently occurring traps encountered by those who interact with the news media. Many people believe that if they

preface or follow a comment made to a reporter with the statement, "This is off the record," the information won't be used. Not necessarily.

Some Ground Rules

There are several different ways that you can talk to a reporter:

• **On the Record.** Anything you say can be quoted directly or indirectly and attributed to you or your company by name. Remember this "default" assumption: unless you have already established otherwise, you are always on the record.

Here are some other types of interviews. Keep in mind that you can move in and out of them during the same conversation:

• **Off the Record.** You're giving the reporter information he can't use in the story. For example, say you've agreed to be interviewed, but a day or two before

SEE OFF THE RECORD on page 2

Handling Q & A: Guidelines for Comfort and Success

In a scene from one of those instantly recognizable cartoons from *The New Yorker* magazine, two top executives have just finished their presentations at the company's annual shareholders' meeting. Now it's the shareholders' turn to ask questions. There's a long line of people waiting at the microphone as the one executive whispers to the other, "This is the part of capitalism I hate!"

If the Q&A portion of your

presentation is something you hate, take heart. It's not as hard as you may think. Here are some tips to increase your comfort and success:

• As the speaker, you should determine when to field questions. Generally, it's best to tell the audience that you are saving time for questions, and to ask them to hold their questions until the end of your presentation. That way you prevent interruptions. An

SEE Q & A on page 3

the interview, you learn of a significant company development that will be announced after the interview takes place. To prevent the reporter from writing something that will make him appear foolish or out of touch, you reveal the information, but do so off the record. He cannot use the information until after you make it public, but he takes the embargoed information into account when writing his piece.

Off the record does not apply retroactively, so be sure to establish that you are speaking off the record before you reveal sensitive information.

- **Not for Attribution.** The reporter can directly quote the information, but can't ascribe it to you or your company by name. If you're concerned about being identified, be sure to negotiate with the reporter the exact wording of the attribution – e.g., “a knowledgeable

Off-the-record comments to reporters have damaged or destroyed many a career or reputation.

source,” “a Wall Street analyst,” “an industry observer,” etc.

- **Background.** The reporter can use the information but not quote it, and the attribution must remain general – e.g., “according to a

company official , . . .”

- **Deep Background.** The reporter can use the information but not quote it, and may not attribute it to anyone. In other words, he must say it on his own.

Caveat Orator

Speaking to a reporter on any basis other than on the record is risky. You run the risk that he or she may inadvertently or intentionally reveal something sensitive. If you do go off the record, here are several safeguards to keep in mind:

- **Know the reporter.** If you don't know the reporter and haven't

developed a close working relationship, you are more likely to get burned.

- **Know the medium.** A news outlet with an ongoing interest in your organization is less likely to violate a confidence. Still, the best policy is never to say anything you wouldn't want repeated.

And finally:

- **Assume every camera and microphone are on and are attached to a recorder somewhere.** Although the interview or program may not have started, the equipment could be on.

- **Don't make off-the-record comments before the interview starts.** Instead, break the ice with the reporter by chatting about safe subjects (e.g., weather, sports, etc.). Better yet, share an interesting (and important) piece of information about your topic; the reporter may bring it up during the interview – handing you an opportunity to discuss it. 🚫

Oops!

Some classic “off-the-record” comments

Ronald Reagan

During a radio microphone test in 1984, President Reagan jokingly said, “My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you I just signed legislation which outlaws Russia forever. The bombing begins in five minutes.”

Mrs. Gingrich

Shortly after their son, Newt Gingrich, became Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1995, Mr. and Mrs. Gingrich agreed to appear on CBS's *Eye to Eye* with Connie Chung.

During the interview, Chung asked Mrs. Gingrich what her son had told her about President Clinton. Mrs. Gingrich said,

“Nothing. And I can't tell you what he said about Hillary.” Chung leaned forward and softly replied, “You can't? Why don't you just whisper it to me – just between you and me.” The response from Mrs. Gingrich: “She's a b----.”

After the interview, Chung explained to viewers that “Mrs. Gingrich was sitting before three cameras, with lights and a microphone on. It was clear that what she said would be broadcast.”

Jesse Ventura

Outspoken Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura created a furor when the following quote attributed to him appeared in a 1999 interview in *Playboy* magazine: “Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people who need strength in numbers. It tells people to go out and stick their noses in other people's business.”

Afterward, in a CNBC interview with

Tim Russert, Ventura confirmed that he uttered the quote, but explained that he had spent many hours over several days with the *Playboy* interviewer, and that his comment about religion was not made during the actual interview.

George W. Bush and Dick Cheney

Texas Governor George W. Bush was caught on Labor Day 2000 making an off-color remark about a *New York Times* reporter to his running mate, Dick Cheney.

Standing on a stage at the start of a rally in Naperville, Illinois, Bush was heard saying to Cheney, “There's Adam Clymer of *The New York Times*, a major-league a--h---,” to which Cheney replied, “Yeah, big time.”

The remark was not heard by most of the audience of 2,000 but was picked up by a reporter's tape recorder.

Q & A - Continued from page 1

exception could be a technical presentation where immediate clarification is needed.

- Sometimes the toughest part of Q&A is getting people to ask questions. “Planting” questions is one option, but there’s a better approach. Ask if anyone has any questions, then wait 15-20 seconds while looking and smiling confidently at several audience members. (Don’t pack up your notes or laptop computer during this time; these gestures may signal that you’re eager to leave or that you don’t really want questions.)

If there are no questions, pose one yourself by saying, “One question I’m frequently asked is . . .” (Choose a question relating to one of your key messages.) Then answer your own question. Next, ask if there are any other questions. Again, wait 15-20 seconds. If there’s no response, don’t appear uncomfortable. Thank the audience or make some other closing remark.

- With larger audiences (more than 30 people), you may need to repeat the question so everyone knows what question you’re answering. You don’t have to repeat the question verbatim (never do so with a negative question); simply rephrase it, being sure to keep the essential elements. Also, in your answer, don’t repeat negative words from the question.

- Prior to every presidential news conference, the president’s staff identifies most of the questions that will be asked. You can do likewise with the help of your colleagues. Ask, and practice answering, the questions you anticipate. Also, make a list of the questions you hope no one asks. Then answer them.

- For each question, listen . . . think . . . then respond – in that order.

Sometimes the toughest part of Q & A is getting people to ask questions. “Planting” questions is one option, but there’s a better approach.

If necessary, take 5-10 seconds before responding. The silence will seem like an eternity to you, but to the audience you will appear thoughtful.

- Don’t bluff. Many people feel pressured to respond immediately to every question. If you don’t know the answer, say so, and perhaps

indicate that you will find out. Ask the questioner to give you a phone number or business card after the presentation.

- One reason some people fear Q&A is that they feel control shifts from them to the audience. Not necessarily. Audience questions can actually be a springboard to your agenda if you use the technique of bridging. Think of the equation, $Q=A+I$, in which **Q** represents a question from the audience, **A** represents your answer, and **+I** represents the bridge to your point or agenda. For example:

Q: Has your plant ever had a chemical release?

A: Yes, three years ago, we released 450 pounds of methyl chloride because of equipment failure during a power outage . . .

+I: However, after that incident, we installed additional pressure safety valves and revised our shutdown procedures in order to prevent future releases.

- When answering a question, look at the person who asked it. However, if your response requires some time, be sure to make eye contact with others in the audience as well in order to keep their attention.

- Don’t engage in a prolonged dialog with one member of the audience. If a questioner presses you for a more thorough answer, provide some additional information, then move on. If the questioner persists, tell him or her that you’ll be happy to discuss the

specific point afterwards.

- The time to develop a strategy for handling a hostile audience is not during the Q&A. Have a plan clearly in mind before you arrive. Some suggestions:

Keep your composure – no matter what!


It’s okay to let people “vent,” but don’t allow a prolonged emotional monologue. As the speaker, exercise leadership; the audience expects you to.

If you’re interrupted, politely ask the individual to hold his or her question or statement, and allow you to finish your remarks.

If someone is disruptive, address that individual; don’t direct your response to the entire audience. Appeal to his sense of fair play. Politely, but authoritatively, tell him that the interruption is preventing you from sharing information.

If the situation becomes extremely tense, call for a short break, then appeal for cooperation directly to those who are disruptive.

Ask, and practice answering, the questions you anticipate. Also, make a list of the questions you hope no one asks. Then answer them.

Q&A is an important element of your presentation. It’s two-way communication – the best kind of communication. It provides your audience with an opportunity to participate, and you with an opportunity to obtain feedback. 

Advisor is a quarterly newsletter of The Ammerman Experience. The mission of our firm is to help clients succeed in the communications arena. The mission of this publication is to provide thoughtful, useful, state-of-the-art information to help you do that. Your comments and content suggestions are welcome. Contact Ken Haseley at 1-800-866-2026 or by E-mail at kenhaseley@compuserve.com. This issue and previous issues of *Advisor* can be found on our Web site: www.AmmermanExperience.com.



Case Study: Melissa, Anna (Kournakova) and Other Cyber Challenges

F-Secure Corporation (headquartered in Finland with North American headquarters in San Jose, California) is in the business of protecting the corporate data that people use. A leading provider of centrally managed data security, the company offers a range of anti-virus, file encryption, distributed firewall and virtual private network solutions for workstations, servers, gateways and mobile devices.

This past February, one of the company's partners in Sweden was able to track and discover the writer of the Anna Kournakova e-mail virus and hand over his name to the FBI. (In this virus, when an e-mail attachment – presumably containing a picture of the international tennis star – was clicked, the virus sent itself via e-mail to all addresses found in the computer's address book. The rapidly spreading virus was capable of overloading and crashing e-mail servers.)

In recent years, F-Secure has alerted computer users to the dangers posed by

“I learned a different way of thinking about [media] interviews. Now, my mindset is, ‘What questions do you have for my answers?’”

computer viruses and worms such as Kournakova, Melissa and LoveLetter, and has provided recommendations on how to avoid these troubling, if not fatal, problems. This expertise has made the

company a popular source of information about data security for journalists who cover information technology and related issues. When a reporter wants information about the latest computer virus, chances are he or she will contact F-Secure. To gain insight into how the company achieved this desirable position as a leading industry spokesperson, *Advisor* spoke with Steve Gottwals, F-Secure's director of product marketing.

Q. Some companies consider media inquiries to be a nuisance. Clearly, that's not the perspective of your firm. Why?

A. We've made ourselves available to the press because there's a lot of valuable information we can pass on to people through the media. We can alert computer users to the dangers posed by viruses and offer tips on how to prevent contagion. Also, there are many smaller-magnitude viruses that generate media attention. In those cases, we'll tell the press, “Hey, this one's not that big of a deal.”

Q. So, talking to the media provides a public service, but what's in it for F-Secure?

A. It's a great PR mechanism. I can spend a lot of money running ads trying to get people to notice us. But in this case, a reporter calls, then writes about us. And people are eager to read about this vulnerability or that breach of security. In doing so, they're reading about us, and there's a ton of credibility that goes with that. I've been in marketing for a long time, and I know that this is a powerful way to deliver a message – for free! It takes a little bit of my time, and we get great PR out of it.

Q. How did F-Secure go about establishing itself with the media as the company to call?

A. One of the first things we did was enlist the aid of Neale-May [a strategic marketing and communications firm headquartered in Palo Alto, California, 650-328-5555, www.nealemay.com]. They put together an outreach program. The media were told of our leadership role in the area of data security – that we have our own anti-virus labs and that we're usually the first to come up with a lot of valuable information. As a result, reporters were interested in talking to us. Now, we're someone they can come to when they have questions.

Q. What kinds of questions?

A. We get questions about a plethora of things. Questions about viruses, certainly. But also questions that have nothing to do with a virus outbreak. Someone from *Business 2.0* called me yesterday wanting to talk about a product developed by Microsoft. They just wanted my take on it. Those kinds of things.

Q. Who at the company does these interviews?

A. There are a couple of us who do them – because only a few of us have been media trained. But we all feel the same: there's tremendous advertising value in talking with the media.

Q. What did you get out of the media training?

A. I did media interviews before I had The Ammerman Experience training and after it. The training helped me very much. Before the training, I didn't really know what dealing with the media was all about – what the ground rules were.

CASE STUDY – Continued from page 4

Initially, I was acting as the expert. I was there just to give a very good, detailed explanation of what was happening. I was being like an educator. What I learned from the media training was two key things: One, there are a bunch of traps reporters can spring on you. Not that we encountered a lot of them before, but at least now I was aware of those traps so I could avoid them. The other thing I learned was a different way of thinking about interviews. Now, my mindset is, “What questions do you have for my answers?” No matter what they ask me, I can answer and constantly bring the discussion back to the benefits of using F-Secure software and how we solved a particular problem. For me, that was a huge mindset change – almost a paradigm shift in my brain – that had to

occur. It’s made talking to the press different for me – and so much better.

Q. You were F-Secure’s primary spokesman during various computer virus outbreaks. Tell us what the experience was like.

A. When one of these things happens, it’s usually non-stop that day. The story unfolds right before your eyes. You get a new piece of information, and then you get a new round of press people calling you. Sometimes it’s the same person you talked to earlier – three times that day. They’re just calling back to see if there’s any new information and what they can add as they hit new deadlines during the day. So, things like Anna Kournakova, the LoveLetter, Melissa – those are very busy days in our life, but good days.

Q. You deal with both print and broadcast media. How do they differ?

A. Typically, the TV or broadcast guys don’t get involved unless it’s a big story. The print people are always there, even when the issue is small or off the beaten track. The issue may not be all that important today, but maybe it’s interesting, or something has happened a few times in the past. And print reporters try to draw a picture of the future. For example, “What’s happening in the wireless world? Which way do you think we’re headed?”

For more information about F-Secure and its approach to media relations, contact Steve Gottwals directly at steve.gottwals@F-Secure.com, 408-350-2167, or visit the company’s Web site at www.F-Secure.com. 

The Content Expert as Media Spokesperson

It used to be that when a company received a call from a reporter in search of information, the firm’s media relations representative (typically the public information officer or someone in public relations) would speak. This approach to handling media inquiries was standard operating procedure in most large organizations, and the policy was usually understood (though rarely welcomed) by the media. Although PR people still talk to the media, today they are rarely the exclusive voice of their organizations.

Why this change? For one thing, like many other employees, communications professionals have not been immune to corporate downsizing in recent years. As a result, in some cases, there are fewer of these individuals or none at all left in the company to field reporters’ inquiries. So the responsibility to speak for the company shifts to others in the firm.

A more likely explanation for this change is the fundamental shift in thinking about what constitutes effective

delivery of information. For example, when a reporter wants more than just a brief statement, answers to a few questions, or a general overview of a topic, someone other than a PR person may be needed. PR professionals must be good generalists. They need to know a little bit about a lot. But reporters may need detailed information that only a specialist can provide. That explains why reporters will always prefer to talk to the “content expert.” Put yourself in the reporter’s shoes and try to imagine the difficulty of having a detailed exchange with someone who has limited knowledge of a subject that’s the focus of a news story or feature article.

Another factor is that forward-thinking organizations have come to realize that sometimes it is inappropriate

(indeed counterproductive) to have someone in PR be the sole representative of the company to the public. In the 1989 Exxon Valdez accident, Exxon misjudged the

importance of having its chairman and CEO Lawrence Rawl speak immediately to the media. Rawl waited a full week before he granted an interview; in the interim, the public had concluded that the company was arrogant and insensitive.

Clearly, one of the most significant changes in the practice of PR – and more specifically in the practice of media relations – over the last two decades has been the more prominent role content experts play in a company’s media relations efforts.

And that’s a good thing, in the words of Martha Stewart. But this trend is not without some drawbacks. For one thing, some people simply won’t talk to the media. Perhaps they see no benefit in doing so. Or maybe they don’t have time,

PR professionals today are rarely the exclusive voice of their organizations.

In Brief

150 Words Per Minute

Communications consultant James E. Lukaszewski predicts that verbal presentation and persuasive skills will outpace writing as the most important success attribute in communication.

According to Lukaszewski, “No matter how much technology we use, no matter how efficiently we move information to audiences, the public still tends to learn at verbal speed – 150 words per minute. The verbally effective communicators and managers are the managers who will succeed in the future, because they’ll be able to get people to listen and act on what they hear. The successful manager in 2010 will be a ‘charismatic manager,’ able to share big concepts verbally, face-to-face, on television, in simulations, even through infomercials. The communicator who can stage simulations, role-play, and develop dramatic teaching scenarios and teach managers to be charismatic storytellers will have lots of job security.”

Survival Skills for Meetings

Professionals now spend nearly three hours per day in business meetings, according to research conducted by MCI WorldCom Conferencing, and more than a third of those polled say meetings are unproductive.

Many employees are so fed up they’re simply not attending. More than 90 percent of workers have missed all or part of a meeting, the survey found. And 73 percent of attendees have done other work when they’re supposed to be paying attention.

Other meeting survival strategies include:

- Using technology. People use their cell phones to page themselves, then sneak out. Hand-held organizers have replaced doodling. And instead of passing notes, employees use laptop computers to send e-mail.

- Daydreaming. Nine out of ten employees have daydreamed during a meeting.

- Taking catnaps. Forty-one percent of men have dozed, compared with 31 percent of women.

- Faking. Six percent of executives take notes to make it look as if they’re listening, based on a survey by A.T. Cross (the writing instruments company). Forty-one percent of all meeting attendees admit to doodling.

- Reading. Nineteen percent read something to stay awake during business presentations, according to the consulting firm, Strategic Communications.

Experts say the problem is that many meetings are too long, too unfocused and irrelevant to day-to-day tasks. “Our attention span is not much better than a school child’s,” says Michael Begeman, a meetings expert and manager with 3M Meeting Network. “After a half hour, our minds wander.”

Hero in the Balcony


At one point in his 1982 State of the Union address, President Reagan pointed to a guest in the balcony. The guest, sitting near Nancy Reagan, was Lenny Skutnik, who several days earlier put his life at risk when he dove into the freezing Potomac River to save a survivor from a commercial jet that had crashed. For a few moments, those in the audience and those watching on television were transfixed as Reagan briefly acknowledged Skutnik’s heroic deed. Reagan was the first (but not the last) president to use this powerful communication technique (author David Gergen calls it the hero in the balcony) when speaking to the nation. More recently, President George W. Bush used the technique when he delivered his first address to a joint session of Congress. To illustrate the value of his proposed tax cut plan, he had waiting in the wings a young Hispanic couple and

their daughter. Bush introduced them, and explained that if his tax cut legislation were enacted, the family would receive \$1600 – and would use the money to pay down their credit card debt. He concluded by saying, “The American public has been overcharged, and I’m here on their behalf asking for a refund.” That powerful image and sound bite received significant media coverage. When you talk to the media, one way to increase the likelihood that a reporter will use what you say is not only by saying something substantive, but also by making what you say come alive through stories, examples, illustrations, anecdotes, compelling data or memorable lines. Whenever possible, move beyond the conceptual and abstract to the concrete.

An Ounce of Prevention

Studies show that 80 percent of potential disasters are people-generated and can be prevented. According to the Institute of Crisis Management, 68 percent of crises are created by management; only 19 percent by employees. With few exceptions, people-caused problems leave a trail of early-warning signals well in advance of the actual crisis. Organizations prepared for a crisis recover 2-3 times faster with significantly less financial and human cost than unprepared ones.

If a crisis were to happen to your organization, would you be ready? Ask yourself the following:

1. Identify at least ten potential problems that could affect your company.
2. What would be the repercussions of each?
3. Can you name the people on your crisis management team?
4. Would you know what to do if you were ambushed by a hostile reporter?
5. Do you have a working relationship with the media? 

SPOKESPERSON - Continued from page 5


fear being misquoted or are afraid they'll say the wrong thing. Whatever the reason, they and the organization they represent may have lost a valuable opportunity.

When they do agree to serve as media spokespersons, many content experts admit to feeling like fish out of water. It often happens that the most confident and knowledgeable expert seems to undergo a personality change when talking to a reporter – especially on camera. Information is delivered haltingly and without enthusiasm. Being out of your comfort zone can do that.

Also, some spokespeople wrongly assume that reporters and audiences have a greater knowledge level about the topic being discussed than is actually the case. Jargon, acronyms and unclear explanations make their way into the conversation. And the problem is not just with lawyers, scientists, and others with technical or

Sometimes the very qualities that make people successful in their profession make them ineffective with the media.

other specialized expertise. Sometimes, the very qualities that make people successful in a particular profession make them ineffective with the media. Law enforcement officials often communicate without emotion. Salespeople who are taught active listening (which entails repeating what was said to them) may end up repeating something negative a reporter says. Lawyers, who know the value of keeping things “close to the vest,” can appear evasive or uncooperative outside the courtroom.

What are some things content experts can do to increase the likelihood of success with the media? For one thing, consider attending a media-training workshop that gives you on-camera practice in a small-group setting. Media training can help you gain the confidence and competence needed for a successful encounter with the media. (For some questions to ask when evaluating and selecting a media-training firm, see our Web site, www.AmmermanExperience.com.) Also, if your organization has a professional communicator, make use of this valuable resource. These individuals can provide valuable guidance – everything from background information on the reporter and the publication or news program to possible talking points and help in identifying the questions you're likely to get, along with suggested answers. For additional suggestions, see “Advice from the Pros,” below. 

Advice from the Pros

What advice do professional communicators have for those who plan to meet the press? We asked a few of them. Here's what they said:

Dan Considine
Team Leader, Communications
Williams Gas Pipeline – SouthCentral
Owensboro, KY

“Always prepare for the interview, rather than speaking ‘off the cuff’ with a journalist. Preparation starts with working directly with a PR professional in your organization. He or she can brief the respondent on the reporter's background or style as well as help prepare a script of probable questions and answers.

“I usually help the content expert prepare both a possible Q&A and a list of talking points to cover during the

interview. Before preparing the content expert, I call the reporter and ask him or her to describe or discuss the content to be covered during the interview. Of course, this doesn't guarantee that the reporter will stick to the subject. I try to ensure that the reporter doesn't see me as an obstacle, but rather as a facilitator of an effective, timely interview with the content expert.

“When the interview occurs, be sure to politely, but firmly, take control. Taking control is much easier when you have done the kind of preparation I just described. Taking control means sticking to your talking points and the subject you are prepared to talk about. If the subject strays to an area you are not comfortable talking about, it is time to firmly take control and, in some cases, politely exit the interview.”

Marilyn Pippin
Vice President
Hopkins & Associates, Inc.
Dallas, TX

“First, find out as much as you can about the reporter. How long has he or she been with the publication/TV station? What specific beat or assignment area does he or she cover? What types of stories has he or she done in the past? If you have an ongoing working relationship with a beat reporter who covers your company, this is easy; if not, do the homework to avoid surprises.

“Second, find out as much as you can about what the reporter wants to discuss with you, then prepare a Q&A covering every possible aspect of the subject that could come up.

“Third, role-play the Q&A with

PROS - Continued from page 7

someone, rehearsing your replies to the hard and easy questions. If the reporter is from a TV station, videotape this session and review it. A credible subject matter expert is the best spokesperson in almost all cases, but you must prepare.

"Finally, at the conclusion of the interview, be sure to give the reporter a written fact sheet with correctly spelled names and titles as well as other relevant information."

Bob Wright
Executive Director of News and Information
Southern Methodist University
Dallas, TX

"If it's a positive story – let's say about something you have expertise in – listen very carefully to the question being asked, and think about it before you answer. Try not to be longwinded, convoluted or too academic. Think about, 'How can I say this so that this person will understand it and be able to write it in such a way that others will understand it?' Remember, what you say is going to be interpreted by the reporter and then printed or broadcast. So you really have to make sure the reporter understands what you said.

"If it's a negative story, the most important thing is to be honest and open."

David Bachert
Manager, Media Relations
AIM Distributors, Inc.
(AIM [Mutual] Funds)
Houston, TX

"I always encourage our employees to take a moment and think before making any comment to the media. While it may be impossible to consider every conceivable ramification before making a comment, especially if you are afforded little time to prepare before the interview, it's crucial to remember that your response can affect you, your company and relationships with other companies. That's a lot to think about, but it's literally what can be at stake every time you talk to the media.

"I'd also say it's important to answer the question honestly, being as thorough and succinct as possible. An answer that rambles on typically will only confuse the reporter and may subject you to being misquoted or misrepresented in the story. If they need further clarification of your response, good reporters will ask for it."

**CALENDAR**

Effective Media Communications. A one-day workshop that helps you acquire the confidence and competence needed for a successful encounter with the news media.

August 21
September 18

October 23
November 6
December 4

Effective Media Communications (Refresher). A one-day workshop that will help you keep your media relations skills sharp. September 20.

Effective Media Communications for Marketing Professionals: A one-day workshop designed to prepare you to respond to, or seek out, media opportunities that will aid in your marketing or sales efforts. October 24.

Effective Presentations: A one-day workshop that will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses as a presenter – helping you build on your strengths, while diminishing or eliminating your weaknesses. September 19.

For detailed information, or to enroll, contact
The Ammerman Experience at:
1-800-866-2026

www.ammermanexperience.com



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