



## **What makes a good spokesperson?**

- Someone who is an authority on the industry and its trends.
- Someone who has credibility within their profession, among their peers and clients, and within their market area.
- Someone who is disciplined when they speak, thinking through their answers to ensure they are thoughtful and insightful to ensure the NCRA name and the court reporting and captioning profession are represented in the greatest positive light possible.

## **How to talk with member of the media**

**Create and focus on key messages.** You should have both general key messages about your business and its products/services that you use for every interview and specific key messages that you develop for each media interaction. Your general messages should focus on the messages that you want the media – and, ultimately, your target audience, to know about you.

- By developing and focusing on two to three key messages that you'd like to communicate, you can be sure to include these messages in each of the interviews you do and each of the pitches you make. Very often, at the end of the interview, the reporter will say something like: "Do you have anything else to add?" or "Are there any additional points you would like to make?" That's your opportunity to say: "Yes! – and a chance to make sure that your key points have been conveyed.

**Be a "broken record."** While you can never anticipate with 100 percent accuracy what questions a reporter is going to ask you, you do know with 100 percent certainty what **your** key messages are. You should refer to those key messages again and again throughout the interview. Don't be afraid to be repetitive. Keep in mind that interviews are made up of "sound bites" and you can never know which comments the reporter will decide to use. If you make the same key points again and again, albeit in slightly different ways, you can be more confident that **your** messages will reach the audience.

**Maintain "control."** Don't be intimidated by the media. They need you and your cooperation as much as you need their unbiased and professional handling of whatever issue it is that you're being interviewed about. So, while you should be aware of media deadlines and attempt to honor them whenever possible, never feel pressured to respond to a media inquiry. Always take the time to make sure that you've gathered the background information and facts that you need and that you've developed your key messages.



**Take advantage of live interviews.** Most spokespeople dread the live interview, never realizing that the live interview is their best opportunity to ensure that the points they want to make are made – and received by the audience. What you say is received **verbatim** by the television or radio audience and that provides you with total control. Take advantage of that control by maintaining focus on your key messages. If you study seasoned spokespeople, you'll see that they can respond to just about any reporter's question by "looping back" to one of their own messages with such statements as: "I don't have any information about **that**, but what I **can** tell you is (insert key message)," or "We haven't found that to be true, **but** (key message). Learn to love the live interview. It's every spokesperson's best media opportunity.

**7. Focus on the real audience (the readers, listeners or viewers – not the reporter!).** Make the reporter's job "easy." Provide background information and additional materials, especially if your message is complex and you're considered about the reporter "getting it right." The added benefit of providing background information, though, is that reporters are busy people and if you've provided good information, that's well prepared and not too "self-promotional," it's likely to be used.

For additional assistance with media inquiries, please contact NCRA's communications team at [pr@ncra.org](mailto:pr@ncra.org).