



Creating an Effective Message

When you are asked to do a media interview, provide a presentation to a local community group, or write a news release, follow these guidelines to effectively communicate your message:

- **Know Your Audience:**
 - Understand who you're addressing (public, media, colleagues).
 - Tailor your message to their level of understanding.
- **Clarity and Brevity:**
 - Keep your message concise and straightforward.
 - Focus on key points without unnecessary jargon.
- **The 5 Ws and H:**
 - Answer the essential questions:
 - **Who:** Introduce yourself and your agency.
 - **What:** Explain the situation, event, or topic.
 - **When:** Mention relevant dates or timelines.
 - **Where:** Specify the location or context.
 - **Why:** Explain the purpose or significance.
 - **How:** Describe actions or procedures.
- **Have three points:**
 - Three are easier to remember.
 - 1-2 could be facts and the other is educational or empathetic.
- **Stick to the Message:**
 - Stay on topic; avoid tangents.
 - Reiterate key points consistently.
- **Time Management:**
 - **Media Interviews:**
 - **Soundbite:** Aim for 20-30 seconds per response.
 - **Background Information:** Provide additional context if needed.
 - **Speeches:**
 - **Opening:** Grab attention in the first few sentences.
 - **Body:** Organize content logically.
 - **Closing:** End with a memorable takeaway.
- **Prepare and Practice:**
 - Anticipate questions and rehearse responses.
 - Be confident and authentic.
 - Videotape yourself and watch it back to see how you do.

Effective communication builds trust and informs the public. Whether it's a brief interview, a speech, or a news release, prioritize clarity, relevance, and professionalism.