



# Mastering the Basics: Media Interviews

The Water Hub

# Meet the team



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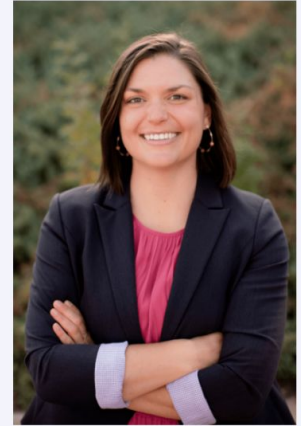
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# Agenda

- Elements of compelling messages
- Interview Basics
  - Before
  - During
    - Responding to tricky questions
  - After
  - Discussion





“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to success is preparation.” -Arthur Ashe

# VPSA Message Development

- **V**alue
- **P**roblem
- **S**olution
- **A**ction



The **Opportunity** Agenda

# Value

- This is really about your vision.
- Why do you do this work?
- Why do we want our target audience to act or change their minds?



# Problem



# Problem

- Framing the challenges, how does this threaten our shared values?
- Keep it focused: 6-10 million families drink water from lead pipes in the United States
- The power of storytelling: use an anecdote of a family or a community whose lives were impacted from drinking water from lead pipes



# Solution



# Solution

- Who's your target piñata— a decisionmaker who can make change happen?
- Focusing on only doom and gloom isn't going to move the needle
- Position your message to offer specifics on a better path forward

# Solution



**Sri Vedachalam** @DrVedachalam · Nov 22

Unknown

With the bipartisan infra bill passing, 15 states can fully replace lead pipes. If BBB Act passes, another 9 states can fully fund lead pipe replacement. Also, 14 more states can replace HALF their lead pipes. There is serious \$\$ in these bills to eliminate/reduce lead in water

# Action



# Soundbites



# Why soundbites?

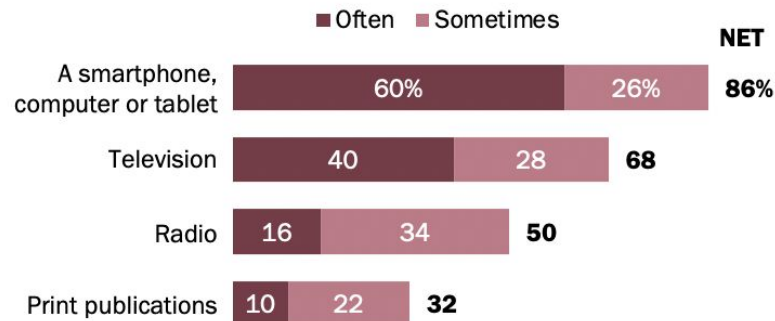
It's a short attention span world!

Most people get their news from social media (via their phones) or TV

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## Large majority of Americans get news on digital devices

*% of U.S. adults who get news \_\_\_\_ from ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 31-Sept. 7, 2020.


**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

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# Traits of effective soundbites

- Visual
- Packs an emotional punch
- Taps into shared values
- Can stand alone





We've known for centuries that lead is a poison.  
Yet, across our country, lead is like **the straw**  
**through which we're getting drinking water.**

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha from Flint, MI  
Bloomberg Law



# The Interview



# Before

- Preparation and practice
  - Write. It. Down.
    - 3 Key Points, Sound Bite, and Takeaway
  - Anticipate questions
  - Practice, practice, practice



# Before

- Logistics
  - Know the interviewer/outlet/audience
- Handle incoming from reporters
  - Gather information
  - Make a plan
  - You don't have to respond to every request



# Before

- You're always on the record



# During

- Breathe!
- Take a beat before speaking
- Speak in full sentences



# During

- Don't fear silence
- Flustered? Stop. Breathe. Start again.
- Its OK to say, "I don't know"





# Staying on Message

# Repeat, repeat, repeat





# Evasive maneuvers



**Acknowledge -> Pivot/Bridge -> Deliver your message**

# Acknowledge the question

- “I hear that concern...”
- “That’s one point of view...”
- “That’s an industry talking point...”



# Bridge - Pivot

- “I want to focus on...”
- “What I do know is....”
- “The important thing to know is...”
- “What we’re actually hearing most from the community is...”
- “The facts show...”



# Answering “tough” questions



Example: “Won’t shutting down this facility kill jobs?”

- **Acknowledge** - That’s an industry talking point.
- **Pivot** - We’re hearing from the community that they are most concerned about pollution making them sick.
- **Message** - Polluters should be held accountable for dumping toxic chemicals in our waters. We can create economic opportunity for our neighbors by investing in public green space and clean energy instead.

# Different formats

- TV Interviews
  - We have a whole training for that!
- Radio
  - Have a clear connection
- Podcasts
  - Often more in-depth, conversational



# After

- Say thanks!
- Follow up. Make sure you've got contact info. Send any materials you promised or follow up on questions you weren't able to answer.
- Ask for the story link, share, tag the reporter and their outlet on social media.





Q&A