



Hanzehogeschool Groningen

Hanzehogeschool Groningen. *Unlimited*

How to deliver good media training

The changing role of the university spokespersons

Arwin Nimis

Workshop Euprio Conference Vilnius 26 august 2006

Introduction

- Arwin Nimis
- Hanze University Groningen, Netherlands
- Director Staff Office Marketing and Communication (30 fte)/ Spokesman of the Executive Board
- Crisis communication experience: fireworks exploding in a neighborhood Enschede (2000); University building on fire (2002)

Fire



Presentation

- 1) Changing role of communication: delivering media training to the university community is essential!
- 2) Guidelines for spokespersons
- 3) If time: practice/ exercise

Changing Role of Communication; former days (>15 years) vs. nowadays

- Informing vs. debating ('in my/our opinion..')
- One- sided vs. two-sided
- Objectivity (presenting 'facts') vs. credibility, emotion
- Compulsory, coercive, imperative vs. trustworthy, soundness, reliability (Thatcher vs. Blair; Chirac/Berlusconi vs. Merkel)
- To get power/force (function) vs. to earn authority/prestige
- Ratio vs. 'what's in it for me'
- Hierarchical vs. 'flat' (*The world is flat, a brief history of the globalized world in the 21st century*, Thomas L. Friedman, 2005)

The 3 major Changes in the Role of Communication:

- A) Answers of the spokes person to the media has to have credible Proof of burden (*reliability/soundness*) → *key figures*
- B) Majority of the people is more and more focused on 'what is in it for me' (*surplus value/ meaning of the information*) → *key message*
- C) Giving media training tot key persons within the university community ('*It's a flat world..*') → *key persons*

Guidelines for spokespersons

- Look, this happened.. → because in our university .. (*this is a chance for image/branding!!*).. → so what we are going to do..
- Cause.. → result/effect.. → solution ..
- Noticing → explanation (debate..) → measures

Being ready for it, get people ready for it

- Think like a journalist, he is (just) a link to you're audience
- Detect upcoming issues, trends and developments
- Be alert to anything that could harm the interests of your university *or* can contribute to your mission statement
- Anticipate questions (who, what, where, why, when, which, how, how much/many)

What if a journalist calls

- Teach: 'Buy' time and contact the department of communication
- Never say : 'no comment'
- Inquire after issue, reason for calling, context, story angle, who else will be called, questions, length of interview
- Collect information
- Prepare yourself for the interview
- Beware 'off the record' does not exist
- Call back within an hour

Preparation for interview

- Decide who will act as spokesperson
- Search for the (media trained) **key persons** of the university community who will support you on this subject!
- Develop **key messages** (what do you want to achieve through the interview)
- Draw up facts, anecdotes and examples to back up the key messages (factsheet; **key figures**)
- Formulate possible answers (Q&A's) and try them on the key persons
- Have CV('s) of involved persons ready

Why key messages?

- Messages allow you to tell your story
 - Messages keep you focused and disciplined especially with hypothetical questions
 - Message repetition (in various wordings) creates awareness
-
- hypothetical questions; question is often not broadcasted, the answer is....
 - No personal opinions
 - Do not argue with a journalist

Usefull phrases (1)

- But the point/the real question is
- I look at this differently
- Sorry, I have to disagree with you. Fact is that
- We have to remember that
- What is important is
- On the other hand you may not forget



Usefull phrases (2)

- There are three things that you have to keep in mind....
- All I can say is....
- In my opinion
- But as I have said before, the main point here is
- That is the third time you're asking me this and I stick to my answer



Mediatraining and researchers; getting media attention for research

- Media and science does conflict because you want to give media a key message (KISS) and researchers want to explain the whole
- Example; bubbles, chocolate and sand...
- What do you tell to your grandma what you're doing...
- Translating and trying to get it linked with trends with a shock of recognition to large number of people (children, movies, crime)



Exercise

- Try to tell your colleagues (journalists) in one minute what your answer is to the disaster happened to your university
- Use: Look, this happened.. → because in our university .. (*this is a chance for image/ branding!!*).. → so what we are going to do..



Thank you
for your participation in
this workshop!





Hanzehogeschool Groningen

Hanzehogeschool Groningen. *Unlimited*