

Sound Bites – How to Master the Media

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Specialty Vehicle Institute of America

Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association

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Today's Agenda

- Who We Are
- Media Relations Department
- Current Media Environment
- Selling Your Story
- Creating Sound Bites and Role Play
- Real World Examples
- Follow-Up and Damage Control



Who We Are...

- Motorcycle Industry Council
- Specialty Vehicle Institute America
- Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Organization



Media Relations Department

- Discover Today's Motorcycling
- Discover Today's All-Terrain Vehicles



Communications Department

- Motorcycle Industry Council
 - Communications
- Specialty Vehicle Institute America
 - Communications
- Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Organization
 - Communications



Current Media Environment

Media is Everywhere and Everyone

- Newspaper
- Magazine
- TV
- Cable
- Radio
- Internet Media
- Blog
- Pod Casts



Current Media Environment

- Blurring of the lines – News vs. Opinion
- Blurring of the media
- Best to always start at worst case



Why Do Interviews?

- To ignore is dangerous
- Don't let others shape your story
- Accuracy
- Public Perception



What Reporters Look For

- Magnitude
- Timeliness
- Uniqueness
- Locality
- Prestige
- Conflict
- Relevance
- Notoriety



What To Do When the Media Calls

- Decide: Handle or Hand-off?
 - NOHVCC, MIC, SVIA, ROVO, Other
- Respond in a timely manner
- Never lie to a reporter
- Check the media outlet's website to confirm the reporter's beat
 - Investigative News Reporter
 - Consumer Interest Reporter



What To Do When the Media Calls

- Let the reporter do the talking
- Ask questions
- Determine the reporter's objective
- Make sure you and the reporter agree on the next steps



What NOT To Do When the Media Calls

- Don't "freelance" any responses
- Don't go "off the record"
- Don't let the reporter lead the interview
- Don't lie, evade, or be vague



Before the Interview...

P-R-E-P-A-R-E

- Prepare
- Research
- Establish Dialogue
- Practice
- Answers
- Role Play
- Explore



Before the Interview...

P-R-E-P-A-R-E

Dress to Impress:

- Wear muted or neutral colors: Tan, Gray or Toned-down blues
- Avoid wearing stripes or solid white
- Avoid flashy jewelry, rings, watches, etc.
- If you are riding, wear all of your protective gear

You have superior knowledge – You know more about OHV riding than the reporter.



Know Your Message Points

- Say what you mean – stay on point
- Pertinent information only
- Create three key message points you wish to use in the interview.
- Should seem like a conversation, but remember it's not



Know Your Message Points

- Take initiative in the interview – avoid the ping-pong approach. They have an agenda and so do you!
- Never let your guard down – The worst is yet to come.
- Everything you say can and will be used against you in the media.



Bridging Back to the Future

- “So, obviously these things are dangerous vehicles.”
- “What’s the worst crash you’ve ever seen?”
- “When someone gets hurt, what kind of injuries usually result?”
- “These things and the people who ride them destroy the environment!”



Media Typecasting

- **The Trickster:** Seems friendly in the beginning but then comes in with hardball questions.
- **The Sensational:** Won't listen to facts, hones in on the negative. Could be a blogger.
- **The Rambler:** Doesn't really get around to asking a question, just rambles on about their opinion on the topic.
- **The Rapid Firer:** Questions in rapid succession or possibly four questions in one.



Know Their Arsenal

- Multiple-Part
- Double Negative
- Stall
- The Setup
- Wild Statistics
- Killing You Softly



Written Word vs. Spoken Word

- Press Release
- Written Statement
- Interview
 - On phone
 - On camera
 - In studio
 - On-site
 - Live or recorded



Talk, Talk, Talk

- Off the record
- Not for attribution
- Background
- Deep background
- Just between us
- Read it to me before you use it
- No (means NO!)



Beating the Odds

Defusing Hostile Questions

- Don't patronize
- Don't use technical jargon
- Put reporters at ease
- Use humor, seldom, but as appropriate
- Share anecdotes and personal stories
- Emotion is OK, if you used it right
- Don't nod
- Humility; don't take it personally
- Relax, (try to) enjoy!



Broadcast, Print, or Radio?

Television

- Tight responses – 15 seconds of fame
- Know the environment; create the environment
- The camera is always rolling
- Talk to the interviewer not the camera.



Broadcast, Print, or Radio?

Print

- Don't be fooled – stay on point. But, you can elaborate
- Get the real deadline
- Analyze the reporter's style



Broadcast, Print, or Radio?

Radio

- Your voice is everything – confident, strong
- Turn up your energy level
- Know the format – talk vs. news for sound bites
- Tone and language drive home messages



Establish Relationships

Follow-Up

- Be it good or bad
- Submit an op-ed – 500 words
- Submit a letter to the editor – 250 words
- Check with outlet for guidelines



Developing Sound Bites

The Process:

- The call
- Decide: handle or hand-off?
- Discuss, conceptually, what to say
- Develop message points
- Create sound bites



Developing Sound Bites

The Call:

Two brothers, one six and one nine, are riding an adult-sized ATV down a rural road, turn into the path of an oncoming truck and are killed. The reporter for the local newspaper calls saying she would like to include tips for safe ATV riding in her story.



Developing Sound Bites

Decide, then discuss what to say:

- ATV Safety Institute's Golden Rules
- Parental responsibility
- Active Adult Supervision
- Never Ride on Public Roads



Developing Sound Bites

Develop Message Points:

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 92 percent of ATV related fatalities involved one or more rider behaviors that are strongly warned against by ATV manufacturers, in ATV owner's manuals, and on the product itself.



Developing Sound Bites

Create the Sound Bite:

According to CPSC data, 92 percent of ATV fatalities involve one or more warned against behaviors.



Developing Sound Bites

Develop Message Points:

It is ultimately the decision of the parent as to whether or not a child should ride an ATV. If a parent feels their child is ready, then they should be sure they are on an appropriately sized ATV, never ride double, and are actively supervised at all times. CPSC data show that 89 percent of youth injury incidents occur when operating an adult-sized ATV.



Developing Sound Bites

Create the Sound Bite:

When it comes to youth ATV safety, active parental supervision is key.

ATVs are not toys. Every ATV has a key, and whoever controls the key controls the use.

Never carry a passenger on a single-rider ATV



Developing Sound Bites

Develop Message Points:

ATV's are designed for off-road use only. The ATV safety Institute recommends all riders stay off of public roads, paved or not, as other vehicular traffic will not be expecting to see an ATV in the traffic mix.



Developing Sound Bites

Create the Sound Bite:

ATVs should never be used on public roads. Drivers see what they expect to see, and they won't be expecting to see an ATV in the traffic mix.



Selling Your Story

- Relevance, Timeliness, Local Interest
- What is the focus, hook?
- Check Web for contact information
- One voicemail only
- Short email with hook in first two lines
- No cell phone unless you know them
- TV needs good visuals



Developing Sound Bites

The Process:

- The call
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Developing Sound Bites

The Scenario:

You are contacted by an investigative reporter with the local CBS affiliate on OHV use on local public lands. This is due to an outcry from local environmentalists and home owners who are displeased with OHV riders "blatant disregard for the environment."

- *Write Three sound bites you wish to tell the reporter.*



Developing Sound Bites

The Process:

- The call
- Decide: handle or hand-off?
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- Create sound bites



THANK YOU !



Media Relations Department

- Motorcycle Industry Council and Discover Today's Motorcycling
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- Discover Today's ATV
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