Communications Planning
Materials Development
Media Relations
Media Training
Public Affairs
Corporate Positioning
Reputation Management
Crisis Management
Social Media
Event Planning

Coalition and Grassroots Advocacy
Strategic Communications & Media Relations
Energy Policy & Facility Siting
Federal Government Relations
Media and Presentation Training
Natural Resources Policy
Regulatory/NEPA Compliance
Public Opinion & Issues Research
State & Local Government Relations
Sustainability and Land Use
The Team

Christian Goff
President
Pure Energy

- Close to 15 years as a communications practitioner.
- Led teams at two of the world’s largest public relations firms.
- Oversaw public affairs in Marathon Oil’s western region
- Strong communications planning

Ryan Poulos
Associate
Pure Energy

- Six years as a journalist in Austin and El Paso.
- Oversaw marketing and sales efforts for a large winery and vineyard.
- Wrote and edited newsletter for one of the country’s largest semiconductor manufacturers.
The Team

Darryl James,
AICP – Partner

• Over 18 years of transportation planning and project development experience across the west.
• Highly successful regulatory compliance practice.
• Authored EA’s for portions of the Heartland Expressway and Theodore Roosevelt Expressway
• Public engagement, agency coordination, and governmental relations expertise

John MacDonald - Principal

• Over 16 years as a reporter, correspondent and editor with The Associated Press
• Strong public affairs strategies ranging from messaging and interview techniques to media relations, crisis communication and community relations
• Media training and communications expertise
Media Training

for the

Port-to-Plains Alliance
Today’s Objectives

- Increase your knowledge and understanding of the media
- Teach you effective message delivery techniques
- Provide tips on how to manage media interviews
PR & the Media
PR & the Media
Unrealistic Expectations

- “I want you to get me on the front page of the Houston Chronicle or New York Times”

- “I want you to stop that article being published”

- “You handle public relations, so I’ll just let you talk to all of the reporters.”
The media can’t survive without PR
PR can’t survive without the media

Honest and professional PR is about striking the correct balance.
Understanding the Media
Today’s Media Environment

Competitive environment
- Reporters compete for breaking stories, exposure, recognition
- Deadline pressures and the half-second second news cycle
- Media outlets must make money, attract viewers/readers

Consolidation
- There are fewer outlets, sometimes with more space to fill
- Reporters cover more beats, or single beats for shorter periods of time
- Reporters tend to be younger, less experienced
The Good News

- Spreads truth/facts
- Can be an ally
- Can help shape public opinion
The Bad News

- Can perpetuate inaccurate information that goes uncorrected
- Can destroy
The Journalist

- Questions
- Skeptical
- Tests
- Observes
- Reports
- Motivations are “good stories”, recognition
- Want his story on cover/front page (above the fold)
- Believe he is fair and balanced
- Prefers simple language
  - Write for and speak to ninth graders (newspapers)
  - Avoid acronyms, jargon, clichés and multi-syllable words
What do journalists want?

- Ports-to-Plains Needs to Know:
  - What the media wants/needs
  - When they want/need it
  - In what form they want/need it
  - How they operate
  - Who they are
  - Who their readership is
  - What their constraints are
Maximize Media Relations

- Build relationships
- Provide newsworthy material
- Don’t forget illustrations (e.g. photos)
Know a Good Story

- Is the story new, interesting, entertaining?
  - To the media and the reader
- Is it current?
- Is it relevant locally?
- What is the impact of a story? How much of the audience will it affect?
Ground Rules

- Know deadlines and try to respect them
- Never mislead reporters
- Present as much of the overall pictures as you can
  - Plus your point of view
- Have facts & research to back up your point
- If you don’t know the answer, say so
  - And then find the answer quickly
Key Pointers – Print Media

- Level of editorial integrity varies
  - Usually independent from advertising
  - Editors have sole right to cut/re-edit press materials received
  - Political independence & strength varies
  - Brown paper packages in some countries
  - Government control/ownership/censorship/propaganda medium
  - Media promotes items of national interest/agenda
Key Pointers – Print Media cont’d

- No commitment if the editorial will be printed and when
- News assignments are subject to other events occurring
- Beat reporters are highly influential
  - Editors vary in degree of control and influence
- Exclusivity is preferred as competition is keen
  - Once offered exclusivity, must be honored
Key Pointers – Electronic Media

- News assignments are normally confirmed only on the morning of the events or evening before.
- Exclusivity is important for chat shows (e.g. Good Morning America).
- News reporters are looking for sound bites.
- Chat show producers/hosts want short, direct answers together with entertainment value.
The Interview
The Interview

- An interview is an exercise in controlled communication
  - Your challenge is to define and come across as transparent as possible

- It should:
  - Reflect your company’s views
  - Be persuasive in molding public opinion
  - Present factual information and/or insights
Preparing for an Interview

- To achieve this you need to:
  - Set an agenda (objectives)
- Do your homework
  - Gather all the information (facts and figures etc.)
Preparing for an Interview cont’d

- Set 3-5 key messages you wish to impart
  - This is the key to any successful interview

**Messages Need To Be:**
- Believable
- Understandable
- Retainable
- Succinct and Simple
- Relevant to Audience
- Branded

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Preparing for an Interview cont’d

- Anticipate likely questions
  - Prepare answers
- Rehearse
Conducting an Interview

- It is your interview
  - Not the journalist’s
  - You should control it

Remember:
We are here to deliver messages not just answer questions.
Conducting an Interview

- Be Honest
  - Erroneous information can damage credibility
  - “I don’t know” is OK, but…

- Be Believable
  - Be conversational, use layman’s terms

- Be Concise
  - Crystallize thoughts in a few hard-hitting sentences
    - Use key words
Conducting an Interview cont’d

- Evaluate the Question
  - Answer in manner which serves both the journalist and you
- Turn Potential Negatives into Positive
  - Avoid speculative “what if” questions
  - Control the interview
  - Don’t repeat loaded/slanted words
Interview Techniques

Bridging

- Bridge to Your Message
  - Answer question directly, then bridge to positive message point or bring line of questioning back to your advantage

Remember:
Always Get Your Message Across
Bridging Phrases

- I think I can best answer that by discussing…
- I don’t know about that but what I can tell you is…
- You might also want to know that…
- In addition, our research shows…
- Another way to look at that is…
- I want to make sure you understand that…
Interview Techniques cont’d

Flagging

- Tactfully control by assuring your messages are heard
  - Body language, including hand gestures, are useful
  - On the phone? Use flagging phrases

- Tell relevant stories

- Emphasize key points

- Use open-ended questions, wrap-up questions as opportunities to flag
Interview Techniques cont’d
Flagging Phrases

- I want to make sure you understand that…
- There are three things I think are important to this story…
- Let me repeat something I said earlier…
- If there are just one or two ideas I leave you with today, they’re that…
- I think what’s most important to your readers is…
Interview Tips
All Media

- Make sure to give reporter a business card that includes the correct spelling of your name and current title
- Correct inaccurate statements made by the reporter
- Nothing is Off the Record
Newspapers and Magazines

- Rephrase and clarify the initial statement
- Offer to review facts and quotes used by reporter
- Offer background information
- Have typed answers for reporter, if possible
- Offer to clarify or provide further information
Newspapers and Magazines cont’d

- Support Assertions
- Restate major point, make it sound different
- Be conversational, use stories and analogies
- Be prepared to be misquoted
TV & Radio

- The Pre-Interview
- Interview Duration
  - Current affairs/Chat show: Up to 10 minutes
  - News: 8-15 second “sound bite”
- Interview start time
  - Be prepared
- Time is crucial
  - Sound bites
TV & Radio cont’d

- Appearance and Demeanor
- Conservative in dress
- Dress in solid colors, bold colors (TV) so that clothes will not be “washed out” on camera
- Assume you are on air all the time
- Direct attention to the interviewer, not the camera
- Be yourself
- Remain seated
Pre-recorded Interview

- Stop & restate answer if unhappy
- Sum up answers
- Reaction shots
- Check on name and title
- Ask to be kept informed on broadcast time
Telephone Interviews

- Prior to the Interview
  - Do Not do an interview immediately
    - Say you are busy and will call back
- Get reporter’s name & name of newspaper, TV & telephone number
- Ask what the topic & scope of story is
- Determine the reporter’s deadline
- Call him/her back after 10 minutes (minimum)
The Interview - Summary

- Get your information together
- Work out your key messages
- Ring the journalist back
- Be Yourself
- Play it Straight
- Be Honest
- Use simple sentences
- Avoid jargon

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The Interview – Summary cont’d

- Create thinking time
- If you don’t have the answer, find it
- Structure your answers
- Defuse loaded questions
- Neutralize the negative
- Rely on bridging and flagging techniques
- Enjoy the experience!
INTERVIEW
DO’S AND DON’TS
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t get involved in arguments with reporters
  - Do be polite
- Don’t pass on hearsay information of opinion (i.e. your own beliefs or opinions)
  - Do be accurate
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t get too involved in detail
  - Do be clear and concise
- Don’t allow media access to unauthorized places/personnel
  - Do take them and assist them where possible
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t sneer at reporters or photographers or make derogatory remarks about the quality of press reporting
- Don’t try to give information “off the record”. If you do not want material used, do not provide it
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t let a journalist appeal to your ego with the argument: “We won’t quote you, so no one will ever know who told us”
- Do give your name to reporters – it is polite, just as they should identify themselves to you by name and newspaper
Let’s Practice!