

“What I wish I’d said” just doesn’t cut it

DEAR SUNSTAR: I was taken aback when the reporter I spoke to recently seemed more interested in political leanings than my firm. What I wish I’d said just got lost in the shuffle. - CONFUSED

DEAR CONFUSED: Make sure you do some research about the publication and the reporter/anchor prior to your next interview. Knowing the types of stories and articles the reporter typically tends to write will give you insight into what to expect. If it’s TV, it’s a good idea to watch prior interviews to get a feel for the segment.

As PR professionals, it’s our job to let our SunStar clients in on the personalities of the journalists they’ll be meeting with, since most may not be familiar with the reporter or anchor. Don’t overlook this important piece of your preparation.- Kathryn Morrison, CEO

DEAR SUNSTAR: The person who was to be interviewed after me was late, so they kept me on camera an extra 10 minutes, but my talking points had all been covered and I was flustered. - NOW WHAT IN LIMBO

DEAR NOW WHAT: We suggest you always have one or two talking points prepared for when a

**Dear
SunStar
Strategic**



reporter asks “Is there anything else you’d like to add?” This is a golden opportunity, whether it’s to mention something new or bring home your key messages.

I’ve seen some executives seamlessly produce an excellent sound bite in this instance, even tease upcoming products to hook the reporter for a follow-up conversation.

- Ben Gerow, AE

DEAR SUNSTAR: Thirty seconds, two minutes or even 10, I never have enough time to say everything I need to in an interview. How can I get more time? - OUT OF TIME IN OHIO

DEAR OOT: I advise our clients to carefully prepare for each interview opportunity by focusing on no more than three to five key messages. By being laser-focused, you can ensure these messages are shared - regardless of the reporter’s questions.

By honing in on what’s most important, inserting a compelling

message – but not too many – you are more likely to be quoted and to have a key message as part of that quote. Two wins!

That said, this is a difficult concept for many, so it’s a big piece of SunStar’s Messaging Workshop. We spend a couple hours working on “bridging” from the reporter’s question to an answer that contains a message you want to impart.

- Melissa Murphy, VP

DEAR SUNSTAR: My interview had to be taped four times - the anchor kept telling me to “keep it tight.” How can I figure out why my answers are not tight enough? - NOT TIGHT ENOUGH

DEAR NOT TIGHT: For broadcast interviews, it’s important to deliver the key points you have in “bullets.” Visualize just a few key messages as a short list on paper and speak about them in exactly that way during the interview.

This ensures that you don’t ramble on with very long sentences. Not only do you lose your audience that way but your messages also get lost. So keep it tight and speak in bullets.

- Hibre Teklemariam, VP

DEAR SUNSTAR: When our spokespeople are on TV, they look like they've just attended a funeral. How can I get them to lighten up? - UPTIGHT ON TV

DEAR UPTIGHT: If possible, be sure to have someone be at the interview location with them, whether yourself or someone from your PR team. Remind the speaker to take a deep breath before going on camera. Then, have them consciously flash a quick smile. Not only will that change the whole atmosphere of the room, it gives the spokesperson some personality.

-Bob Tebeleff, VP

DEAR SUNSTAR: Taking an interview feels like a first date, will the interviewer be friendly or

aloof, patient or frantic, low-key or pumped up. I never know what to expect. - FIRST DATE

DEAR FIRST DATE: Don't let someone's else's demeanor change your personality. Be yourself...and be prepared. You can ask the scheduler, the producer or your PR professional in advance for their take on the interviewer's typical demeanor.

- Kerri Fronczak, AVP

DEAR SUNSTAR: No matter how I try to turn the conversation to my topics, the interviewer always seems to come back to the topics on their own agenda. How can I get them interested in what I want to say?

- NOT ON MY AGENDA

DEAR NOT ON MY AGENDA: You'll notice that a lot of politicians in the 2016 election seem to hardly ever answer a question, rather the answer they give is a seemingly unrelated point they want to make.

At SunStar, we help clients transition a bit more gently. We suggest you briefly answer the question posed, then use a transition statement to move into the point you want to make.

A key to this technique's success is once over the bridge, stay there. If you close your answer by circling back to the original question, which many people naturally do, the next question is likely to again be on that topic.

- Marilyn Dale, VP

ABOUT SUNSTAR STRATEGIC

SunStar Strategic provides strategic public relations and inspired marketing communication programs that help you attract, maintain, and grow your clients. We focus first on developing your unique messages to differentiate your firm in a crowded market. Then we work closely with you to ensure you get the attention and recognition you deserve.

Our robust PR practice spans two decades. Core services include public relations and comprehensive digital and print marketing services from strategy through design and execution.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MEDIA TRAINING WORKSHOP

Interviewing well is more than feeling comfortable talking to people or being in front of a camera. As a spokesperson for your firm, it's crucial for you to get your messages out, not just show that you are a smart individual. SunStar Strategic's Media Training Workshop gives you the tools, techniques and importantly the practice to interview well. Find out more on our website: www.sunstarstrategic.com or call us at 703.299.8390.

