

Media Relations

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What we'll be covering

- What is news?
- Where reporters get their story ideas
- Key Messages
- Transparency/Open Communication/On the Record
- Who speaks for your board?
- Handling media interviews
- How to turn off your audience
- Handling difficult situations
- How can you get your message out

The Cold Interview

- Police locked down one of your high schools due to a report of an armed male walking on school property.
- Approximately 200 students and staff were locked in classrooms for more than an hour while officers cleared the building
- Your school division used an automated calling system to notify parents, which went out about halfway through the incident
- Some students texted parents/friends or tweeted while locked inside
- The situation was resolved – no armed man found.
- Questions have been raised about lockdown procedures and communication

What is news?

- What is happening in your world
- What affects your loved ones, your livelihood, your community
- What is of particular interest to you
- International
- National
- Local – why your work is so important

Different Types of Media

- Print
- TV
- Radio
- Online
- Blogs
- Social Media



LEADER-POST



The StarPhoenix

Where do they get their story ideas?

- News releases
- Sources/connections in the community
- Tips from the public
- Upset community members or groups
- Social media
- Other media outlets or national/international stories
- Police/fire/ambulance scanners

How do you communicate successfully?

Key Messages

- What you want the public to take away from the conversation
- Clear, succinct statements
- Sound bites
- Keeps you focused

Teacher charged with luring teen

Saskatoon Public Schools issued a statement Thursday afternoon saying student safety is a priority. The division has worked closely with police, and directed Kennard to have no contact with students or division staff members.

COURT

Teacher no longer on job after being charged with sexually exploiting student

all such allegations as "extremely serious." The complainant is now an adult, but the fact the teacher was still working in the system made the case urgent, he said.

"The safety of our students is our first priority," Valentine said. "She was still in a school, and we didn't have the facts."

City preparing first test of Notify NOW System

System has already been used by Saskatoon Public Schools

Saskatoon Public Schools are partnered with the City in the Notify NOW system and have already had the opportunity to use it twice.

"Our number one priority is student safety, certainly. Followed very closely by that is communicating with parents and the greater school community," explained Superintendent of Education at Saskatoon Public Schools, Bruce Bradshaw.

CRIME

May 24, 2013 10:14 am

Lockdown protocols for Saskatoon schools

Saskatoon public schools has protocols in place for situations like Thursday.

"When a school lockdown occurs our first priority is student and staff safety and as soon as possible we do communicate with our parents," said Patricia Prowse, education superintendent with Saskatoon Public Schools.

Transparency

- Taxpayers have an expectation to know where their money is going
- Open communication – citizens, media
- Clear decision-making
- On/Off The Record

Handling Media Interviews



Before the Interview

- Be prepared
- Who is your audience for this interview?
- Hot button items
- What can/can't you say
- Review your key messages
- Rehearse

Listen closely

- Break down the question
 - Is this a leading question?
 - Is the reporter making an assumption?
 - Are they trying to confirm a fact through how they present the question?
 - Are they asking you about something you can't answer?

Bridging

- Bridging helps you stay “on message”.
- Briefly answer the question then bridge back to your key message:
 - The fact is...
 - What I recommend people do is...
 - Let me reiterate...
 - That’s why it is important to...
 - The real issue here is...

Key message: “Our school division encourages conflict resolution by training students to talk to each other”

- **Q: Do you tolerate bullying on school buses?**
- **A: I am aware of an unfortunate incident on a bus and school division officials have moved quickly in response to it.**
- **A: *The fact is* we have a number of programs that encourage conflict resolution between students**
- **A: *What I recommend is that* parents let their principals know if they are concerned. Principals are trained to resolve conflict between students and to help them find resolution themselves**
- **A: *Let me reiterate* that we want students to talk to each other and work out their differences...**
- **A: *The real issue here* is we have to work harder as a community to encourage students to resolve conflict or avoid it when possible on the playground, on school buses and wherever students gather.**

Answer only the question

- Don't fall in love with the sound of your own voice
- After listening closely to the question, answer only what you are being asked
- It is human nature to want to fill the awkward silence – resist the urge.

Short and sweet

- “Brevity is the soul of wit”
- Don’t use 10 words when five will suffice
- Be clear and be brief
- How long does it take to say this quote?

“I didn’t like (the role) at times, but at the same time we were winning and, in the end, that’s all that matters,” Simon said. “In order for a team to have success, everybody has to have their role established and in order to have success, you’ve got to accept that role. You may not like it, but you’ve got to accept it — so I accepted it.

“It took a while to accept it, but I was also ready and prepared for when my opportunity was called.”

Understandable language

- No jargon
- No acronyms
- Speak at a level your audience will understand
- Avoid negative sentences and double negatives
- If using examples, make them meaningful to the audience

Know the audience

- Who is affected by this news?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- Internal – staff, school communities
- External – the public

Tell the truth

- Lies always come out
- Don't make assumptions or guesses
- Don't make promises you can't keep

Show respect

- For who is raising the concern
- For the reporter
- For the audience

The perfect sound bite

- Do not be afraid to pause for a moment to get your thoughts in order
- If you stumble, take a breath, wait a beat and start again

The last question...

**Do you have anything
else to add?**

Turning off the audience

- Lying
- Arrogance
- Lack of emotion
- Phrasing

Handling difficult situations

- Crisis

Woman, 21, and girl, 17, face several charges in fatal crash

Two 17-year-olds dead after car hit by stolen truck Monday night in Saskatoon

CBC News Posted: May 07, 2014 8:13 AM CT | Last Updated: May 07, 2014 9:20 AM CT

Students from Bethlehem Catholic High School

Grief counsellors are at a Saskatoon high school helping students and staff cope with the aftermath.

■ Teens killed in car crash went to Bethlehem Catholic High School

And the city's police chief is calling on drivers to smarten up when it comes to leaving keys in vehicles.

CBC News has learned that the 17-year-old boy and 17-year-old girl killed in the accident, and the 16-year-old girl injured, all went to Bethlehem High School.

School board officials would not confirm the precise school. But Director of Education Greg Chatlain did say that it was one of the schools in the catholic system, and that the tragic events response team was at the school.



Scene of the crash. (CBC)

"Students will be affected differently and some will be wanting to be with other students and talk together. Others would rather do that more in private one-on-one kind of a setting," he said in an interview.

"We know that grieving and coming to grips with these types of situations is a process that takes some time and that we need to be there for everyone in various ways through the long haul."

Newtown local news story

Handling difficult situations

- Difficult board meetings/decisions
- When you don't/can't say the answer

Interview #2

- Police locked down one of your high schools due to a report of an armed male walking on school property.
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- Your school division used an automated calling system to notify parents
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Getting the message out

- What other ways can you communicate with your audience?

Do you have anything else to add?