

Subject: Putting Some Mojo in Your Media Interviews

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Bianchi PeRspectives

An e-newsletter offering PR-related info to use, challenge and amuse.

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WORD NERD

Twit*stop *n.* -- A bathroom detour from a meeting or conversation in order to check e-mail, Twitter or the latest and greatest via an app.

Latest Bianchi Biz Blog Post

"Salt, Sand & Sales: Marketing Lessons from Jimmy Buffett"

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Staff News

This month, Bianchi PR celebrates its **18th anniversary**. We'd like to thank you - our partners, clients and friends - for your continued support and we look forward to celebrating future milestones with you.

Jennifer L. Greenfelder has been promoted to senior account executive. She joined Bianchi PR in 2005 and currently serves

Confucius, Baseball and Media Success



Confucius once said: "Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."

This holds true in our national summer pastime, baseball, in life and in media interviews.

We've all witnessed the media interview gone wrong. An unprepared executive tries to wing it with less-than stellar, sometimes disastrous, results. All for the want of a few extra minutes of preparation. What an opportunity wasted!

The next time you or a colleague are ready to step up to the plate for a media interview, we hope you'll take baseball slugger Roger Maris' advice: "You hit home runs not by chance but by preparation."

To knock it out of the ballpark, take time to prepare. It'll make all the difference.

Jim Bianchi, APR

as co-chair of the PRSA Detroit Automotive Council.



Congratulations Jennifer!

On July 7, **Andrea Yedlin**, assistant account executive, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Josephine Olivia. Congratulations to Andrea and her husband Andy!

Client Kudos

Last month, [Johnson Controls Automotive Experience](#) employees joined Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley volunteers to begin renovations on a home in Ypsilanti. Johnson Controls, in partnership with the Toyota Technical Center, also provided all of the funds needed to complete the project.

President

→ Putting Some Mojo in Your Media Interviews

Getting your executives in the spotlight to discuss your company and share their knowledge, talents and skills with your target audience is a main goal of most PR and communication pros. But are you and your executives **getting the most of your media interviews**? Are you adequately prepared to harness the power of the news media to get your message out?

The key is preparation. From all angles. No ifs, ands or buts about it. There are things you can do prior, during and after an interview to help you and your execs get the most out of any media interview. Don't assume anyone can wing it. Even the CEO. Just because someone is intimately involved in the company and its mission every day doesn't mean they should chance their way through a media interview unprepared.

Here are some tips to help ace media interviews and really make an impact:

-- **Why are we doing this again?** -- As every interview is unique, research and planning should be done for each one. When you pitch, or receive a request from, a reporter, take a minute to really think about what specific goals you would meet from engaging with that specific media outlet. Who is the audience? What would they find most interesting or important? Why do we want to be in this magazine or on this news show?

-- **Background check** -- You want to learn everything you can about the reporter in advance. What is their writing style? Their background? Do they typically cover companies like yours? Is there a tone or pattern to their story angles? This information can help your executive feel more prepared going into the interview and allow you to further tailor specific messages based on what you learn. Remember - it's OK to inquire about the angle of a reporter's story, it's not advisable to ask to see their questions in advance.

-- **Plan for the good and the bad** -- Preparing and rehearsing your main key messages and talking points is a given for any interview. But you also want to try to anticipate what the most difficult or troublesome questions will be. What is the worst thing a reporter could ask you? What would you be the most unsure of? Is there financial information you can't reveal? Partnerships you're not ready to discuss? Proprietary information that shouldn't be shared? Make a list of these questions and prepare answers for them too.

-- **Details, details, details** -- Don't forget to consider the little things when planning a media interview. Can you conduct the interview in a quiet place where phones and email alerts won't

Charity Golf Outing

Cooper-Standard Automotive is

lending its support to the Ilitch Charities One Community Gala and Celebrity Golf Classic being held Aug. 29 and 30. A portion of the proceeds from the events will benefit the [S.A.Y. Detroit](#) Family Health Clinic - the nation's first free, 24-hour medical clinic for homeless children and their mothers. [Click here](#) to learn how you can help.

PRSA-Detroit Ethics



The **Bianchi PR Team** became one of the area's first agencies to successfully complete **PRSA-Detroit's** inaugural ethics honor code program, targeted at ensuring an ongoing commitment to the highest standard of

be beeping? Have you allotted enough time so you won't be rushed? Even better, have you considered giving the reporter only 20-30 minutes? That way, they'll want to get to the main points right away. If the interview is being taped for television, remember to avoid focusing on the camera and refrain from wearing bold patterns, stripes or bright colors. No matter what the format of the interview is, remember to speak in simple sentences, rather than reciting long-winded passages from your boilerplate.

-- **Cross the bridge** -- During any media interview, the bridge is your best friend. Learn it, master it, use it. If a reporter asks you a negative or off-base question, use a bridge to turn it around and deliver one of your main messages. First, reference the reporter's initial question and then use a bridge phrase to deliver your message. Examples of bridge phrases include "more importantly," "and that's why," "for that reason" and so forth. For example:

- *Q: How is your company reacting to the low safety ratings given to your product?*
- *A: Safety ratings are very important to us. And that's why we have undertaken a new safety quality initiative where every single product is inspected to meet the most stringent set of standards in the industry.*

-- **It's not "off the record." Ever.** -- If you're not OK with something being in print or broadcast - don't say it. Even if you're told it'll be off the record, act like it won't be. Better safe than sorry reigns supreme here. Also, if you don't know the answer to a question, it's OK to say so. Don't try and waffle your way through it. Tell the reporter that you'll get back to them and make sure you do, in a timely manner.

-- **Take it away** -- Almost always, a reporter will end an interview by asking if the interviewee has anything else to add. Don't give up this opportunity! Use this chance to recap your key messages or share a few VIP points that you want the reporter to leave thinking about. It can help if such points are delivered succinctly by using "flags" - statements that set up important points - such as "The most important thing to remember is" or "Here's the bottom line."

-- **Not over yet** -- Post-interview, be sure to get back to the reporter on anything they had requested - additional information, images, etc. Remember, the more thorough you are, the more information the end reader will have. Once the interview runs, be sure to keep track of results and feedback. Continuous improvement isn't just for your company's products and services, it should be applied to your messaging and communication as well.

Hopefully these tips can help you or your executives make the

ethics, honor and integrity.

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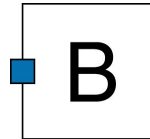
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most out of media interviews. For more examples of bridging and flagging during interviews, [click here](http://www.bianchipr.com/flagging-and-bridging.html) (<http://www.bianchipr.com/flagging-and-bridging.html>).

Want more info? Contact Bianchi PR at 248-269-1122 or visit www.bianchipr.com.



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