



# MEDIA TRAINING TOOLKIT



ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE FOODSERVICE

Use this guide when preparing for your next media opportunity.  
And remember – AHF is here to help! Our Public Relations team can  
guide you on interview preparation, message development and more.  
Just call 888.528.9552 and ask for the AHF Public Relations Team.

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## A. PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Interview prep doesn't just take place immediately prior to an interview. Many people make the mistake of thinking that they are too busy to practice or prepare for an interview or hone their sound bite skills, and those same people will complain that their statement was taken out of context when they see it in print or hear it in a broadcast. Media interviews are unlike every other conversation in life because each idea that you utter will be judged on its own, not within the context of what you said before or after it.

A little bit of preparation in advance can mean the difference between a 15 minute interview, wherein you accomplish your goal of getting the desired message out to the audience and having a meandering one hour conversation that takes time away from your day because it took you that long to say anything that the reporter can use.

### Tips for Practice in Between Interviews

- Brainstorm messages that you want to get out to the public – think of dream headlines that you would like to see in the media
- Write down sample questions and answers
- Review your answers and pick out the messages that you conveyed
- Edit your answers into 15-30 second sound bites
- Practice interviewing yourself during down time with an eye toward realizing those dream headlines

# A1. GETTING AN INTERVIEW REQUEST

Remember that you do not have to accept all interview requests. Occasionally, reporters may want to talk about topics that are outside of your expertise. In those cases, you should attempt to connect the reporter with someone who can better address the query.

## Initial Conversation with the Reporter

- **What's the topic of the story/purpose of the interview?**

*Tip: Listen for terms that the reporter uses when describing the story. You can frequently get a sense of the story angle and the type of background information that the reporter has collected. Remember that the reporter may have a different understanding of industry terms than you do.*

- **When is your deadline?**

*Tip: Even if the deadline is 10 minutes from the time that the reporter calls you, five minutes of preparation will give you quiet time to rid yourself of distractions and choose your message points and relevant sound bites.*

- **Let the reporter know that now is not a convenient time and that you will call back prior to the deadline.**

*Tip: Arrange to speak at a specific time. It is acceptable to set a time limit with the reporter if you feel that you must do so.*

*Tip: This is also a good time to showcase yourself as a helpful source by passing along background information that you feel may be helpful to the reporter (other articles/op-ed pieces, a press kit). If you wish to recommend other sources for the reporter to consider, do so after the interview.*

If you are unable to speak with the reporter prior to her deadline, feel free to suggest other sources. This will increase the likelihood that the reporter reaches out to you in the future or will be willing to work with you on getting your message out to the public.

## Preparing for the Interview

It's tempting to spend the preparation time thinking of all of the possible questions that you might be asked, but a good rule of thumb is to spend 10% of your time thinking about questions and 90% thinking about your answers.

- Spend 10 minutes familiarizing yourself with the reporter, media outlet, and relevant past news coverage
- Spend five minutes or less brainstorming four to five possible questions
- Spend 10-15 minutes brainstorming possible messages that relate to the interview topic
- Review your messages and choose **THREE** key message points
- Spend 5-10 minutes crafting sound bites for each message point

## B. THE INTERVIEW

Remember, unless the interview is live, the questions don't matter, only the answers. You will never have control of the questions that you're asked, but you have 100% control of what comes out of your mouth.

### Types of Questions You *Can* Answer Include:

- Questions that tie directly to your three key messages
- Questions that are not directly tied to your key messages

*Tip: You should always answer the question that the reporter asks, but keep your goal in mind. Do not be tempted to pontificate about a topic that is outside your desired message even if you're very passionate about the topic. Briefly answer the reporter's question (10 to 20 seconds) and bridge back to your key message.*

*Tip: Helpful bridging phrases include:*

- Let me put it in perspective...
  - What's important to remember is...
  - And don't forget...
  - What I really want to talk about is...
  - Let's take a closer look at...
  - That's not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is...
  - Let me just add...
  - What that means is...
  - Another thing to remember is...
  - That reminds me...
- Multi-part questions

*Tip: Only answer the question(s) that you want to answer (i.e. questions that tie to your key message points). If the reporter wants to re-ask one of the other questions, she will and you can address it at that time.*

## Questions You **Cannot** Answer Include:

- Questions that you cannot answer because the answer is not knowable

*Tip: Provide a three- part answer:*

1. I'm sorry, I cannot answer that...
2. Because (Why?)
3. But what I can tell you is...(bridge back to your key message points)

- Questions that you do not have enough information to answer

*Tip: Tell the reporter that you do not know, but that you will look into the issue and will get back to him prior to his deadline. If you do this, it is very unlikely that the reporter will quote you as saying that you didn't know the answer, but it is essential that you get back to the reporter prior to the deadline.*

*Tip: Offer another source who is better equipped to answer the question. If you do this, phrase it as "that's not my area of expertise, but I know someone who would be better able to address that question. I will send over her contact information."*

## The Message

Remember to focus on your goal for the interview, which is to get your three-point message out to the audience. Do not be tempted spend the interview educating the reporter. The reporter's job is to do research; your job is to get your message out. You can underscore your worth as a source by passing along background information that may be helpful to the reporter, but don't waste valuable interview time explaining something that doesn't advance your cause.

## Stick to Your Three Message Points

*Won't the reporter notice if I'm saying the same thing over and over? Maybe, but that's not a bad thing. Sticking to your agenda is the way to ensure that you're effectively getting your message out to the audience. Remember, unlike other conversations, complexity is your enemy and repetition is your friend during a media interview.*

### What is a good media message?

- It's brief! A good media message should take 15 to 30 seconds to convey and should contain your three key points. If your message takes longer than that, you are likely getting into points 4, 7, and 15.
- It addresses problems and offers compelling solutions.
- It highlights positive results.
- It focuses on the positive and avoids naming adversaries.
- It's simple and easy to understand.
- It's audience appropriate, letting them know what's in it for them.
- What should I watch out for?
- Don't confuse an interview with a speech; you don't want to say everything you could possibly say about a subject, just what you must say to get your desired three-point message out to the public.

## The Sound Bite

Reporters need quotes to make a story more interesting, understandable and memorable. Sound bites are much more specific than your general messages and there are certain rhetorical devices/tools that will increase the likelihood that your quote will be used in a story.

- Bold action words
- Emotions
- Rhetorical questions
- Analogies
- Clichés
- Absolutes
- Real-Life examples

## C. INTERVIEW FORMATS

### Phone Interviews

- Remove distractions  
*Tip: Turn off your computer monitor and silence your cell phone*
- Have cue cards/a piece of paper with your main points in front of you at all times

### Television Interviews

- Avoid patterns
- If you're seated, either sit only on the front half of the seat or lean forward approximately 15 degrees
- If you're standing, lean forward slightly and feel free to move around as you would when speaking with a friend
- Cameras flatten your performance, so always smile slightly, even when you speak
- Use hand gestures and move your head slightly to look more confident and conversational
- When filming segments that will be edited, occasionally insert the reporter's name when making key points
- It's ok to nod in agreement or shake your head when you disagree
- For in-studio appearances, shake hands with the anchor at the conclusion of the interview

### Radio Interviews

- Keep your posture and facial expression the same as you would in a television interview; you will sound more engaged
- Vary your tone depending on what you're saying
- Remember your key messages – do not be lulled into thinking that a radio interview is similar to a normal conversation just because you are booked for an hour. That hour will turn out to be approximately 20 minutes between advertisements, news/weather/traffic updates, the host speaking, and call-in questions. Not to mention the fact that people who are tuning in will only hear

## INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

You've been contacted by the media... what's next? Follow this handy checklist to make sure you and your team are as prepared as possible. Make sure you've checked every box!

- Contact your facility's internal PR or marketing contacts to let them know about the interview – when, where and with what media outlet
- Confirm the purpose of the interview – is it background/informational or on the record
- Confirm the scope of the story with the reporter
- Confirm the ground rules with the reporter – request upfront that they read back or email any direct quotes that they plan to use
- Confirm the deadline with the reporter
- Control the interview: pick a convenient time to call or email them back, even if it's just a few minutes
- If you have time, call your AHF Public Relations Team – we can advise you and help guide the interview. Andrea Parr can be reached at [aparr@hqtrs.com](mailto:aparr@hqtrs.com) or 502-574-9934.
- Develop a maximum of 3 key messages
  - Be brief, use everyday language, think sound bite & avoid jargon
  - Focus on positive results avoid naming adversaries or making negative comments.
  - Craft your message to the audience: What would they want to know about the topic?

- Review your key messages sheet and keep it handy. Prepare responses based off these messages and your understanding of what the reporter may ask. If you have time, try to craft sound bites around the most relevant messages and practice delivering them.
  
- During the interview, plan to weave in as many elements as you can:
  - Your facility
  - Your status as a self-operated foodservice professional
  - Your membership in Association for Healthcare FoodService (always spell AHF out)
  
- If you are sharing any numbers, ask the reporter to read those back to you at the end of the interview to confirm accuracy
  
- If the reporter has agreed to allow you to review direct quotes, ask for those at the end of the interview
  
- Send the reporter your bio
  
- Thank the reporter and let your facility and AHF know how it went!
  
- After the publication or airing, follow up with the reporter,
  - Thank them again
  - Share good feedback you've received from others who saw, heard or read it
  - Suggest a story idea for a future interview

## SAMPLE MEDIA BIOS

### Mary Angela Miller, MS RD LD FADA



Mary Angela spent 15 years as director of Nutrition Services at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and now serves as administrator for a wide variety of healthcare departments. OSUWMC serves over 900 patients and 12,000 staff. She also is the owner of KeepSafe Food, LLC, which offers products for personal food safety.

Mary received her BS degree from Youngstown State University and Masters from Case Western Reserve. Her professional experience spans 30 years and includes leadership positions on AHF's Board of Directors and the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Management in Food & Nutrition Practice Group. She's also served as president of HFM, the Central Ohio ASHFSA chapter and the State and District Dietetic Associations.

Mary has been honored to be recognized as the recipient of the IFMA Silver Plate, the HFM Angela Gagliano award and the ASHFSA James Rose Publication award, FER Management Excellence Award and the YSU Human Ecology Alumni of the Year recognition.

Look for Mary at the Food and Beverage Innovations Awards Ceremony at this year's National Restaurant Show. She's serving as the health care judge, evaluating which hot new products best meet the marketability, lifestyle, and nutritional criteria to earn this prestigious designation. She lives in a Columbus neighborhood whose chief attraction is that it is within walking distance of her favorite park. She spends as much of her free time as possible outdoors, and when indoors, she spends her time with beads and books.

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## Josh Dodds, Environmental Services Supervisor



Josh Dodds has spent the last 3 years as the Supervisor over Environmental Services and Grounds at IU Health Bloomington Hospital, a 355 bed hospital that serves as the South Central Region hub for IU Health Systems in Indiana. Josh over sees hiring for the department as well as housekeeping and grounds at the IU Health Hospice House. Before working in Healthcare Josh was a member of the media and spent 6 years as a morning radio host in Bloomington Indiana.

Josh received his BS degree from Indiana University where he studied Communication and Business Management at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. Josh is a 2 year member of AHF and is a member of the Marketing and Communications committee for this year's Conference. Josh is also a member of the International Executive Housekeeping Association.

Josh was recently honored in graduating from the Leadership Bloomington Monroe County Leader Training as well as the Disney Institute's Customer Service Training. Josh is a high energy speaker and a motivator and is able to discuss a range of topics and trends both in healthcare and the media.

He lives in Bloomington, Indiana with his fiancée and four year old son. When he isn't working he is most likely coaching T-Ball or playing softball at the local baseball fields. The family is also avid campers and boaters on most weekends!

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## Ralph H. Goldbeck, AIA



Ralph H. Goldbeck, A.I.A. is a partner of Kitchens To Go, LLC and a partner of Carlin Manufacturing, LLC. Kitchens To Go is a lessor and Carlin Manufacturing is a designer and manufacturer of custom vehicles and modular buildings for a variety of foodservice clients throughout the world. Over the years KTG/Carlin has built a number of emergency response and disaster relief units for such clients as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and North Carolina Men's Baptist as well as relocatable kitchen units for commercial clients such as Aramark, Burger King and Pizza Hut. KTG/Carlin has an established reputation for quality and dependability, with units operating in 28 countries worldwide. Recent projects have included clients in Israel, Korea, Venezuela and Iraq.

Mr. Goldbeck became a licensed Architect in 1984 and is a member if the American Institute of Architects. He is currently licensed as a general contractor, commercial coach and vehicle dealer.

Mr. Goldbeck had served for two terms as the Board Chair for the American Red Cross Central Valley, is a council member of the Fresno Citizen Corps, is the Chair of the Business, Industry & Government Committee and is CERT trained. He is married and has two sons.

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# DEVELOPING YOUR MEDIA BIO ...

your media bio does all of this

- Describes you in 300 words or less
  - May be used for your introduction
  - Is written in everyday language
  - Highlights your essential personal and Professional attributes
- 

[Name], [Credentials]

[Headshot]

## **Professional Attributes**

Why were you selected to be interviewed on this topic? What do you do that makes you an informed, reliable source?

## **Expertise**

What qualifying experience and/or education makes you an expert?

## **Prestige**

List at least one award, recognition, accomplishment or contribution of which you are most proud or that is relevant to the interview topic.

## **Credibility**

Make it real. Include a specific example of an activity, attribute or anecdote which exemplifies an area of expertise or special interest and describes you in a way that adds credibility.

## **Personal Facts**

Tell us something that will engage the audience to connect with you as a real person.

## **Contact Information**

Include your email, website and LinkedIn profile.

## KEY TALKING POINTS FOR PROMOTING SELF-OPERATION

### CULINARY BENEFITS OF SELF OPERATION

*Creative control* - greater freedom to customize selections to according to local culture rather than a corporate menu; menu selections can be tailored specifically to the organization's budget and philosophy

### FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF SELF OPERATION

*Better cost efficiency* - confirmed by AHF Benchmarking EXPRESS®

*Direct reinvestment* - There is no administrative management fee and retail revenue is directly returned to the facility's bottom line; rebates and purchase discounts revert back to the organization rather than a third party

*Additional income* - If lease rental branded concepts are utilized, revenues from these go directly to the healthcare organization

*Transparency* - Internal controls show where the money goes; the flow of all funds is overseen by the organization

### PATIENT SATISFACTION BENEFITS OF SELF OPERATION

*Consistency* - Patient satisfaction programs are in sync with those of the organization overall

*Integrated internal approach* - There is a clearer focus on how culinary satisfaction influences overall patient satisfaction



## NUTRITIONAL VALUE BENEFITS OF SELF OPERATION

*Clinical integration* – Better opportunity to integrate clinical nutrition services and align patient foodservice with retail foodservice units—a best practice within healthcare foodservice (linking the clinical foodservice component with retail foodservice is critical to helping each influence the other; also helps integrate brain trust and develops a body of knowledge that integrates the entire foodservice philosophy)

## HUMAN RESOURCES BENEFITS OF SELF OPERATION

*Career path development* – Creates opportunities for career growth within the facility; at the leadership level, there are more opportunities for multi-department management and cross-training; at the staff level, there is greater retention and more equity (i.e., retention of tenured staff)

*Staff dedication* – Direct employment by a self-operated organization fosters deeper staff dedication

*Greater professional development* – Both for staff in-house, as well as greater encouragement for culinarians to be trained out-of-house, which allows for more creative exposure

## BENEFITS TAILORED TO MISSION OF FACILITY

*Flexibility* – direct reporting relationships within the organization enable the foodservice department to quickly adjust to organizational change as needed

*Synergy* – Greater department loyalty and focus through direct reporting, as well as better internal synergy and shared focus on the overall quality of care

*Customization* – Greater dedication to the hospital culture and policies; allows departmental policies that are tailored specifically to the facility

## BENEFITS OF ELIMINATING ADMINISTRATOR “HASSLE FACTOR”

*Broader insight* – Greater understanding of foodservice and its impact on overall health and wellness



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