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## Developing and Delivering Media Messages

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## Developing Media Messages

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

- Albert Einstein

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## Morning Agenda: Developing Messages

- Identify media and audience
- Develop your message
  - Message triangle
  - Message enhancements
  - Identify difficult questions
- Writing exercise
- Partner exercise

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## Resources

- College/School and University Communications
  - Help placing stories
  - Research on reporter, news outlet
  - Assistance anticipating, answering questions
  - Coaching
  - Interview and performance results
  - Advice and help with damage control
- On-campus resources
  - ISDN studio, radio
  - Television studio
  - Google+, Skype studio

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## Reporters are...

- Not evil
- Busy
- Generalist, not an expert (exceptions)
- Looking for someone to answer questions
- Filling newscast/column with compelling, interesting stories



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## Questions to Ask a Reporter

- Name?
- Outlet/Organization?
- What is the story about?
- Do you have any background in the subject?
- Who else will you interview?
- What is the format of the interview?
- How long is it?
- What is your deadline?
- ***Can I call you right back?***

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## Who is your audience?

The audience is not students in a classroom,  
members of a panel, attendees at a conference

- What language, information and ideas connect with your audience?
- What's their educational attainment?
- Are they older? Younger?
- Where do they live?
- What do they read? Watch?


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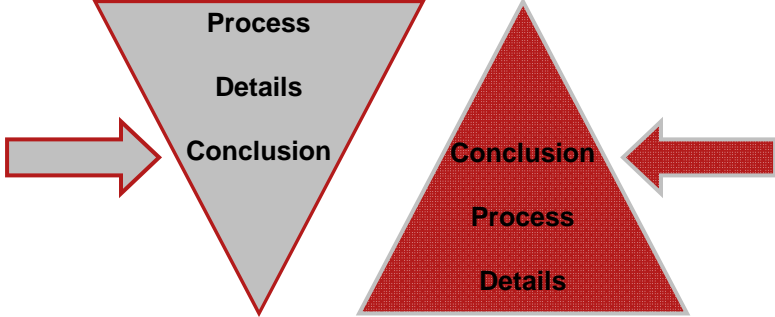
## Developing Your Message



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## Flip the Triangle

Scientific/Scholarly Communication



Communicating with the Media

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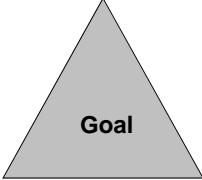
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## Message Triangle: A Helpful Tool

**Audience:** Who is in the audience?  
**Goal:** What you want the audience to think or do as a result of the interview?  
**Message:** What do you want to say?  
**Difficult Question(s):**

**Talking Point:**

- Detail:
- Detail
- Example/Enhancer:



**Talking Point:**

- Detail:
- Detail:
- Example/Enhancer:





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## Who is your audience?

- What language, information, and ideas connect with your audience?
- What's their educational attainment?
- Are they older? Younger?
- Where do they live?
- What do they read? Watch?
- The audience is not: students in a classroom, members of a panel, attendees of a poster session

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## Develop a Message Triangle

- Establish your goal
  - What do you want your audience to think, feel, or do?
- Identify your message
  - What do you want your audience to know?
- Develop three talking points
  - Three strongest arguments for your message
  - Problem-Solution-Benefit


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## Enhance Your Talking Points

- Details that make your talking points relevant and understandable
  - Examples: Be specific; avoid jargon
  - Analogies: Simplify complex ideas
  - Three Cs: Colorful words, clichés, contemporary references
  - Personal Experience/Story of the Quest

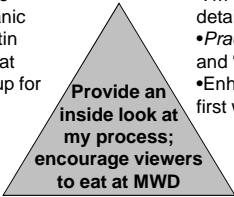
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**Audience:** Local television audience; major market  
**Goal:** Provide an inside look at my process; encourage viewers to eat at my restaurant  
**Message:** The food I cook is the result of great products, mindful preparation, and personal passion.  
**Difficult Question:** What is your favorite food to cook?

**Talking Point: Products**

- *Proteins* from local farms, free-range
- *Produce* from JBO, a 150-acre organic farm located in the city limits of Austin
- Enhancement: Our staff volunteers at JBO; we participate in a CSA start-up for goat products



Provide an  
inside look at  
my process;  
encourage viewers  
to eat at MWD


**Talking Point: Preparation**

- I'm "*particular*," and pay attention to detail
- *Practice* and test menus with staff and "regulars"
- Enhancement: Food is experienced first with our eyes

**Talking Point: Passion**

- I love to cook for others: my family, my friends, my clients
- Eating food with others can create connections and life-long memories
- Enhancement: Favorite saying on food delivery truck: Cook food; serve love

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**Audience:** Attendees at American Association for the Advancement of Science panel  
**Message:** We study seminal proteins of fruit flies, which have dramatic influences on females, but only if female agrees to dance.  
**Goal:** Brief science journalists about new findings in a long-term research project and its implications  
**Difficult questions:** Are you going to release genetically modified insects? Can the same techniques be applied to humans?

**Reproduction is more than a sperm fertilizing an egg:**

- Sperm are accompanied by a cocktail of seminal proteins
- Female is different creature after mating
- Why *Drosophila*? Because sex is complicated.
- Interactions are "up close and personal," unlike broadcast pheromones

**Mating is both a battle and a ballet:**


- Battle between males: seminal proteins are a "weapon" that makes females reluctant to mate with other males
- Battle between male and female: What is good for the gander may not be good for the goose
- Ballet between male and female: male protein is processed only in female

**Brief science journalists at AAAS about our work and its implications**

**More than an interesting question about chemical communication in *Drosophila*:**

- Interactions in *Drosophila* are analogous to Mosquito, including those that carry diseases like West Nile virus and Dengue fever
- Millions of humans are affected by WNV and Dengue, and there are no vaccines for either
- One way to address spread of disease is to impede ability of insect vectors to reproduce

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## Writing Exercise: Developing Your Message Triangle

- Establish your goal
- Identify your message
- Develop three talking points
  - Consider problem-solution-benefit structure
- Use message enhancements
- Identify and prepare for difficult questions

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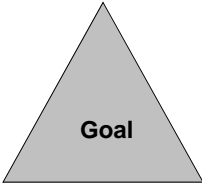
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**Talking Point:**

- Detail:
- Detail:
- Example/Enhancer:

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## Partner Exercise: Interview Practice

- Pair up. Take turns interviewing and being interviewed.
- Provide interviewer with Message Triangle.
- Interviewer asks an open-ended question about scientist's research.
- Interviewee practices delivering a talking point with a detail and an enhancement.
- Try two or three questions before changing places.

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## Delivering Media Messages

Before anything else,  
preparation is the key to success.

Alexander Graham Bell

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## Afternoon Agenda: Interview Practice

- Stay on message
- Prepare for difficult questions
- Bridging techniques
- Interview techniques
- Practice interviews
- Evaluate “best of” interviews
- Wrap-up

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## Stay on Message

- You are in the driver's seat
- Know your talking points
- Practice delivering talking points
- Avoid jargon
- Don't be afraid to repeat your message
- Do not assume that your interviewer is scientifically literate

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## Three Questions Interviewers Always Ask

- The one you don't know the answer to
- The one that requires you to speculate
- The one that invites you to share a controversial opinion

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## How to Handle Provocative Questions

- Be politely assertive
- Calmly correct mistakes
- Never say “No comment”
- Do not argue with a reporter
- Keep calm and talk slowly
- You can be emotional, but not angry
- Model behavior you would like to see
- Don't lose sight of the audience

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## Stay on Message

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## Use Transition Techniques

- Bridging
  - Answer question briefly
  - Follow up with one of your key messages
- Flagging
  - Highlight your most important message
- Hooking
  - Introduce a statement that influences the next question

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## Techniques for On-Air Interviews

- Smile
- Look at reporter (excluding satellite)
- Pay attention to nodding of your head
- Plant yourself, no movement/swivel
- Use natural gestures
- If sitting, lean toward camera
- Voice: expressive, animated




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## Techniques for Interview


- Dress:
  - No white
  - No patterns, including herringbone, stripes
  - Best choices: dark or neutral shades
  - Conservative jewelry
- Say “yes” to make-up
  - Keep it light, natural-looking

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## Techniques for Skype/Google

1. Do you have high-speed internet?
2. Test technology before the interview
3. Look at the camera, not the screen
4. Camera should be at eye level
5. Natural lighting
6. Dress the part
7. Prepare your surroundings
8. Close/turn off distractions







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## Techniques for radio

1. Close/turn off distractions
2. Smile
3. Stand or sit at attention
4. Use your hands



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## Practice Interviews

- Create groups; assign roles
  - Interviewer
  - Interviewee
  - Camera Operator
  - Reviewer/critic
  - Observer/Timekeeper
- Conduct **two**-minute interviews
- Evaluate (see next slide)
- Switch roles until all participants have been interviewed

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## Tips for Evaluation

- Did I get my message across?
- What did I forget to mention?
- How could I have better incorporated my talking points into my answers?
- Did I use transition techniques when replying to difficult questions?
- Was I relaxed, calm, and natural?
- What can I do to be more effective?

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## “Best of” Interviews

- Each group selects its “best” interview
  - It may be the most successful
  - Or, it can be an example of a “lesson learned”
- Each group shares their interview with the class
- Review and provide feedback
- Wrap up and final questions....

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