



Arizona Association of Counties

Media Coaching Handbook

**SCUTARI &
CIESLAK** PUBLIC RELATIONS
PHOENIX • TUCSON • SAN DIEGO

PRESENTED BY SCUTARI & CIESLAK PUBLIC RELATIONS

A LITTLE ABOUT US

Chip Scutari



Chip Scutari is co-founder of Scutari and Cieslak Public Relations and managing partner of the firm's Phoenix office.

Chip brings an authentic knowledge of politics and public policy, using his reporter's instinct and nose for a good story to the worlds of public relations, crisis communications and media coaching. For 15 years – including several years covering the Arizona state Capitol – he worked on the journalistic frontlines covering Arizona's most powerful politicians and influential business leaders.

National news outlets, like Fox News Channel, MSNBC, National Public Radio and The New York Times, frequently call Chip for his take on the news because of his strong connections to all sides of the political spectrum. He's also been a guest blogger for The Arizona Republic's election coverage.

In 2006, Chip joined a downtown Phoenix advertising agency in a hybrid role of public relations and business development, helping recruit an array of new clients to the firm. His journalism experience, combined with a web of connections and understanding of the

intersection between policy, politics and business helps position clients in a wide range of environments.

Chip moderates a variety of business panel discussions and debates for companies and non-profit groups, such as the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. He has a B.A. from Providence College in Business Administration and a Master's degree in journalism from Syracuse University. In 2012, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer appointed Chip to serve on the state's Lottery Commission, touting his marketing and public relations expertise.

Dave Cieslak



Dave Cieslak is co-founder of Scutari and Cieslak Public Relations and managing partner of the firm's California office.

During his award-winning journalism career, Dave was a reporter for The Arizona Republic newspaper, where he covered high-profile beats including crime and education. He made the jump into public relations in 2005 as the head of communications for the City of Scottsdale, Ariz., Fire Department. He then joined a

marketing firm as a senior public relations manager, overseeing national clients including TASER International and the World Wildlife Fund.

In 2008, Dave was honored to serve as a state communications director for Barack Obama's presidential campaign. The position put him on a first-name basis with key political and business leaders across the country. In 2012, Dave was elected to the Ocean Beach Town Council in San Diego and served as its public relations chair. He is a member of the San Diego Regional Chamber of

Commerce's Health Care and Energy & Water committees, and previously sat on the Chamber's Legislative and Small Business Committee.

Dave has provided public relations and political analysis for The New York Times, Politico, and Newsweek. He has also appeared as a spokesperson and analyst on MSNBC, Fox News Channel, CNBC and Dateline NBC. He has served as a guest lecturer at the Freedom Forum Diversity Institute at Vanderbilt University and has a B.A. in journalism from the University of Arizona.

Bill Bertolino



Bill Bertolino spent 16 years in journalism covering politics, public policy, legislation and city and state government. He's been a reporter, a city editor

and a managing editor in a variety of newsroom settings.

Bill brings those journalism skills, in-depth political knowledge and management expertise to the public-relations field, where he thrives at the

constantly evolving intersection of business and public policy.

He specializes in messaging, media- and community-relations, crisis PR and speechwriting. Bill provides strategic communications advice to executive leadership, and develops public-relations and earned-media plans for leading public entities, companies, nonprofit groups and political campaigns.

Bill believes in the power of storytelling and uses his journalism training to pinpoint and highlight the

most compelling information about clients– whether they're people, policies, companies or causes.

His work has been published in the *Arizona Republic*, *Arizona Capitol Times*, *East Valley Tribune*, *Orange County Register*, and *Colorado Springs Gazette*, among other publications. He has offered his insights on a variety of TV and radio news shows. Bill has a B.A. in journalism from Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications.



MEDIA RELATIONS BEs & DON'Ts

Be honest.

Be passionate.

Be prepared.

Be expressive.

Be accurate.

Be courteous.

Be concise.

Be calm.

Be consistent.

Don't lie or mislead.

Don't be evasive.

Don't be defensive.

Don't speculate.

Don't lay blame.

Don't deny what happened.

Don't be negative.

Don't speak before thinking.

Don't stonewall.



Quick tips:

- Being passionate will show your natural charm and enthusiasm for your cause.
- Don't lie — Like Mom always said, "honesty is the best policy."

Notes:



SEVEN DEADLY SINS

* COMPILED FROM DECADES OF BAD INTERVIEWS

1. Breaking into Jail

As you get more comfortable and settle in to an interview, it's only natural to let your guard down. The conversation begins to flow and you feel like, "Hey, this is really getting somewhere!" You're probably right — and let's keep it that way by not deviating from our talking points or dabbling in things you don't know or simply wish were true.



EXAMPLE: BARACK OBAMA

President Obama is known for his oratory skills, but even he makes mistakes. Take a recent prime time news conference that was supposed to be about health care reform — before it got sidetracked because of one reporter's question. Obama was asked about the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Gates at his home by Cambridge Police. Obama, who is known for his careful choice of words, said officers "acted stupidly" in arresting Gates. It's a comment Obama would later regret.

The President had to do a mea culpa at a White House briefing, which resulted in the so-called "beer summit" a few days later. And, it was a huge mistake for Obama because it destroyed the message he was trying to deliver that night on health care reform.





SEVEN DEADLY SINS

* COMPILED FROM DECADES OF BAD INTERVIEWS

3. Message MIA – Missing In Action

Failing to prepare three simple, key messages in advance of your interview. If you don't edit your story down to its three most important points, then someone else will do it for you. And, if you don't know the crux of your story, it's easy to fall flat on your face with thousands of people watching.

EXAMPLE: RICK PERRY

Remember Texas Gov. Rick Perry's "oops" moment during a GOP presidential debate? In one of the all-time embarrassing moments, Perry couldn't recall the three federal agencies he would eliminate - despite making that a central theme of his campaign. Perry's poll numbers flatlined soon after the humiliating blunder and he spent the next day trying to dig himself out of the wreckage.



4. Runaway Adrenaline

Everyone gets a little nervous or excited before a big interview. The key is channeling that energy into a concise, compelling message. When you're calm, cool and collected, your arguments instantly become more convincing and credible.

EXAMPLE: CHARLIE SHEEN

When Charlie Sheen's television career took a massive downslide, he inexplicably decided to do interviews with every television reporter on planet Earth.

Nobody can forget Charlie's runaway adrenaline, which produced now-infamous phrases like "WINNING" and "TigerBlood." Those blunders led to Charlie becoming a national punch line and forced him into rehab - for his tarnished image.





TV INTERVIEWS

When all eyes are on you, what you say, how you're sitting, even the tone of your voice can make or break your big moment. Here are some tips to remember in a TV interview:

- Think in Headlines.
- Know the single most important point you need to get across.
- Work on your "quotable quote," and make sure your message is succinct and memorable.
- Avoid the phrase, "I think".
- Lean slightly forward toward the camera.
- Touch interviewer/anchor's arm or hand to show warmth.
- Fluctuate your voice tone, like you're talking to a friend.
- Wear neutral colors: Dark blue is always a good choice.
- Know the set: If your legs will show, don't wear jeans or a dress.
- You're so vain: Check your makeup, hair and teeth before the segment.
- Look at the interviewer, NOT the camera.
- Answers should be 15-30 seconds, total.
- PRACTICE ... PRACTICE ... PRACTICE ... Then PRACTICE some more.

RADIO INTERVIEWS

Because these interviews lack the visual component TV interviews offer, careful word choice and tone are key. This, however, is changing because radio stations now offer live streaming video of their studios and newspapers are posting video interviews conducted by reporters and editorial boards.

- Smile.
- Fluctuate voice tone
- Use descriptive words, creating visuals
- Think of radio as "theatre of the mind"
- There are no tough hosts, only ill-prepared guests.
- Have your entire message (still three points) written out in front of you.
- When given a choice between being interviewed by phone or in studio, try to do the interview in studio. You will get more time in the studio and it is harder for hosts to be nasty to you if you are sitting three feet away from them and looking them in the eye.
- If you are booked on a one-hour talk show, remember the audience changes every 15 minutes, so you must repeat your message constantly.
- Callers can be especially nasty, but they cannot force you to be nasty or say stupid things.
- Don't be afraid of callers.
- Don't react to the negative energy of callers or hosts.

PRINT INTERVIEWS

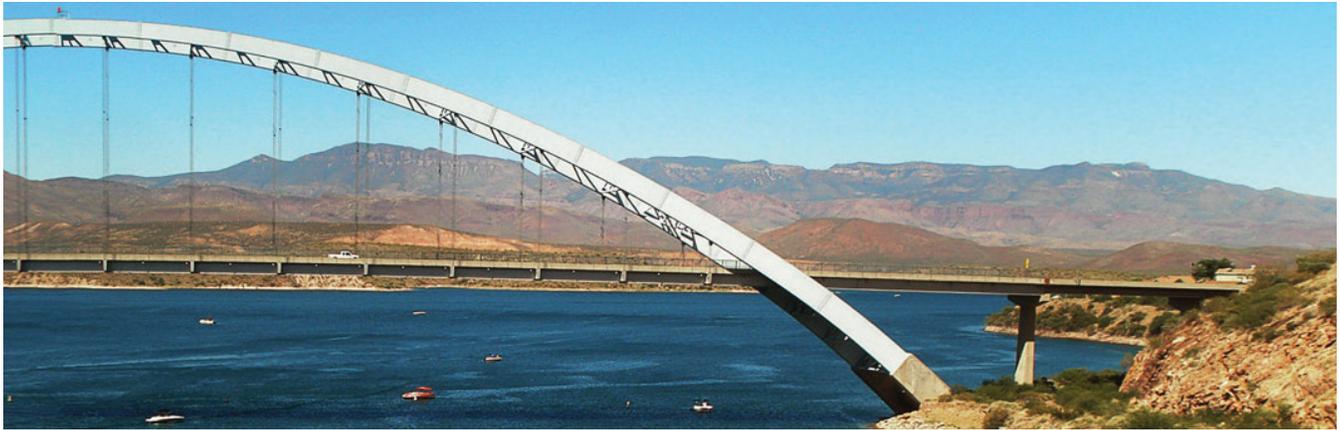
Sarcasm doesn't work in print.

During phone interviews, have your three-point message sound bites in front of you.

You are not a reporter's personal Librarian of Congress; you don't need to provide facts for hours at a time to reporters.

Assume everything you say is on the record unless you have a very specific agreement otherwise. Even if the pens and recorders have been put away and you are walking the reporter to the door, anything you say can be used in the story.

If you hear a reporter typing when you are saying one of your sound bites, slow down and let the reporter catch up. Then say it again.

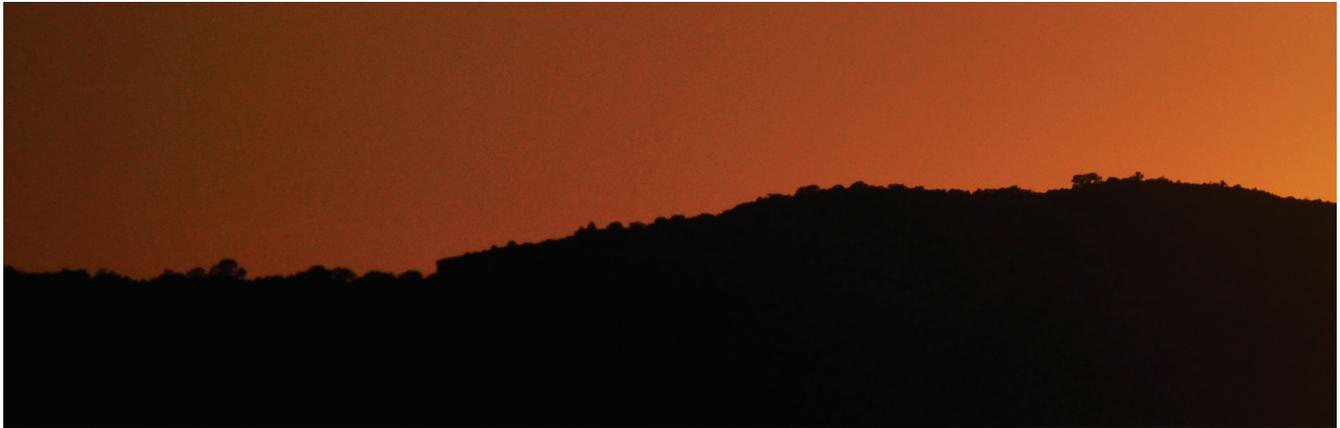


THE EVOLVING MEDIA WORLD

More people have a voice today because of rapidly changing technology, including the new app Periscope that allows anyone to stream live video direct to the Internet from Twitter on their Smartphones. Remember, the days of news being reported by working journalists are long gone. And many new media outlets lack the traditional editorial vetting process, which can lead to inaccurate and biased reporting. Positive interaction with bloggers is also key (many blogs have higher readerships than traditional newspapers these days) and it's important to proactively approach bloggers with your success stories. They are tremendous influencers and can open up critical networks across the country.



Remember, most people make up their minds within 15 seconds or less!



FINAL TIPS

- You are in control.
- Select no more than three key message points.
- Know your audience and your interviewer.
- Never lie, guess or speculate.
- Know the length of the interview and the range of topics to be covered.
- Use Sound bytes with substance and keep your answers concise.
- Do not say anything “off the record.”
- Do not argue or get defensive.
- Don’t give “no comment” as a response.

Notes:



SCUTARI & CIESLAK PUBLIC RELATIONS

“The expertise Chip and Dave bring to the table, in a wide array of mission critical areas, including media relations, new member development and public affairs has been a true asset to my organization.”

—TODD SANDERS, President & CEO
of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce



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