



# ABOUT MESSAGES AND HOW TO DELIVER THEM

## WHAT ARE MESSAGES

Messages are not everything you **could** say. They are only those things you want people to **remember** and **repeat**.

## HOW TO USE THEM

### Use Your Own Words

Most of the time, the thoughts behind messages on various topics are actually more important than the precise words. Don't feel like you have to memorize a script. Get thoroughly familiar with the content of the messages available to you in this section, and do your best to use what you see, but know that it's okay to use your own words.

### State Your Conclusion First, Then Support

This can be a little counterintuitive because in normal conversation we have a tendency to build toward our conclusion. But in media situations, you can't count on having the time to get where you're going. Start with your conclusion — the main thing you want people to know — and then back it up with the supporting information.

### Don't Be Afraid to Repeat Yourself

Using your messages once and then going into lots of other discussion topics is no more useful than not having messages at all. Good communicators consistently return to their messages. It's okay to repeat yourself. Just try to make it sound conversational as you do so. Especially be sure to restate your main point at the end of any interview you do.

### Make It Personal

Nothing is quite as persuasive or compelling as real human stories. Whenever possible, illustrate your messages with a story or example from your own experience. And be sure to avoid jargon.

### Never Say “No Comment,” Lie, or Mislead

There's no such thing as “off the record.” If you don't know, don't speculate. Don't volunteer information unnecessarily. And if there's information you don't want to share, explain why you can't or don't want to, but don't simply say “no comment” — it comes across as defensive or as if you have something to hide.

### Prepare and Practice

Have a plan for what you want to communicate — be sure you know what the first words out of your mouth will be. In particular, be ready for the first and last questions and also any questions you dread. Say what you want to say and then **STOP!** You don't have to say a lot to be effective. Focus on your messages and leave it at that.