

TUESDAY ASSOCIATES

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TO: Massachusetts Republican Legislative Candidates
FROM: Holly Robichaud & Ron Vining
RE: Resources for the Campaign Trail, Volume 4: Media Tips
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MEDIA TIPS

Winning campaigns have a strategy for using earned media to communicate their message.

The code of professional journalism calls for objective, unbiased reporting. As your campaign heats up, this code in most cases will become nothing more than lip service. Here are a few suggestions on both improving your media relations and how to handle the press:

- Never lie to a reporter.
- Be accessible. However, calls should be screened so you are never caught off guard.
- If possible have an intermediary (Campaign Manager, Press Secretary) take the message, details so you can prepare before returning their call.
- Be confident. Don't let the press intimidate you.
- When on the radio or television speak slowly and confidently.
- Keep your answers short. This way the reporters cannot take words out of context and you get your message out.
- Have coffee with you local reporters. It will make it harder for them to unnecessarily attack you.
- Stick to message. Don't drift. You want your message in the paper, not their agenda.
- Develop a thick skin and a good sense of humor. You will need it with the liberal press.
- Keep a detailed list of inaccuracies, errors and attacks, so if you do have to complain, a pattern of problems can be shown. Be willing to let the little things go, if your message got out, it doesn't matter if a word is different. Avoid complaining constantly.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about your ideas and your record.
- Never brag about campaign strategy. Often reporters will ask about your plan. It is none of their business. Besides you don't want articles on strategy. You want ink on your message and ideas. Articles regarding lawn sign placement does not get you votes.
- Create a good press list. Make sure you know the deadlines. Please note that local radio stations are always desperate for taped sound bites.
- Remember, you are never really off-the-record. Reporters have printed off-the-record information in the past.
- Listen carefully to the reporter's questions.
- Be a happy Republican, not a scary one. Tone is important and remember to smile on camera.
- Try to establish the terms of the interview before it starts. Have an exit strategy, if things go south.
- Be consistent. Give the same answer when asked the same question more than once. Stick to your story.
- Use humor with care. Sarcasm and one liners may be taken out of context and misinterpreted by readers when in print.
- Live by the sword. Die by the sword. If you leak to reporters, others will leak on you. Don't be overzealous in getting into every photo or live shot.
- Make gestures to show you are comfortable on-air. Keep gestures within 6 inches of your heart.
- Be prepared. Play Q & A before doing an interview.
- Don't wear stripes or white clothing on television. The later will make you look pale and stripes will blur the image.

Tuesday Associates is here to help Republican candidates win! Should you have any questions about how to get your race into the paper via a planned earned media program, handle the media or deal with a crisis, please contact us. Visit our Web site at www.TuesdayAssociates.com to view the individual services offered to campaigns such as yours. To receive more emails like this one, contact Ron@TuesdayAssociates.com to sign up and be added to our weekly campaign blast.