

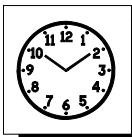
Module 4: Media As A Tactic



Goals

Participants should understand:

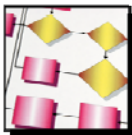
- How to use the media to advance an issue campaign.
- Kinds of media coverage.
- Self-interest of the media.
- Planning to use the media.



Time

Total: One Hour

- Presentation: 30 minutes
- Exercise: 20 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes



Overview

The focus of this session is to help people think more strategically about how to use the media. The exercise will give participants practice in crafting a focused message that states a demand and conveys the real power of the organization.

We tend to think that because our message is important to us, and because we are working on behalf of children, that the media will be sympathetic and give us the coverage we deserve.

Unfortunately, the media has other interests. We need to be thoughtful and strategic in order to maximize the value of media coverage.

PTA has a large number of members. The goal of grassroots advocacy is to mobilize our members to contact decision-makers and urge them to support the specific policy changes we are seeking. In an issue advocacy campaign, we should use the media as another way to demonstrate that our members are mobilized and focused on an issue.

We cannot rely on elected officials to do the right thing, just because it is what the children need, and we cannot rely on the media to convey our message in a powerful way. This advocacy training module is structured to help PTA members use the media to reflect the power of the association.



Materials Needed

- Easel paper (five sheets per small group)
 - Masking tape
 - Dark markers
-



Handouts

- Make copies of the handouts as detailed in the Program Preparation section in the front of this manual.
-



Equipment Needed

- Easel/"flipchart" (recommended minimum of two, five is preferable)
 - *If you have elected to develop your own PowerPoint presentation to suit your specific training audience for this module, you will need:*
 - Computer with PowerPoint software
 - LCD Projector
 - All cords and cable needed to connect computer with LCD projector, and extension cord to connect computer and LCD projector with electrical outlet
 - AV stand or tab (if you will be using PowerPoint in this module)
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Introduction



Welcome To Module 4: Media As A Tactic

By the end of this module, you should understand:

- How to use the media to advance an issue campaign.
- Kinds of media coverage.
- Self-interest of the media.
- Planning your use of the media.
- Guidelines for using the media.



Instructor Note

Make The Following Key Point:

- Good media coverage reflects a powerful issue campaign strategy



- In this session we are going to discuss how to use the media to advance an issue campaign. That is, not just getting good coverage, but using the media strategically to build power.
- It is crucial to begin with a solid strategy for each issue campaign. This means that we have carefully defined what we want to win, and evaluated our own organizational power in relationship to the power of the decision-maker we are trying to persuade. Let's say we want State Rep. Eunice Smith to vote "Yes" on increasing state school funding. By how many votes did she win the last election? How many PTA members do we have in her district? Can we mobilize them to write letters, make phone calls, and meet with her? Our use of the media in this effort is another tactic, a way to convey to Rep. Smith that we have organized a lot of people who want her to vote "Yes." Of course, we will mention along the way the outdated textbooks, classrooms without teachers, and overcrowded conditions. But in addition to talking about the problem, it is essential to communicate who is doing the asking, that is, large numbers of PTA members with the power to vote "Yes" or "No" on the question of continuing Eunice Smith as their elected representative.

Kinds of Media Coverage



There Are Several Kinds Of Media Coverage We Can Aim For

If we hold a large rally at the offices of our local school board, we may try to get the media to cover what we are doing. However, if enough people show up to talk to the members of their school board, we may consider the event a success whether or not we get on television or in the newspapers. In this case, the media is important, but secondary to our purpose.

At other times, we may do something for the sole purpose of getting media coverage, to put pressure on the decision-makers who will be mentioned. We may release a report which shows that our state's schools receive less funding than 46 other states; we may announce that the school board president received a large campaign contribution from the contractor who is about to be hired to build a new school. In these cases, if we make the announcement, but no one from the media is there to hear, it is as if the announcement never happened. Like the proverbial tree in the forest, if it falls and no one hears, it made no noise — and did not serve the intended purpose.

A third situation occurs when the media asks us for comment for the newspaper or for a TV news program, or to participate in a radio talk show. Here, we have less control of the agenda. Sometimes we are caught by surprise and have to think on our feet. It is very important, therefore, to understand how the media thinks, what they are likely to be looking for, and exactly what we want to convey to move our agenda forward strategically, even if we only have a 15-second sound bite to do so. We need to be prepared to get our most important points across whether the media ask the right questions or not.

This brings us back to the point that our use of the media is a tactic that should fit with our larger strategy. Activities designed to garner media coverage go in the Tactics column of the strategy chart along with such other tactics as petition drives. This means that a media event has the characteristics of any other tactic.

Kinds of Media Coverage



Ask

Who remembers from the Strategy discussion the three common characteristics of all tactics?

For every tactic there must be:

- Someone who does it.
- Someone to whom it is done.
- Some reason why the person to whom it is done doesn't want it done.



Groups so often say that they have adopted a "media strategy" to win a campaign. This elevates the use of media from the level of a tactic to that of a strategy; the media becomes the whole plan. Sometimes a media strategy is possible, but it usually requires hundreds of thousands, or millions, of dollars of paid media time to accomplish. Media coverage of an event doesn't cost anything. It is covered, because it is news. This is sometimes referred to as "earned media" to distinguish it from "paid media."

Self-Interest Of The Media



How does the media choose what to cover? There are a few cities where there is so much major news happening that it's easy to get drowned out, no matter how hard you try. New York, Washington DC, and Los Angeles are examples, but there aren't many others. There are also a few places where media outlets are owned by individuals who are often ideologically opposed to some of the legislation we support, and often won't allow it to be covered.

To help ensure that we get media coverage, the first thing is to understand the self-interest of the media.



Ask

When a newspaper exposes the fact that a politician took a bribe to vote to bulldoze a bird sanctuary and build a parking lot, why do they print that story?

Solicit several answers, before saying, if no one else does:

To sell newspapers!



The main interest of the media is always to increase the audience so that it can charge higher rates for advertising. They always want to sell more advertising and not antagonize the advertisers. That is their business. They are not a public service for disseminating news or creating a well informed citizenry.

Planning Your Use Of The Media

Planning starts with the strategy chart. You have already identified the decision-maker. You are clear on what you want him or her to do, and you have looked at the electoral numbers and voter registration figures and know what your base of power is. Use of the media is another way of applying your power.

Start planning by writing a headline. Of course, the newspaper editors rarely use the headline you write, but the point of doing it is to help you focus. Ask, "if a reporter saw what we are about to do, what headline would she write?"

Once you have your headline, the whole media event should be designed to suggest that one line to the viewer. Be sure your line expresses your main demand and your power! An example might be, "State Representative Smith, 500 parents want you to vote to support our children's education!" A less useful line would be, "Kids Need Books!" because there is no power reflected, and the decision-maker is not mentioned. It would be possible to agree that kids need books, and not vote for more money.

Guidelines For Using The Media



We have six guidelines that will help you use the media to advance your issue campaign:

1. There must be hard news.
2. Think pictures.
3. Have a quotable quote.
4. Help reporters do their work.
5. Know the media staff.
6. Include human interest.



Display On A Flipchart Or PowerPoint

Guidelines For Using The Media:

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1. There Must Be Hard News

Unless you are the President, a rock star or the head of the Mafia, your opinion isn't news. You can't call a media event just to say how upset you are about something. There must be news. News can be any of the following:

Guidelines For Using The Media



Display On A Flipchart Or PowerPoint

There Must Be Hard News:

1. Large numbers of people do something interesting.
2. Someone who is news says it.
3. A new program is launched.
4. New information is revealed.
5. The unexpected happens.
6. New treatment of an old story.
7. A tie-in with a breaking story.

Guidelines For Using The Media



Numbers of people coming together to do something interesting. The media thinks that if a large number of people want to do it, then a larger number of people will want to read about it.

Someone who actually is news says it for you. The downside of using celebrities is that it deprives your leaders of the experience and risks your message getting sidetracked in a discussion of the latest divorce or the Academy Awards.

A new program or campaign is announced. The media is often more interested in announcing a new activity than following up on an old one. For example, an organization once used its annual conference to launch a new campaign for national health care. A year later, when conference time came again, the group realized that a press release saying, "The campaign continues," wouldn't make much of a story. Instead, they announced the launching of a new campaign for national health care. They got good coverage each time. Make ongoing campaigns sound new.

New information is revealed. While a story is running, you can keep it in the headlines longer by adding new information. The state representative who opposes the smoking ban took big contributions from the gaming industry.

The unexpected is often news. "High school students demand tougher school standards."

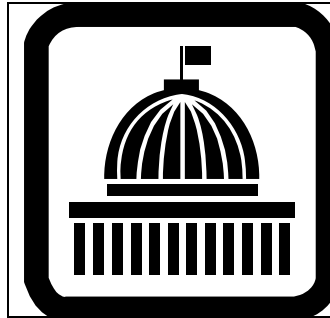
A new treatment of an old story can be news. Taxes are an old story. Each year on April 15th, every TV station has a shot of people running to mail their tax returns. If, at the same time, a large number of people were mailing letters to the President of the United States asking for more tax money to support school reading programs, it would probably be picked up as well.

- A tie-in with a breaking story makes your event more newsworthy. Whatever is on the morning TV news is likely to be in the evening paper. If you can call the paper with a local angle on a national story they will often thank you.

Guidelines For Using The Media



Display On A Flipchart Or PowerPoint



[Note, this is just a random image used as a placeholder. The idea is for you to illustrate the next section by using a picture of your choice.]



2. Think Pictures.

Even the print media is increasingly visual in its writing. Ask yourself how this event will look. The media hates talking heads. Move the event outdoors and produce interesting visuals and exciting people. Even if a newspaper doesn't run a photo, they will describe the event in visual terms. Put a prominent sub-head in the media advisory that says, "Photo Opportunity." Then say what the opportunity is.

Examples:

- **Two-block-long living fence.** A group that wanted an elected official to get off the fence and take a position marched in front of his office with sections of picket fence from the garden store.
- **Popsicle sticks for the state legislature.** In order to bring attention to the need to fund school nurses, the Georgia State PTA collected and sent popsicle sticks/tongue depressors to their state legislators.
- **Giant estimated dice.** A group protesting the utility company practice of sending estimated bills instead of actually reading the meter went to the company with dice made from cardboard cartons. They rolled the dice and made "estimated payments" of their estimated bills.
- **World's largest monopoly board.** Don't play monopoly with our community. A neighborhood organization took a huge Monopoly board to city hall. The street names were from their own neighborhood. They were protesting the elimination of affordable housing and conversion to high-priced condos.

Guidelines For Using The Media

- **Utility rates balloon up.** A consumer organization protesting rising utility rates made a graph of rate increases over the last 10 years. The last bar was a long black ribbon that was taken up into the air with a helium balloon.
- **Use visuals.** Good visuals include a large sign with a slogan and a chart or graph that makes the point if statistics are involved.
- **The most important visual is the one with the name of the organization.** Put it right on the podium if you use one. An 8 ½-x 11-inch, boldly lettered sign is better than a five-foot banner which won't fit in the picture and is hung so high that only the bottom of the letters shows. If there are resources, having a repeating logo as the backdrop is also effective, especially if you have a VIP speaker taking up your issue. People can also wear stickers with the organization's name. The visual needs to work as a still photo. It can't be an activity that takes time to unfold.



Display On A Flipchart Or PowerPoint

Quotable Quote:

- Captures the meaning of the event.
- Each speaker repeats it.
- Put it on signs.
- If nothing else, spell it right.



3. Have A Quotable Quote.

Have a quotable quote, a consistent theme that runs throughout the event and is reflected in the visuals. Each speaker should use the same quote. For example a campaign to get a local supermarket to carry organic food used the quote, "Let us choose safe food."

Guidelines For Using The Media

Think of some of the all-time famous quotes. Who said:

- "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." (Franklin Delano Roosevelt)
- "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." (John F. Kennedy)

The interesting thing about these quotes is that they aren't exactly true. We did have something to fear other than fear itself, and why not also ask what our country can do for us? But true or not, these quotes will live forever.



Display On A Flipchart Or PowerPoint

Help Reporters:

- Write release as a news article.
- Who, what, when, where & why in first paragraph.
- Length of typical news story, or a bit longer.
- Factual, well written & accurate.
- Put opinions in quotes. "I have never seen such a mess," said Mr. John Brown.



4. Help Reporters Do Their Work.

- Like everyone else, reporters are overworked and underpaid. If they can take your release and run it as their article, they are more likely to use the story than if they have to take notes and write something. Study the length and style of stories in the local paper and learn to write that way. Develop a reputation for factual, well written material. Remember that your media event is competing with dozens and even hundreds of other activities that people are trying to get the media to cover. The easier you make it, the more successful you will be.
- Write your press release as if it were a news article. Study the local paper and learn its style of reporting. What kind of sentence structure does it use? What education level is it written for? Try to give them copy that is as much like what they print as you can.

Guidelines For Using The Media

-
- Write a lead paragraph that tells who, what, when, where, why and how. This way, if the story is cut to just one paragraph you still have all the information.
 - Make your release the length of the average story or a bit longer to save editing.
 - Develop a reputation as a source that doesn't need a great deal of fact-checking.
 - Put opinions in quotes. The reporter doesn't want to be responsible for the accuracy of what you say, only the fact that you said it. By using quotes you make it clear that it is your opinion, not the reporter's.
-



5. Know The Staff.

Having a personal relationship with reporters and editors is helpful for many things. Find out who covers your program area, and go around and introduce yourself. Occasionally give an exclusive. Respect reporters' integrity. They are professionals who cover news. They won't run stories as a favor, but they will sometimes exchange information. When you do have a relationship with reporters, remember that nothing is ever really confidential or off the record. If you don't want it printed, don't say it. If you don't want it on TV, don't do it. (This last point applies to every aspect of your life.)

6. Include Human Interest.

A study about toxic emissions is boring. A statement from a family whose child was exposed to the emissions is human interest. Every media event should have a human interest element, with real people telling their own stories. Local PTAs have many good stories that can be used to illustrate the points that we are trying to make. Just remember that each story needs to end with a demand on the decision-maker. Stories do not replace the need to show power, but they help draw attention.

The Media Advisory

To attract the media to your event, send out a Media Advisory a week ahead of time. This can be done by mail or fax. Email is also acceptable, but it is too easily lost or ignored. The advisory includes a few lines telling reporters what the event will include, but don't give them enough information that they can write a story without coming. Include information on the place and time of the event and the name of someone to contact for further information, along with a mobile phone number.

Add a heading that says "Notice of Photo Opportunity" and tell them what visual device you will use to make the event more appealing to TV and news photographers. It might be a two-block-long, living petition or five pounds of cigarette butts collected from local school yards. The visual needs to support the theme of the media event, which you have created in order to put pressure on a decision-maker. So it can't be just a clever stunt. Three dogs dressed as walnuts probably will get on TV, but if it has nothing to do with the issue, it won't be the kind of coverage you want.

Three days before the event, start calling all the media outlets and speaking to the assignment editors (TV) and city editors (print). Tell them about the event and ask if they are coming. Mention that you sent an advisory but don't expect them to remember it or even to have read it. Call again the night before the event to remind them and again the next morning to make sure. Remember that competition for the attention of the media is very stiff and there may be dozens or hundreds of events on the same day. Only two or three will get covered.

The Media Advisory

At the event, have a press release to hand out. Again, give all the contact information. Write the headline you would like to see on the story although your headline won't be used. Then open with a lead paragraph that answers the questions: "who," "what," "when," "where," "why" and "how"? "Who" is your organization, and "what" is the pressure you are putting on the decision-maker. The rest follows from that. In the second paragraph, quote a leader or volunteer. In the third, give more background. Two pages are the most for a release. If there is an accompanying report or study, attach it to the release, but don't try to incorporate it in the body of the release. The release should be able to stand on its own as a story would appear in the newspaper.

Here are some examples of a media advisory and a media release.



Use the following advisory to point out the important elements.



St. Finbar PTA
424 S. Finbar Street
St. Finbar, New State 09031

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jane Mayer, PTA President
777-666-2121
janemayer@stfinbarpta.org

June 24, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today, members of the St. Finbar PTA released a report showing that high school graduates who speak a second language have an employment rate twice that of graduates who speak only one language. They demanded that School Board Member Linda Nagashima vote to continue funding the school buses which make the magnet schools of St. Finbar possible.

"The School Board is saving pennies now, and depriving our children of dollars later," said Jane Mayer, president of the St. Finbar PTA. "Programs like the one at the Linguistic Academy prepare our children for the jobs of the future. Why do Linda Nagashima and the other school board members want to jeopardize our children's future employment?"

Ten children were on hand to wrap Ms. Nagashima's office (at 1833 Office Way, St. Finbar) with a huge paper chain, on which they and their parents had written "Please save our school" in 27 languages. The chain had 10,000 links and reached around the office five times.

"Quiero aprender español," said Jackie Hoong. "Por favor, guarde nuestra escuela."

Professor Luiz Martinez, of St. Finbar College, author of the report, said, "Today's children need these schools for tomorrow's jobs. I can't imagine what the school board and Linda Nagashima are thinking. The employment data clearly shows children need this program. The large numbers of parents involved shows that everyone appreciates, except maybe the school board, the importance of funding transportation so our children can get to their school."

Media Exercise



Instructor Note

On the pages that follow are directions for a Media Exercise.

As stated in the *Getting Started>About This Manual>Three Types Of Campaign Exercises* section of this manual (page viii), there are three case studies available. Each one illustrates advocacy at the local, state, or federal level. You should have selected the level you believe to be most appropriate and relevant to your group, and copied the handouts for that level's case study to use in the following exercise.

Reminder, the design of this course is for the level addressed to remain consistent throughout. That is, if you work the local level case study in this module, you should work the local level case studies in all the other modules.

Media Exercise — Local

Local

Media And The Campaign To Restore Bus Service To St. Finbar Magnet Schools



Participants practice focusing their message in the face of questions from the media. There are two related media exercises. Half the group will do one and half will do the other. If the group is larger, you may divide into three groups; more than that will require a second trainer, or the exercise will take too long, or not be participatory enough.



Total: 30 minutes

- Exercise: 20 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes

Media Exercise Instructions

Local



You will use the same background scenario for this that you used for the Strategy Exercise. In this role play, everyone is a member of the St. Finbar PTA unit, and is being questioned by the media following a school board meeting in which the board postponed action on the bus funding issue.

Half the group will plan what to say when they are spontaneously approached by the media as they leave the board meeting, and the other half will prepare for questioning on a short radio talk show they have been invited to participate in the following morning. If you have more than a dozen people, you may want to break into three groups, and role play two talk shows, so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

Each group will need its own space to prepare. After you have divided the group into two or three small groups, hand out the exercise assignment and let each group know if they are doing part one or part two. Give them 15 minutes to plan their role play. The talk show group will naturally work as a team; the people who are leaving the board meeting can also plan their responses together, although they will each be approached individually in the role play.

The Media Exercise is based on the St. Finbar Strategy Exercise. If you did the Strategy Exercise, the class will already have the

Media Exercise Instructions

Local

background sheet, but many will have lost it. Always send a double supply with the training materials. Be sure that the Strategy Exercise and the Media Exercise are on different colored paper so you can refer to them easily. (“Now everyone look at the blue sheet.”) If you did not do the Strategy Exercise with this group, then use the sheet headed “Additional Background Information on St. Finbar,” which is the same thing with the exercise instructions removed. It is at the end of this section. **Don’t use the Strategy Exercise as background for the Media Exercise unless you already had the group do the Strategy Exercise. Especially if the group is large, half way through you will discover that some people have become confused and are doing the Strategy Exercise not the Media Exercise.**

1. Hand out the appropriate background sheet and the Media Exercise.
2. Ask the group to read the information and then ask if they have any questions.
3. Count off the class into two or three small groups. Tell each if they will do Exercise 1, Exercise 2.
4. Tell them they have 15 minutes to prepare; expect that it may take up to 25 minutes.
5. Send the groups to their work areas. While the groups are working the trainer who will do the debriefing should circulate among the groups and make sure they are on track. Avoid the temptation to coach.
6. After 10 minutes, check to see if they are nearly ready. If not, extend the time by no more than 10 minutes (for a total of 25 minutes). If you extend the time, give a five-minute warning at the appropriate time; if you stick with 15 minutes, give a two-minute warning. This helps make sure everyone is ready to go at the same time.
7. Bring the groups back together.

Media Exercise Instructions

Local

Run the Media Role Play Exercise 1

1. The group playing the PTA members leaving the board meeting should go first. They can cluster just inside the door, as if they just left a board meeting. One trainer should play a reporter asking questions of each person sequentially; the second trainer will critique the role plays.
2. When these role plays are finished (and you may or may not have time for every person to be “interviewed”), the second trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard work the group did.
3. Debrief the individual role plays; see details below.

The Role Of The Reporter During The Role Plays

The job of the reporter is to try to get the individuals and the group off message, to get them to say something inflammatory or distracting from the main point. Here are some ploys that the reporter (as well as the talk show host) can try. They can ask one of the following:

1. What are some other budget cuts the person would suggest to avoid cutting the buses?
2. Is sitting on buses for so long really good for children, or if it isn't just leading to other problems, like obesity?
3. Is all of this just to help Board Member Linda Nagashima's opponent in the election?
4. Do you really want is a tax increase, and won't that drive families out of the district?
5. Is the bus drivers' union really behind all of this and aren't they funding your group?
6. Isn't the problem really all the money going for football teams in high schools?
7. Ask if someone has a child with them and then interview the child, trying to get them to say something cute that is off message.

Media Exercise Instructions

Local



Debrief the Media Role Play Exercise 1

1. Have everyone take a seat in their regular places.
2. Ask the rest of the group – not the individuals – what headline the reporter was going to write when s/he went back to his/her office?
3. Now ask the individuals in the role play, what headline they wanted. Was it the same or different?
4. Ask if either the reporter's headline or the group's headline reflected power (numbers of people the organization represents in the district of the school board member or members mentioned) and the demand on the decision-maker (we want Board Member X to vote to continue bus funding).
5. Emphasize how important it is to use any media opportunities to address the decision-maker with a specific ask and a show of power.

Run the Media Role Play Exercise 2

1. The second group will then enact the radio talk show. Put the number of chairs needed in a circle in the middle of the room, where everyone can see and hear the role play. The same trainer who was the reporter will act as the talk show host, and will ask questions and lead the discussion on the "talk show." The role play should last eight to 10 minutes. At the end, the other trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard-working role play group.
 - a. The trainer playing the role of host should give a sentence or two framing the show, being sure to be somewhat off the PTA message: "We have four parents with us today who are concerned about their children's education. They were at the contentious school board meeting last night, where the board heard from angry parents."
 - b. The host should ask each person to introduce himself/herself.

Media Exercise Instructions

Local

- c. If possible, get them to talk about their children, rather than the issue.
- d. The host will ask a series of questions, including some of the questions listed for the reporter above. Your goal is to prevent the PTA group from getting their message across by leading them in other directions, going for human interest, and breaking their flow. If one person in the group seems to be particularly focused, turn the question to someone who may be less focused. The host needs to politely but continually try to pull the group off message and squander the 10 minutes.

Debrief the Media Role Play Exercise 2

Use the questions above for the Exercise 1 role play. In addition, you use the following:

- a. Comment on whether there was one main theme running through the individual responses, which adds focus and prevents the reporter from going in the wrong direction.
- b. Was there a quotable quote? How well did it convey the purpose of the group?
- c. Did the group members stay on message although the reporter tried to get them off? How might they have handed particular questions better?

Conclude the session by reminding people that use of the media is a tactic within an overall strategy. It is not enough to be right! We need to use the media to convey our power to the decision-makers.

Media Exercise — State

State

Media And The Campaign To Invest In New Leif's Children



Participants practice focusing their message in the face of questions from the media. There are two related media exercises. About half the group will do one and half will do the other. If the group is larger, you may divide into three groups; more than that will require a second trainer, or the exercise will take too long, or not be participatory enough.



Total: 30 minutes

- Exercise: 20 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes

Media Exercise Instructions

State



You will use the same background scenario for this that you used for the Strategy Exercise. In this role play, everyone is a member of a local PTA in Fremont, and is being questioned by the media following a Lobby Day in the state capital.

Half the group will plan what to say when they are spontaneously approached by the media as they leave the Capitol Building after meeting with State Sen. Rosten, who has refused to commit on the state funding issue, and the other half will prepare for questioning on a short radio talk show they have been invited to participate in the following morning. If you have more than a dozen people, you may want to break into three groups, and role play two talk shows, so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

Each group will need its own space to prepare. After you have divided the group into two or three small groups, hand out the exercise assignment and let each group know if they are doing part one or part two. Give them 15 minutes to plan their role play. The talk show group will naturally work as a team; the people who are leaving the State Capitol can also plan their responses together, although they will each be approached individually in the role play.

The Media Exercise is based on the Campaign To Invest in New Leif's Children, the State Legislative Strategy Exercise. If you did

Media Exercise Instructions

State

the Strategy Exercise, the class will already have the background sheet, but many will have lost it. Always send a double supply with the training materials. Be sure that the Strategy Exercise and the Media Exercise are on different colored paper so you can refer to them easily. ("Now everyone look at the blue sheet.") If you did not do the strategy exercise with this group, then use the sheet headed "Additional Background Information on the New Leif Campaign," which is the same thing with the exercise instructions removed. It is at the end of this section. **Don't use the Strategy Exercise as background for the Media Exercise unless you already had the group do the Strategy Exercise. Especially if the group is large, half way through you will discover that some people have become confused and are doing the Strategy Exercise not the Media Exercise.**

1. Hand out the appropriate background sheet and the Media Exercise.
2. Ask the group to read the information and then ask if they have any questions.
3. Count off the class into two or three small groups. Tell each if they will do Exercise 1 or Exercise 2.
4. Tell them they have 15 minutes to prepare; expect that it may take up to 25 minutes.
5. Send the groups to their work areas. While the groups are working the trainer who will do the debriefing should circulate among the groups and make sure they are on track. Avoid the temptation to coach.
6. After 10 minutes, check to see if they are nearly ready. If not, extend the time by no more than 10 minutes (for a total of 25 minutes). If you extend the time, give a five-minute warning at the appropriate time; if you stick with 15 minutes, give a two-minute warning. This helps make sure everyone is ready to go at the same time.
7. Bring the groups back together.

Media Exercise Instructions

State

Run The Media Role Play Exercise 1

1. The group playing the PTA members leaving the State Capitol should go first. They can cluster just inside the door, as if they just left the building. One trainer should play a reporter asking questions of each person sequentially; the second trainer will critique the role plays.
2. When these role plays are finished (and you may or may not have time for every person to be "interviewed"), the second trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard work the group did.
3. Debrief the individual role players; see details below.

The Role Of The Reporter During The Role Plays

The job of the reporter is to try to get the individuals and the group off message, to get them to say something inflammatory or distracting from the main point. Here are some ploys that the reporter (as well as the talk show host) can try:

1. Ask what other budget cuts the person suggests to avoid cutting the schools?
2. Ask if there isn't a lot of fat and waste in the school budget, and shouldn't it be cut?
3. Ask if all this isn't just to help State Sen. Rosten's opponent in the election?
4. Ask if what you really want is a tax increase, and how can hard-pressed families afford that?
5. Ask if the state legislature should be cutting the recent expansion of health care benefits for the disabled instead of cutting education?
6. Ask if someone has a child with them and then interview the child, trying to get them to say something cute that is off message.

Media Exercise Instructions

State



Debrief The Exercise 1 Role Play

1. Have everyone take a seat in their regular places.
2. Ask the rest of the group – not the individuals – what headline the reporter is going to write when s/he goes back to his/her office?
3. Now ask the individuals in the role play, what headline they wanted. Was it the same or different?
4. Ask if either the reporter's headline or the group's headline reflected **power** (the numbers of people the organization represents in the district of State Sen. Rosten) and the **demand on the decision-maker** (we want Sen. Rosten to vote "No" on the school funding cuts).
5. Emphasize how important it is to use any media opportunities to address the decision-maker with a specific ask and a show of power.

Run The Media Role Play Exercise 2

1. The second group will then enact the radio talk show. Put the number of chairs needed in a circle in the middle of the room, where everyone can see and hear the role play. The same trainer who was the reporter will act as the talk show host, and will ask questions and lead the discussion on the "talk show." The role play should last eight to 10 minutes. At the end, the other trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard-working role play group.
 - a. The trainer playing the role of host should give a sentence or two framing the show, being sure to be somewhat off the PTA message: "We have four parents with us today who are concerned about their children's education. They were at the State Capitol yesterday, where legislators heard from angry parents."
 - b. The host should ask each person to introduce himself/herself.

Media Exercise Instructions

State

- c. If possible, get them to talk about their children, rather than the issue.
- d. The host will ask a series of questions, including some of the questions listed for the reporter above. Your goal is to prevent the PTA group from getting their message across by leading them in other directions, going for human interest, and breaking their flow. Can you get them to say something inflammatory? If one person in the group seems to be particularly focused, turn the question to someone who may be less focused. The host needs to politely but continually try to pull the group off message and squander the 10 minutes.

Debrief The Exercise 2 Role Play

Use the questions above for the Exercise 2 role play. In addition, use the following:

- a. Comment on whether there was one main theme running through the individual responses, which adds focus and prevents the reporter from going in the wrong direction.
- b. Was there a quotable quote? How well did it convey the purpose of the group?
- c. Did the group members stay on message although the reporter tried to get them off? How might they have handed particular questions better?

Conclude the session by reminding people that use of the media is a tactic within an overall strategy. It is not enough to be right! We need to use the media to convey our power to the decision-makers.

Media Exercise — Federal

Federal

Reauthorization Of The Childhood Nutrition Act



Participants practice focusing their message in the face of questions from the media. There are two related media exercises. About half the group will do one and half will do the other. If the group is larger, you may divide into three groups; more than that will require a second trainer, or the exercise will take too long, or not be participatory enough.



Total: 30 minutes

- Exercise: 20 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes

Media Exercise Instructions

Federal



You will use the same background scenario for this that you used for the strategy exercise. In this role play, everyone is a member of the PTA County Council in the district of Rep. Ethan Charles, and is being questioned by the media following a meeting that the PTA County Council has had with the congressman in his district office.

Half the group will plan what to say when they are spontaneously approached by the media as they leave the congressman's office. Rep. Charles has refused to commit one way or the other, saying that he needs more information. The other half of the group will prepare for questioning on a short radio talk show they have been invited to participate in the following morning. If you have more than a dozen people, you may want to break into three groups, and role play two talk shows, so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

Each group will need its own space to prepare. After you have divided the group into two or three small groups, hand out the exercise assignment and let each group know if they are doing exercise one or two. Give them 15 minutes to plan their role play. The talk show group will naturally work as a team; the people who are leaving the congressman's office can also plan their responses together, although they will each be approached individually in the role play.

Media Exercise Instructions

Federal

The Media Exercise is based on the Campaign To Improve Foods Sold Outside School Meals, the Federal Issue Strategy Exercise. If you did the Strategy Exercise, the class will already have the background sheet, but many will have lost it. Always send a double supply with the training materials. Be sure that the Strategy Exercise and the Media Exercise are on different colored paper so you can refer to them easily. ("Now everyone look at the blue sheet.") If you did not do the Strategy Exercise with this group, then use the sheet headed "Additional Background Information on the National Campaign," which is the same thing with the exercise instructions removed. It is at the end of this section. **Don't use the Strategy Exercise as background for the Media Exercise unless you already had the group do the Strategy Exercise. Especially if the group is large, half way through you will discover that some people have become confused and are doing the Strategy Exercise not the Media Exercise.**

1. Hand out the appropriate background sheet and the Media Exercise.
2. Ask the group to read the information and then ask if they have any questions.
3. Count off the class into two or three small groups. Tell each if they will do Exercise 1 or Exercise 2.
4. Tell them they have 15 minutes to prepare; expect that it may take up to 25 minutes.
5. Send the groups to their work areas. While the groups are working the trainer who will do the debriefing should circulate among the groups and make sure they are on track. Avoid the temptation to coach.
6. After 10 minutes, check to see if they are nearly ready. If not, extend the time by no more than 10 minutes (for a total of 25 minutes). If you extend the time, give a five-minute warning at the appropriate time; if you stick with 15 minutes, give a two-minute warning. This helps make sure everyone is ready to go at the same time.

Bring the groups back together.

Media Exercise Instructions

Federal



Run The Media Role Play Exercise 1

1. The group playing the PTA members leaving the congressman's office should go first. They can cluster just inside the door, as if they just left the building. One trainer should play a reporter asking questions of each person sequentially; the second trainer will critique the role plays.
2. When these role plays are finished (and you may or may not have time for every person to be "interviewed"), the second trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard work the group did.
3. Debrief the individual role players; see details below.

The Role Of The Reporter During The Role Plays

The job of the reporter is to try to get the individuals and the group off message, to get them to say something inflammatory or distracting from the main point. Here are some ploys that the reporter (as well as the talk show host) can try:

1. Ask if it isn't really up to parents to teach their children what to eat?
2. Ask if we haven't already given our schools enough responsibility, and how can we expect them to handle one more thing?
3. Ask if adults always eat healthy food, and how would they like to have their choices restricted?
4. Ask if all this isn't just to help Representative's Charles' opponent in the upcoming election?
5. Ask if your local schools can afford to lose the money they make by selling sodas and chips, and how will the girls' basketball team afford their new uniforms, which the coach says they need?
6. Ask if Congress has any business regulating what people eat, since we can see that a lot of them eat junk food, and shouldn't this be left to states and local officials?

Media Exercise Instructions

Federal

7. Ask if someone has a child with them and then interview the child, trying to get them to say something cute that is off message.

Debrief The Exercise 1 Role Play

1. Have everyone take a seat in their regular places.
2. Ask the rest of the group – not the individuals – what headline the reporter was going to write when s/he went back to his/her office?
3. Now ask the individuals in the role play, what headline did they want? Was it the same or different?
4. Ask if either the reporter's headline or the group's headline reflected **power** (the numbers of people the organization represents in the district of Rep. Charles) and the **demand on the decision-maker** (we want Rep. Charles to vote "Yes" on nutritional standards for competitive foods).
5. Emphasize how important it is to use any media opportunities to address the decision-maker with a specific ask and a show of power.

Media Exercise Instructions**Federal****Run The Media Role Play Exercise 2**

The second group will then enact the radio talk show. Put the number of chairs needed in a circle in the middle of the room, where everyone can see and hear the role play. The same trainer who was the reporter will act as the talk show host, and will ask questions and lead the discussion on the "talk show." The role play should last eight to 10 minutes. At the end, the other trainer will ask for a round of applause for the hard-working role play group.

1. The trainer playing the role of host should give a sentence or two framing the show, being sure to be somewhat off the PTA message: "We have four parents with us today who are trying to take candy away from children. They met with Representative Charles yesterday, to ask the Congress to regulate what our children eat."
2. The host should ask each person to introduce themselves.
3. If possible, get them to talk about their children, rather than the issue, or to talk about how they themselves eat chips and soda.
4. The host will ask a series of questions, including some of the questions listed for the reporter above. Your goal is to prevent the PTA group from getting their message across by leading them in other directions, going for human interest, and breaking their flow. Can you get them to say something inflammatory? If one person in the group seems to be particularly focused, turn the question to someone who may be less focused. The host needs to politely but continually try to pull the group off message and squander the 10 minutes.

Media Exercise Instructions

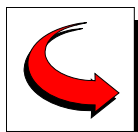
Federal

Debrief The Exercise 2 Role Play

Use the questions above for the Exercise 2 role play. In addition, you use the following:

1. Comment on whether there was one main theme running through the individual responses, which adds focus and prevents the reporter from going in the wrong direction.
2. Was there a quotable quote? How well did it convey the purpose of the group?
3. Did the group members stay on message although the reporter tried to get them off? How might they have handled particular questions better?

Conclude the session by reminding people that use of the media is a tactic within an overall strategy. It is not enough to be right! We need to use the media to convey our power to the decision-makers.



Transition To Module 5: Meetings To Pressure Decision-Makers