



## Chapter 11

### News Media





## Dealing Successfully with the News Media

The public has come to expect professionalism from anyone being interviewed; whether it's a political candidate, a professional performer, a business leader, or a Chamber volunteer. They want live, concise, interesting statements from the president or some knowledgeable executive.

The news media has become extremely powerful in shaping views, attitudes, and images and as such is usually resented. But business must learn to use that power rather than resent it (or be used by it). Chamber spokespersons can be very helpful in this regard. They should, and must, look for and make real opportunities to meet with the media. Be sure, however, when you invite the news media to cover a Chamber event that it's truly newsworthy. You must try to develop their confidence and trust in you so that your information holds up and reflect *your* views — not those of the *reporter*.

Be ready to go on local news shows or morning talk shows to discuss important economic and civic affairs in your area. Call a news conference if you feel your Chamber has something important to contribute to a current problem that affects your business community. It can be a tremendous opportunity for you to get your message across to a broad section of your community.



# 10 Commandments for a Successful Media Interview

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1. Correct the reporter's erroneous statements, say, *"That's not true"*. Then explain what is true, if you wish.
2. Answer all questions in the positive. Do not repeat the negative words or phrases of the question when giving your answer. *(The negative words will be the ones to be quoted.)*
3. Do not answer wildly speculative questions, say, *"I'd be happy to answer any questions, but only on the facts as they occurred."*
4. Answer the question directly. If you do not want to answer, say so. Then explain why *(litigation, speculation, not your responsibility, etc.)*.
5. Use message discipline — get your message points into the interview by *bridging*, even if you are not asked for them.
6. Always tell the truth, sooner or later all the facts will come out. Lying instantly destroys your credibility.
7. Do not let the reporter continually interrupt you. Say, very politely, *"Excuse me, but please, could I just finish this point?"*
8. Never give the media a negative quote; if you do, **they will use it!**
9. It is your challenge to get the positive into the story. You must constantly "get off the negative and back to the positive".
10. Most important is your demeanor. Your confidence level must be equal to, or greater than, the reporter's. Don't be arrogant; be low key and sincere.