**Media Tips**

**Lesson 1: Don’t mistrust the media**

* It’s OK to be careful … and even a little wary. But reporters are not out to get you. They’re just doing their jobs.
* Be nice. That means being polite, being responsive and being helpful when possible.
* Be understanding. Reporters are human; they make mistakes.
* Remember: They help us at least as much as we help them. (In actuality, they help us FAR MORE.)

**Lesson 2: Answering the tough question**

* Answer honestly. It’s still the best policy. … That doesn’t mean you have to share everything you know.
* Never say, “No comment.” The reader/viewer interprets that as you hiding something.
* It is, however, all right not to know … and to say so … … only without saying, “I don’t know.” Better: “Let me get back with you on that,” “I’d like to double-check my facts before answering that,” “That’s a good question; let me look into that.”
* Be dispassionate. You’ll be less likely to say something you’ll regret.
* Don’t be glib about serious subjects. Serious subjects demand sobriety.
* Email interviews or not: They are time-consuming, but can avoid confusion.

**Lesson 3: Don’t assume … and talk plainly**

* Reporters don’t share your expertise and institutional knowledge. Don’t assume they have a base level of understanding about the story they’ve been assigned.
* Don’t use acronyms, jargon and technical language.
* Be like Denzel in “Philadelphia” – “Explain it to me like I’m a 4-year-old.”
* Ask: “Does that make sense?” Then pay attention to the non-verbal cues. (Young reporters tend to fret about looking stupid with their sources.)
* Slow down when talking to newspaper reporters. Note-taking is an acquired skill.

**Lesson 4: Put your best face forward**

* Appearances matter on TV. Look professional.
* Remember whom you’re representing. At that moment, you’re “the City.” This is an opportunity to inspire public confidence in the organization.
* There’s nothing to be nervous about. An interview is just a conversation … likely over something you’re knowledgeable and passionate about.
* Look at the interviewer, not the camera. And smile when appropriate.

**Lesson 5: Use your Public Information Office**

* We can help you shape your message so it is focused and polished. Part of excelling at an interview is going in knowing what you want to communicate and accomplish.
* We can help craft a media plan for getting your message out.
* We’re happy to sit in on interviews.
* We won’t ask someone to do an interview if we don’t feel sure they’ll represent the city well. We’re here to make you and the City look good.