



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE – SERBIA PROGRAM

What Do Voters Hear?*

The key to campaign communication is to deliver information that voters care about in language that is relevant to their lives. Voters want to support leaders who share their values and who will empower them.

People Want	People Do Not Want
To be trusted	Politicians who tell voters what they should want or what they should believe.
To be respected.	Politicians who are insincere or belittle them.
To be uplifted	Politicians who talk only about what is wrong.
Leaders they can trust.	Politicians who say one thing and do another. Politicians who cannot fulfill their promises.
Leaders who have a vision	Politicians who cannot share the hopes and dreams of the voters.
Leaders who they believe share their values.	Politicians who cannot communicate in language that is relevant to the voters immediate needs.

Press Interviews

Reporter's Initial Question

State Your Message

Positioning statement

Start your answer with your basic message. Use a bridge if necessary to lead from the actual question to the answer you want to give.

Theme/key message hook

State your message right at the beginning so your key points are heard first.

Stop: Encourage the follow-up question by leaning on the silence

Reporter's Second Question

Support Your Statement

Supply evidence

In response to a follow-up question, support your basic message with your rationale or evidence. Give the audience a key point that is relevant to their lives.

Theme/key message hook

Demonstrate how your evidence reinforces your key message.

Stop

Reporter's Third Question

Illustrate Your Statement

Provide examples

Have a prepared example to further demonstrate the point you made in the first two answers.

Restate key message

Stop: Give only the answer you want the audience to hear. Do not give the press the opportunity to use points or messages not key to your effort by continuing to talk needlessly.

Control An Interview

Bridging and Deflecting Techniques

If a questioner or reporter is developing the interview in a direction you do not want to go, feel comfortable to bring the discussion back to your points. To successfully control your discussion, it is important to develop bridging or deflecting techniques to move logically from the question asked to the answer you want to give.

Question	Bridge	Answer
Acknowledge or Refute		Deliver your Message

Bridging Phrases

- Let us look at it from a broader perspective . . .
- There is an equally important concern that . . .
- Let us not lose sight of the underlying problem . . .
- There is another issue playing into this . . .
- Have you considered another perspective . . .
- That is not the real issue. The real issue . . .
- That is the popular theory, but in reality . . .
- We are not involved in that controversy. Our purpose . . .

Using Bridges

- If you do not need to bridge, do not. Just answer the question in a straight-forward manner, delivering your key messages and evidence.
- Think of a bridge as shifting gears smoothly. Do not grind gears by making too big a leap or ignoring the original question.
- Answer an aspect of the question or acknowledge what you can in the question, but then move to your message.
- Do not blatantly ignore a critical comment, but do not repeat the emotionally loaded words in the question, as that will become the headline. If you want to disagree, refute the point quickly then move to your point.

Invitations for a Press Conference

An invitation should have a standard form, recognizable for journalists.

1. Logo – the parties must be at the top
2. Title – “Press Conference”
3. Issue - the main issue/problem identified
4. Speakers – the first and the last and their official functions
5. Place – the address at which the press conference will be held
6. Time – time when the press conference starts
7. Contact person – the name of the person whose task is to deal with media
8. Contact information – party’s address, contact phone numbers, e-mail

Basic Rules for Writing a Press Release

1. The phone number of the contact person clearly on the top of the page.
2. An interesting title – to attract the attention of the journalist and so that the journalists would use it as a title for their article – to avoid the situation that often occurs, in which journalists give their own titles to the articles (and we may not necessarily like them).
3. Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? -- questions that every press release must seek to answer (although not necessarily).
4. Use short words, sentences, and paragraphs.
5. Use as few ‘scientific’ terms as possible.
6. Use as few acronyms as possible.
7. Check for grammar mistakes.

*Materials from Ann Liston.