

Top 5 Speaking Don'ts

- **Don't wing it!**
 - Come prepared – Practice your presentation however you feel most comfortable. I do it on my drive to work and my drive over to the location. Sure, I may look crazy if another driver glances over, but at least I'm prepared. I also find a speaking outline helpful. It helps keep you on track, making sure you hit all the points you need to without getting sidetracked.

- **Don't be afraid to arrive early and introduce yourself to people as they arrive. This helps loosen you up and also feel out your audience.**
 - Greeting people as they arrive is a great way to get to know your audience. I find that it also helps settle any nerves since you know some audience members and your audience knows you a bit better as well.

- **#1 thing to avoid! Don't be vague! Tell them how they can help and be specific about it.**
 - Your audience will assume, as a non-profit, you need their support. Give them something tangible to support. The more specific, the more likely it is to stick with them and make them feel like they can make a difference by contributing. For example, if you're in need of a freezer, then specifically state that you need X amount of funding for a freezer. If you need more volunteers for a senior box distribution give them the dates and hours you need help. Be specific about your call to action.

- **If at all possible, don't answer questions during your presentation**
 - I've found that if I start answering questions in the middle of a presentation, I'll get sidetracked and not have time to finish making the points I want to make. I will tell the audience that there will be time at the end for any questions.

- **Don't Forget to bring contact information and follow up**
 - Bring a card with your contact information and be sure to follow up your speaking engagement with a thank you note or phone call!

Top 5 Speaking Dos

- **Do start with something that gets your audience interacting with you**
 - Often times I'll start off by introducing myself and saying "Now, just to take some inventory of the room, how many of you have heard about the East Texas Food Bank – maybe you have heard about our programs or services." This gets the audience involved in your presentation from the get-go, making it feel as if you're having a conversation with them and not at them.

- **Do feel out your audience and be ready to adjust your speaking points accordingly**
 - This is easier in a smaller group setting. If you arrive a few minutes early and have time to chat to a few of your audience members, you will be able to gauge where their interest may lie and can adjust your client stories and some speaking points accordingly.

- **Do have client stories on hand.**
 - During a portion of my presentation I will touch on our various programs at the East Texas Food Bank. This is where I will insert a client story. These stories are meant to pull at the heartstrings of our audience and personalize hunger. Hunger is not just a thing that affects people we don't know. Client stories give hunger a face.

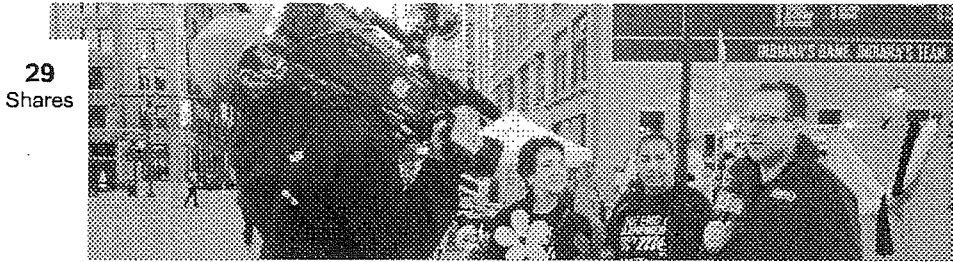
- **Do bring something for "show and tell" if applicable**
 - I often will bring either a sample senior box or kids backpack. If you can, pair your show and tell with your call to action. For instance, if we need funding specifically for backpack program in their area, I will bring a sample backpack with me to show as I explain the program and need.

- **Do expect at least 1 heckler per speaking engagement. If you luck out, then it'll be a happy surprise.**
 - In my experience "the heckler" will often be one of the first people to approach you before you begin your presentation and the last person you speak to on your way out. They question, question, and question some more, sometimes with no answering being good enough. Don't let them startle you. When I first started speaking, hecklers would rattle me, but not I see it as a huge opportunity to offer a different point of view which will get them to soften their outlook.



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5 Steps To Becoming a Nonprofit Media Relations Expert



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at's supposed to be a compliment, right? But doesn't it sit uncomfortably on you?

3 a comment might be well-intentioned, but it means that your message isn't reaching far. Many people don't know about the services you offer, and it seems like a daunting task to overcome. You don't have a big budget (or anything at all) to pay for advertising, and you've heard that the media market is changing. How could you possibly reach a larger audience?

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With a little elbow grease and some time commitment, you can learn how to be a good communicator and advocate for your organization. With time, media personnel will be calling on you to answer questions about your industry because you'll be seen as a reliable expert in the field.

Even if you don't have media relationships yet, you can start by being proactive, organized and prepared. Here's a few tips to get started:

1. Find an angle (determine your content)

Is the weather abnormal? Are you approaching Mother's Day? Is a local celebrity hosting a book signing? Use current events to craft your own

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message. Chances are, local media are already hunting for stories along these lines – give them some content of your own.

Perhaps your organization offers safe housing for homeless teens, and the winter weather is creating extremely cold temperatures. This would be a fantastic opportunity to pitch to local media about your services.

What about holidays? Share a love story between two seniors in your program around Valentine's Day. If your message can tie to a local personality or celebrity in any way, jump at it. Once you determine your angle, you can wrap what you want the community to know around the tie-in.

2. Craft your press release

Consider offering tips and tricks that tie in to your selected angle. For example, a list of weather safety tips during frigid temperatures would be a handy tie-in to your mission to provide safe housing options for homeless teens.

If your message is timely, and you don't have a current event to wrap around – for example, a grant announcement – you can still make your release intriguing by adding statistics and relevant quotes. Regardless of your message's topic, keep your release as short as possible.

[DOWNLOAD THIS SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE for a starting point.](#)

3. Pitch to local media

Do you have any connections with journalists or reporters? Start there. Pay attention to media personnel's interests and beats, and pitch them an idea for a story (your angle) with your release. Is there a local meteorologist who is outspoken about his love for dogs? Send him a pitch for your upcoming pet adoption day! Chances are he'll be an internal advocate to make the story happen – or in this new media age, HE might be the one to show up with a camera.

Most reporters prefer email, which works in your favor to send attachments. Offer interview candidates with a short teaser (*"I've got a connection with an amazing 92-year-old D-Day veteran who is willing to share his experiences with you. Just in time for Memorial Day!"*), and include any additional material.

SIDE NOTE: Storytelling is the best way to spread your message. If you don't have a blog, start one soon. Collect personal experiences and post them to your blog site. You can utilize these stories in email pitches (include a direct link) and social media posts down the road! Repackaging content can be one of your best communications strategies.



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While your release needs to be short, an email pitch can be an avenue for more detailed information – but don't make it too lengthy. Unless the reporter knows you, it may not be read in its entirety, so utilize the power of teasers. Also consider a catchy email subject line.

4. Follow-up

You don't have to wait until you receive a response via email to follow up. It is perfectly fine to leave a voicemail within a few minutes of sending the email pitch. It can help you further sell your story angle. Also consider sending a tweet to the reporter with a link to your release (Google Docs works well for this purpose.). You'll likely receive better response via Twitter than any other method of communication!

Another simple way to announce a special date or event is through online community calendars. Check to see if your stations and newspapers have event submission opportunities. Utilize them because some media outlets use these listings to publish or broadcast weekend activities!

5. Follow-through

Everything thus mentioned is important. But follow-through is the *most important* part of communications. Nearly anyone can submit a calendar listing or tweet a reporter with a story idea, but to be considered a reliable industry expert who can be called upon for future opportunities, you must make follow-through a priority. The good news? It's simple.

Let's say that meteorologist responded to your email about the mega adoption day you're hosting. Great! Feel free to celebrate this first victory! Next, you need to provide relevant, thorough information as quickly as possible. Here's what I mean:

Hi John! Thank you for arranging a segment at WWW-TV on Thursday! I have attached several photos, our logo, and suggested bullet points that can be used for the segment, as well as interview talking points and the original release.

The interview will include the following people:

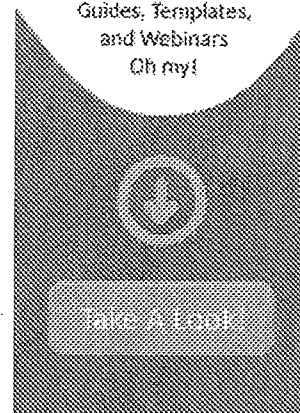
Mark Smith, Communications Manager, 555-555-5555

Jane Doe, Board Member, 555-555-5555

If at all possible, craft sample talking points to give to media or offer to write a radio PSA. This will help shape the conversation in the way that you desire. Include bullet points, too, to include in the end screen of a TV

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segment – quick details about the event, action items, etc. Don't forget to include your logo and website!

If a journalist or reporter wants to interview a candidate on site, make sure to meet them with the interviewee at the designed location, if at all possible. Again, this will help you have greater control of the conversation. When media arrive, present a file folder of printed materials that will help craft the story – press release, statistics, any brochures or handouts, etc. Include your business card.





NEVER TURN DOWN A MEDIA OPPORTUNITY. Find a way to make it happen. Reschedule your appointments if you have to or find someone to take your place. It's very important to be readily available or accessible; otherwise, it will be more difficult to pitch to that media outlet in the future.


Once the piece is complete, you have bragging rights to post it everywhere you can. Include the link on social media posts, in newsletters, your blog, etc. The media outlet will appreciate its longevity and reach just as much as you! Make sure to publicly thank the media outlet and reporters involved via social media. It will likely be retweeted and liked, gaining an even larger audience.

If you promptly provide quality material as suggested above, the media will appreciate you. Seriously. They'll likely respond to a future email pitch or ask you to help them when they have an existing industry-related story in the works.

Media communications is all about relationships. As a not-for-profit, this is something in which you have experience, and within time, you'll be able to be your own public relations specialist, too!

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Leah Shattuck is Communications Director at the Alzheimer's Association Greater Indiana Chapter. There she manages and coordinates all communication and marketing initiatives, including serving as editorial and project manager for website, newsletter, e-newsletter and annual report.