

## The Media Response Program

Every club needs to develop a “media response program” should something “newsworthy” happen at the club or within the larger community which directly or indirectly implicates that club’s “family” in some way.

I would recommend that all clubs do the following:

- a. Create a standing “Media Response Committee” whose members are fairly constant over time. This committee would guide the response effort, would train and educate the club’s media response contact and would provide a “global understanding” of media dynamics to each new Board.
- b. Create a “media packet” which could be given to any media representatives making inquiries.
- c. Determine who the key response people would be regardless of administration.
- d. Establish the “crisis management team” if different than the “Media Response Committee.”
- e. Develop a relationship with a media response consultant who could provide specific insights into different media and the personalities at work in each.

The entire media response effort might be “jump started” by addressing the following questions:

1. Who should be on “The Media Response Committee?”
2. Who should be on the “Crisis Management Team?”
3. Who should be the “official spokesperson” for the club?
4. Who outside of the Committees for Media and for Response should receive education about the media and the media response program?
5. Should a professional media consultant be hired and if so who?
6. Where should media encounters be held?
7. When should media encounters be held?
8. What questions should be asked of the media person before accepting or conducting the actual interview?
9. Which media outlets can you expect to deal with?
10. What personalities at each of the media outlets can you expect to deal with?
11. How long will you allow a “media encounter” to last?
12. Who will conduct “interview skills” practice?
13. What “interview skills guidelines” should be emphasized?
14. Should a non-member ever be the club representative in an interview?
15. What points will you be trying to make during the interview?
16. What general interview questions about clubs should be anticipated?
17. What specific interview questions about the incident in question should be anticipated?
18. What type of practice should be conducted before the actual interview?
19. How should one dress for an interview?
20. Should you ever speak “off the record?”
21. What “time management” concerns should one have for the interview?
22. How quickly should one respond to requests for interviews?
23. When should a media contact be initiated?
24. What things should a club representative not discuss during an interview?
25. When should the club say “no comment” to a media request?
26. When should a “prepared statement” be read or issued to the media?
27. How should the club control members and staff speaking to the media?
28. What should the members know about an incident and the club’s media response plan?

29. Under what circumstances should the media be allowed onto the premises?
30. What witnesses should be present while an interview is being conducted?
31. What “media warning signals” (We’re on a deadline, etc.etc.) should the club be aware of?
32. How does the club go about discovering in advance the interviewer’s knowledge of clubs in general and your club in the specific?
33. What annual media response training should be conducted for whom and by whom?
34. What potential “media response needed” scenarios might arise?
35. What conduct might alienate a reporter?
36. What “myths” might a reporter have about private clubs?
37. What “biases” might a reporter have about private clubs?
38. How quickly should the club respond to a media inquiry?
39. What “media kit” should be prepared in advance and issued to the media?
40. Should the club accept general club industry type interviews or only those dealing specifically with club specific incidents?

These questions need to be answered before we can represent that a media response plan is in place. The answering is the first step with continuous training and preparation following immediately thereafter.

Such a plan is a little frustrating since it is in anticipation of something that has yet to occur. Our preparation now and on a continuing basis, however, will ensure that the club responds in a reasoned and appropriate way when an “adrenaline inducing incident” finally occurs.