Communication Styles, Media Relations, and Communicating in a Crisis

DATE AND TIME  
Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 February 2010 / 10AM-1130AM

SPEAKER(S)  
M. Jane Christyson  
Director of Marketing and Golf Clubhouse Services  
Cleveland Metroparks  
4101 Fulton Parkway  
Cleveland, OH 44149  
mjc@clevelandmetroparks.com

SESSION DESCRIPTION  
This hands-on session will explore communication styles, day-to-day media relations, and communicating in a crisis. Learn tips, tricks, things to do, and things to avoid. Participants in this session will be exploring strategies and policy development with real-life examples.

(TUESDAY)  
Jane started out her session with a communication style test for everyone. She talked about the four styles and how people tend to gravitate towards other people with the same style. The key is to realize which style you identify with and what you can do to help others to benefit from their communication style. Adjusting your style to others makes it easier to work together. One big part of communication today is email, and she discussed email etiquette. Many conflicts could have been avoided by following a few easy tips and remembering that phrases can have double meaning and inflections don’t carry through an email. Another huge part of her presentation had to do with the media and how to deal with them within your organization. Some important things she said to remember is never lie to the media (the truth will eventually come out), deal with errors carefully, keep people updated on stories, prepare press kits, be mindful of legal ramifications, and always have a plan. Remembering these steps can make a world of difference on how you interact with the media and how they see you and your organization.
(WEDNESDAY)

**Major Points:**

**Packaging:** Collect the points meant to be taken away from all communications; deliver them in a structured and memorable way; use reiteration to reinforce them.

**Communication:** Know the “five W’s and H” of what it is you’re trying to communicate and hit them all: Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How? Customize the message and tailor your delivery to your audience.

**Media Plan (renewed annually):** Organizational media is repetitive and can be successfully programmed for targeted and timely delivery. Have it preformatted and ready to be filled in with the actual “five W’s and H,” on an annual calendar basis, but flexible enough for unexpected changes/conditions.

**Media Guidelines and Resourcing:** Create a team roster of media point people and resources, and plan their involvement in your Media plan, including a communications flowchart of input to output.

**SESSION LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Describe steps to take in daily media relations.
- Identify strategies to benefit your park in the event of an emergency situation.
- Understand a variety of communication styles and appropriate strategies for working with them.
Great Lakes Parks
Training Institute
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Jane Christyson
Director of Marketing and
Golf Clubhouse Services
Cleveland Metroparks
4101 Fulton Parkway
Cleveland, OH 44144
216.635.3229
mjc@clevelandmetroparks.com

Communicating as a Manager
- Styles
- Email

Media Contacts & Management
- Being A Spokesperson
- In A Crisis
- Press Conferences
- Resources

What’s in the Package?

Take A Test

WHAT IS YOUR STYLE?

DEMONSTRATORS

ASSERTORS

CONTEMPLATORS

NARRATORS

There is no wrong or right style, it is only important to recognize diversity. There are positives and negatives in every style.

DEMORSTRATORS

Plus
- Fast paced, animated, informal, outrageous, excitable, sociable

Negative
- Unreliable, self-centered, overly optimistic
**Assertors**

**Plus**
- Fast paced and direct, task oriented and then people oriented. Hard working ambitious leader. Makes decisions quickly. Goal oriented, assertive and confident.

**Negative**
- Take charge people who let nothing stop them. Impatient, competitive and judgmental.

**Contemplators**

**Plus**
- Task-oriented but more indirect and slow paced. Analytical, detail-oriented, persistent, good problem solvers, pride themselves on orderliness and accuracy

**Negative**
- Quiet, low key (withdrawn), personalities, rigid close-minded, overly-pessimistic

**Narrators**

**Plus**
- Slow-paced, indirect but more people oriented
- Relationships over goals
- Listen, sweet-tempered, open minded, loving, emotionally-intuitive

**Negative**
- Overly meek, easily sidetracked

**Disorganized (somewhat)**
- Not detail-oriented
- Wears bright colors
- Takes the initiative in conversation
- Laughs easily and loudly
- Are fun loving
- Like to talk about themselves

**Timeliness and efficiency**
- Look and appear powerful/formal
- Highly discriminating
- Take a leadership role in most situations
- Asks pointed or challenging questions
- Strong opinions and creative ideas

**Keep to themselves**
- Don't initiate conversations, but wait for you!
- Take copious notes
- Maintain meticulous organization
- Stay serious, rarely laugh
- Like to hear facts “proof”
Accommodating and helpful
Casual, simple, clothing
Take the initiative to create relationships
Like to talk and listen
Laugh quietly and often
Show gratitude easily

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH THIS INFO?
“I like people like me!”

HUSBAND
X
Contemplator

BOSS
Y
Assertor
(Contemplator)

PERSON
J
Demonstrator
(Contemplator)

EMAIL FRIEND OR FOE

Effective Communication
- Subject line
- Short
- CAPS!
- Recaps
- Spell check
- HTML – not unless necessity!
- BCC
- Be quick
- Signature file

The OH! Exercise
- Jumps out from behind a door
- Steps on toe
- Gives you chocolate
- Wallet at restaurant
- Child falls off bike
- Great gift
- Icky politician gets elected

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

Confronting via email is a bad idea resist the speed & convenience!
Without immediacy, vocal intonation, facial expressions and body language – the assumptive mind goes on a shopping spree!
EXAMPLE – “TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!”
Sender isn’t this great
- what an incredible job
- tell me I’m great
Receiver wanted writing help, I’ll critique!

Making Media Contacts – Build Relationships

Be Honest
Be Credible And Reliable
Return Phone Calls And Inquiries Promptly
Observe Deadlines – Ask If The Reporter Is On Deadline
Be Open And Friendly – But Get To The Point
Set Up Stories Quickly, Do As Much Groundwork As Possible
Deal With Errors Carefully
Thank The Reporters Or Editors
Keep Records
Hire A Clipping/Video Service

Don’t Go Over The Heads Of Editors
Don’t Expect To See A Reporter’s Version Of The Story Before Publication
Don’t Give Up!

YOUR ROLE AS SPOKESPERSON
DELEGATING YOUR ROLE

You Know A Lot! You’re Credible

The Ideal Candidate . . .
- Can Speak Honestly, Clearly And Confidently On The Subject At Hand
- Can Think On Their Feet Quickly Without Panicking
- Knows The Organization
- Knows A Range Of Issues
- Is Readily Available And Easy To Reach
- Has The Backing And Confidence Of The Organization Management

Preparing To Speak To The Media
- Train Yourself Or Work With Marketing Staff
  - What Type Of Reporter? News? Feature, Opinion Or Investigator?
  - Practice A Succinct, Easy-To-Understand Way Of Discussing A Story Without Jargon
  - Need To Stick To Key Points, Avoid Being Sidetracked
  - The Danger Of Sarcasm, Or Humor
  - Sound Bites/Paraphrasing – No Guarantees
  - The Importance Of Dress, Language, Eye Contact, Posture And Appropriate Surroundings
  - It’s Okay To Say I Don’t Know, Or I Can’t Speculate [but will find out the answer to the inquiry]
IN A CRISIS

Have A Plan

- Proactive Or Reactive
  - If News Is Bad, Be The First To Reveal It
  - Accuracy
  - Establish A Person As The Expert
  - Be Positive
  - Be Brief

Just Because The Phone Rings
- You Don’t Have To Take The Call
- Ask About Deadline
- Tell Them You Will Call Back And Do It!

Never, Never, Never Lie
- Don’t Try To Hide Information
- Don’t Provide Half Truths

Be Mindful Of Any Legal Ramifications Of Information You Release
- Use Good Judgment So No One’s Right To Privacy Is Violated
- Be familiar with the Sunshine Laws in Your State

There Is No Such Thing As “No Comment”
- Anticipate Difficult Questions
- Remember Your Message And Stick To The Point
- When You’ve Given Your Information On A Position – STOP!
- If You Don’t Know, Say So. Offer To Get Back To The Reporter With The Answer
- You Don’t Always Have To Answer The Question – Emphasize Reactive Measures
- The Faster You React, The Better
Put It In Writing
- Write A News Release And Distribute
- Initiate Media Contacts – Get Your Perspective Out First

PRESS CONFERENCES

Don’t Hold A Press Conference Unless Your News Is:
- An Extremely Important News Announcement
- A Very Fast-Breaking Story
- There Is A Need To Accommodate A Large Number Of Requests For An Interview Or Statement
- To Display Or Demonstrate Something Interesting To A Significant Number Of Different News Sources

Prepare Press Kits
Prepare Press Kits

Choose The Site Carefully
RESOURCES

Greater Cleveland Media Guide

Media Guides and Resources

- Bacon's
- PRNewswire
- Vocus