

**JOHN-COX
& ASSOC.**
PUBLIC RELATIONS

BASIC NEWS CONFERENCE PLANNING

BEFORE THE NEWS CONFERENCE

1. Know what you want to accomplish and make certain that everyone involved in the conference knows, too.
2. Pick your spokesman carefully. Make certain that he/she knows exactly what the company wants to accomplish.
3. Pick an aide. An aide is at least as important as the company spokesman.
4. Select a site for the news conference carefully. The story itself may dictate the location.
5. Make certain the site you pick has adequate physical facilities.
6. Prepare ahead of time at least 2 brief information packets. One, a 1-page biography of the spokesman--who he is, what he does, and how he spells his name. The second packet should be a somewhat larger collection of material on the company, the plant and its products--and most importantly, a summary of your key message(s) to be communicated at the news conference. One of each should be given to each reporter as he/she arrives for the news conference.
7. Contact the key media and all media information sources at least a week ahead of the scheduled news conference when possible. Whenever possible, the contacts should

2714 Cypress Point, Suite F
Missouri City, Texas 77459
713/499-2589

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be made by someone who knows the reporter personally.

DURING THE NEWS CONFERENCE

1. Insofar as possible, make certain you start on time.
2. The aide should be the person who greets the media; makes sure everything is set up properly; and should introduce the spokesperson. The spokesman stays out of site until the news conference is ready to begin.
3. Once introduced, the spokesman should begin with a prepared statement of no more than 2 minutes duration (less if possible). Once the statement is read, he should open the meeting to questions.
4. Once questioning begins, the spokesman should avoid, at all costs, what we call a "What if" question. A "What if" question means the spokesman is being asked to speculate, deal in hypothetical situations, or discuss possible actions or motives of a third party. The company spokesman should NEVER speculate; NEVER deal in hypothetical situations; and NEVER engage in a third party conversation.
5. If the media asks legitimate questions for which the spokesman does not have an immediate answer, he should answer "I don't know, but I will find out after this meeting is over and let you know."
6. The news conference should be ended by the aide. He flat interrupts and says "Mr. Jones, I'm sorry, but we have time for one more question." The the aide gets the spokeman out of the room. Some reason--a plane to catch; a phone call; something.

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AFTER THE NEWS CONFERENCE

1. To whatever degree possible, letters--over the spokesman's signature--should go out to the individual members of the media thanking them for attending and for their fair and objective reports. Under no circumstances tell anyone in the media "I liked your report." They are not there to please you. They will be more negative next time.
2. Such followup with the media should include an invitation to get in touch with the spokesman at any time in the future should there be additional questions.

DICK JOHN
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