

EXECUTIVE UPDATE

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CALL IN THE EXPERTS!

BY AL RICKARD, CAE

Next time the media calls, make sure you have experts lined up to respond if it's a question that requires member expertise. Association members hold a wealth of information, and you should tap this resource to gain positive publicity. Here's how:

- Identify experts in the core areas of your industry or profession (preferably top association leaders, but recruit rank-and-file members as needed).
- Prepare talking points on the core topics.
- Brief the experts on these points as well as overall association messages.
- Conduct media training for all experts.
- Advertise the availability of experts in your online media kit and in press materials you distribute to the media (arrange for interview requests to come through you and not directly to the experts).

- When the media calls, contact the expert and brief them on the request. Provide background on the media outlet, reporter, and story focus.
- Set up a three-way call with the reporter and member so you can monitor the interview and offer any input needed.
- Collect print and broadcast clips and display them at your next convention — the members who were quoted will be proud of the publicity, and soon more members will volunteer to participate.

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