

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION MEDIA OUTREACH STRATEGIES

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION OCTOBER 31, 2014

Good afternoon, as John Westbrook just mentioned my name is Jim Leahy and I am a Co-Principal Investigator at the NIDRR funded KT4TT Center at the University at Buffalo. Prior to our becoming the KT4TT Center in 2008, I was a Co-Principal Investigator on the NIDRR funded Technology Transfer RERC also at the University at Buffalo.

SLIDE 1

The title of my presentation today is: **Knowledge Translation Media Outreach Strategies**. From time to time over the last few years, our Center, has worked with the Mainstream Media to publicize our NIDRR funded efforts and to showcase some of the products we have developed for People with Disabilities.

SLIDE 2

This first slide shows some of the Media outlets we have worked with over that time. In the case of NBC and CBS, we worked with their local affiliate stations. In almost all the cases, CNN is the lone exception; we have initiated contact with the Media.

SLIDE 3

In dealing with the Media, I have learned to use two different approaches. The first approach is one for a broader national audience, with the second approach being one that is more targeted or tailored at local media coverage.

SLIDE 4

But before I speak about the two different approaches, there is an important point I would like to emphasize regarding your engagement with Media. Dealing with the Media requires, ***Patience, Persistence and Perseverance***. And really those are qualities that are needed to achieve almost anything in life. We live in an impatient world where everyone seems to seek instant gratification. See Social Media, Twitter, Facebook for an example....

SLIDE 5

In connecting with Media, I have learned that the first rule you always have to understand is that ***you need them, they don't need you***. The second rule is that you must do your due diligence research and identify relevant media outlets, identify individuals working in media that you plan to target, and track individuals/outlets to ensure relevance of our material (value mapping) to them. Hence the need for Patience, Persistence, and Perseverance.

SLIDE 6

Patience - you identify a media target, a USA Today editor for example, and make a cold call into that person. Here you are either making your **convincing pitch** or leaving a message to make your pitch at a future point in time. If it seems the person you are calling is never in and hasn't returned your call, now what do you do? (BTW never leave more than 2 messages, its best to hang up and try again later without leaving a message)

A tactic that has worked for me numerous times is to contact their Admin Asst. When the Admin answers, make your **convincing pitch** to them. Believe it or not in all probability that will open the door for you. The Admin Asst. will give you a time when their boss, your target, is available, and will make sure they take your call. Why does this work? It works because of the psychological make-up of the majority of human beings. In psychology it's called **Helping Behavior, Altruism, or selflessness** and it's a type of [prosocial behavior](#) or voluntary action where a person wants to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals. It works!! . **Caveat here though is that to begin with you had better have a good convincing pitch!!!!.**

Sometimes it will take months to get a story in the mainstream press. Once you have a commitment from a Media outlet, sometimes it will take months to just get a reporter/journalist freed up to do a story. Remember what you are pitching in most cases isn't Breaking News which jumps to the top of Media's to do list. You may be in a queue with other stories ahead of you.

SLIDE 7

Persistence- ok you've made your convincing pitch, and the target hasn't said no but is hesitant, or needs more time to think it over or to do a little research. What do you do? You ask if there is any additional information that the target needs that you could provide? If yes, provide that information as soon as possible. If not, ask when you can follow-up with the target at a future point in time. As either call is ending, you always ask when the next call should be. Before your call ends line up that next call back appt. BTW – make sure you call back at the appointed day and time.

SLIDE 8

Perseverance – you may be turned down by the first media target you identified, but you keep trying until you hit the mainstream outlet who will work with you. Too often, media coverage is secondary in grantees' mind. They will give it a shot, try it, fail and give up. They are not approaching it as if their financial livelihood depended on it. And that's the type of commitment/perseverance that is needed to succeed.

SLIDE 9

Earlier in my presentation, I mentioned 2 different approaches I have used. The first is targeted at a...

Broader/Nationwide Audience – I have learned that you must bring the idea of a broad national audience into your convincing pitch. Your pitch has to sell that your story will appeal to a vast audience. BTW when I use the word pitch, to me it is synonymous with the word presentation.

SLIDE 10

Knowing What to Say, How to Say It and When to Say it – this is all about your pitch to the Media. I have learned that you have to do some research and know the target's hot buttons to hit in your pitch. Is the editor seeking a piece that would appeal to all adults? Maybe a piece on the aging baby boomer generation or their adult children? If so, maybe you have to tie in your product or technology with other breakthrough products that serve the same market. You have to know what is happening in the world around you and how you can tie that in with what you are pitching,

BTW, the assumption here is that you have done your homework or research and have looked at the types of articles the editor and the publication you are targeting have been running. This will put you in tune with their 'hot buttons.'

SLIDE 11

Local Media – here you are seeking a quicker turnaround. You can hope to get the story picked up nationally but it just may stay local.

It can be press or tv coverage – sometimes more of a human interest story. Here you have to know what type of story the reporter you are contacting deals with – likes to do. You tailor your pitch to that. If the Media outlet you are targeting is business oriented – you tailor your presentation highlighting the business aspects of your product. This local story will only be on your product, service or organization. You don't have to worry about what is going on nationally.

Here you also need to write your own press releases and tailor them to your audiences. If you want to get something into a consumer read publication – write it as if you are addressing this audience. Consumers want to know functions and features and how this product is better for them. If your target is a business publication, write it for this audience. This audience wants to know about cost, sales, market broadening, product differentiators among other topics.

SLIDES 13, 14, 15

If time permits – examples (3) – One from local TV. one from mainstream press. One from a targeted academic (AUTM) publication... If not go to

SLIDE 16

Well that brings my presentation to a close. For those interested there is a conference next February called *'The Media Insights and Engagement Conference'* which highlights 'next gen research and engagement strategies helping you overcome challenges and decipher the future of media. " The link for that conference is:

www.MediaInsightsConference.com

SLIDE 17 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you. And with that I would like to turn it back over to John Westbrook. John...