



**Georgia-Pacific**

# Putting Your Best Face Forward

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# Why Communicate?

- ❖ Public is hungry for news
- ❖ State your business objectives
- ❖ Community interest

# How is Communication Used?

- ❖ To crystallize unformed opinions
- ❖ To maintain favorable opinions by constant reinforcement
- ❖ To change or neutralize disparate opinions

# Creating Presentations

- ❖ Know your audience
- ❖ Establish your objective/develop message
- ❖ Maintain discipline and focus

# Things to Remember

- Be a person before you're a spokesperson
- You don't have to be perfect
- Listeners are supportive

# Presentation Structure

- ❖ Identify your major points
- ❖ Use examples, analogies, stories and personal experiences
- ❖ **Avoid, when possible, technical terms and acronyms**
- ❖ Look for opportunities to re-emphasize your major points
- ❖ **Always tell the truth**

# It's not what you say ...but how you look when you say it

- Posture
- Stance
- Be sincere
- Gestures
  - Don't fidget, avoid aggressive motions like finger pointing, fist pounding, etc.

## ...And HOW you say it

- ❖ Corporatese -- using big, bureaucratic words when short simple words would work just as well
  - Never use a large word if a small one will work as well
  - Avoid technical language or industry acronyms

# “What Does that Mean in English?”

“Scintillate, scintillate, diminutive luminous mass.”

“Pulchritude possesses solely cutaneous profundity.”

“Male cadavers are incapable of yielding testimony.”

“Individuals domincillating in vitreous edifices would be well advised to refrain from catapulting petrous projectiles.”

# “That’s Not What I Meant”

“The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.”

“I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law’s face, and headed over the embankment.”

“I told the police that I was not injured but on removing my hat, I found that I had a fractured skull.”

# The Hostile Audience

- ❖ Give the angry person your undivided attention
  - establish eye contact
- ❖ Be a good listener – repeat what you have heard
- ❖ Show empathy

# Visual Aids -- Do's and Don'ts

- ❖ DO use slides, overheads or other visual aids to enhance your presentation
- ❖ DON'T use them if you don't need them
- ❖ DO keep your slides simple
- ❖ DON'T use "busy" slide background templates
- ❖ DO practice with the AV equipment before beginning your presentation

“ And Now, the News!”

# Reporters Are People Too

- ❖ Age and skill depend on location
- ❖ Gather news, quotes, information, emotions to relay to the community
- ❖ They usually possess very limited knowledge of what you do
- ❖ Usually work for companies whose job it is to inform . . . but also entertain

# Be prepared to answer

- ❖ What does your company do?
- ❖ What is your role in the company?
- ❖ Where does your company fit in your industry (size, production, etc.)?

# Know your stuff

- ❖ Make sure you're the right person to talk to; you may need someone else to participate
- ❖ Establish your key messages
- ❖ Use accurate data -- don't fudge
- ❖ Be able to explain technical information in practical terms
- ❖ Be prepared to answer tough questions
  - Including the ones you hope they DON'T ask

# The Interview -- Do's & Don'ts

- ❖ Avoid technical language
  - remember who's watching, listening or reading
- ❖ **There's no such thing as "off the record"**
- ❖ State conclusions first; keep answers short
- ❖ If you don't know the answer, say so, AND offer to get it
- ❖ **Never** say "No comment"
  - sounds like you're hiding something
  - there are alternatives

# Do's & Don'ts

- ❖ Don't repeat negative words or phrases that may be part of a question
- ❖ Avoid responding to hypothetical questions
- ❖ Remember your audience and the brevity of your opportunity to communicate
  - Keep it simple, easy to understand
  - Most people know very little about what you're talking about when it comes to environmental rules and regulations
    - They DO know they want clean air and clean water

# Do's & Don'ts

- ❖ Use humor with care
- ❖ Remember your key messages/themes and transition back to them when necessary
  - sometimes you need to answer the question you WISH they had asked
- ❖ **Don't lose your temper**

# Guiding Principles of Crisis Communications

- ❖ Tell the truth and tell it fast
  - it's okay to defer a response, take the reporter's phone number and get back to them
  - Don't let others do the talking for you
  - Identify your key messages: what happened? Why? What are you doing about it?
- ❖ State your commitment to the community and/or employees
- ❖ Don't speculate

# More Guiding Principles

- ❖ Don't release specific information on injured parties until family members are notified
- ❖ Don't estimate potential monetary loss
- ❖ Explain what you've done to control the situation
- ❖ Be concise; don't use jargon

# Ready, Set, GO!

- ❖ Read the newspaper and watch the TV news
  - Tune in to the news talk shows and see how the pros handle tough questions, how they use their key messages
- ❖ Check out Web sites of local activist groups
- ❖ Take communications seriously
- ❖ Beware the “creeping crisis”