



Top 8 takeaways from Chaos to Communications

During AWC's Annual Conference in Vancouver, Pullman Mayor and WSU Professor Emeritus of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communications, Glenn Johnson, treated his fellow conference attendees to an informative and entertaining session on dos and don'ts when working with the news media.

Here are 8 key takeaways:

1. **Look for the “hyper-local” angle** – Some news outlets are tailoring content for neighborhood news. Also, as part of the “new normal” for news, reporters are looking for news, so try pitching a local take on the day's big news story.
2. **News releases** – Reporters are stretched thin, and they rely on their email search function just like you do. Paste your news release into the body of your email – it makes it easier for a reporter to find, read and use.
3. **Update those contacts** – Another part of the new normal is reporter turnover. Check and update your contact lists regularly.
4. **Know your talking points** – This is especially important for an on-camera interview where you are only going to get a 5-7 second sound bite. You won't have time for a lengthy explanation.
5. **Be your own reporter** – You never know what may happen, so record your own interview (Washington is a two-party consent state for audio recording, so first make sure the reporter knows that you are recording). If you record your interview, you can always post it to your website to get the whole story out to the community.
6. **Always be open & transparent** – Always assume everything is on the record. Even background information not attributed to anyone can still be included in the story. Don't forget, if you are wearing a mic, *it is always recording*. So even if the camera isn't on you, watch what you say.
7. **Bring a good handout** – If you are covering something particularly complex with lots of numbers and facts, providing the reporter with a handout can help avoid confusion when they are finishing the story.
8. **And finally** – “Never screw-up on a slow news day.”

Thank you Mayor Johnson for the helpful tips!

You can check out the complete presentation [here](#).