NOAA Communications: Getting the Message Out

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NOAA Communications

- Based on corporate model
- More strategic approach
- Tie NOAA brand to diverse achievements
- Establish common message
Media Realities

- The “news cycle” is 24/7
- Pack journalism
- Shrinking news holes, staffs, budgets
- Instant news - Internet
- Blogs
NOAA Media Relations

22 PA specialists working media relations in NOAA...

- Avg. 33 interviews per workday – 8,200+ per year
- Avg. 1½ releases issued per workday
- 6451 news hits through July 11
NOAA Media Guidance

- Implements DOC policy
- Reaffirms policy of openness
- Reinforces rights of scientists to discuss their work
- Separates fundamental research from official communications
- [http://www.communications.noaa.gov/mediaguidance.html](http://www.communications.noaa.gov/mediaguidance.html)
How do you make news?

- Tell a story
- Know your audience
- Why is this important to the average reader or viewer?
- Think visual
How Can You Help?

- Give PA advance notice on potential newsmakers
- Think of ways to insert your work in existing stories
- Be available
Tips for Powerful Communications

- Prepare for the interview
- Know your message – 3 points
- Know context of story and the audience
- Assume everything you say will be quoted
- Remember that you will represent NOAA
- Be honest... but be smart
Tips for Powerful Communications

- Be concise – limit answer to a few sentences
- Use illustrations of your work to “humanize”
- Don’t be afraid to repeat yourself
- Don’t speculate
- Avoid jargon
Crisis Communications

- Bad news usually trumps good news
- Critics rely on surprise
- Essential to get NOAA’s view in the same story
- PA needs the answers in the same news cycle
- Answers must be reduced to simple English