

# 10 Commandments for the Science Press Officer

# Be

Responsive

Truthful

Articulate

Accessible

Helpful

Selective

Contrite

Patient

A Conduit

Potted Palm

# Be Responsive

- Answer your phone and e-mail
- Get back to reporters even if you can't help them.
- Respect news deadlines

# Be Truthful

- Do not lie
- Do not obstruct by lying
- You may not be able to tell reporters what they want to know because of legal or other constraints, but do not present false information. Not only will it ruin your relationship, it **WILL** come back to bite you.

# Be Articulate

- Write clear, concise news for your audience
- Know your audience
- Do not write around the news or the science
- Do not hype the research
- Do not use the word breakthrough

# Be Accessible

- Supply full contact information for the writer of the story
- Supply full contact information for your researchers
- Supply full contact information for researchers at other institutions if applicable

# Be Helpful

- If you don't have an expert on the subject, say so
- Do not provide someone only peripherally able to answer the questions
- If you know of another institution that has the expert required, recommend it.

# Be Selective

- Send your news releases to the right audience
- Do not use a service that gets paid by the piece.
- Send only targeted mailings
- Do not send faculty announcements, awards and events to people who could not care less.



# Be Contrite

- Own up to your mistakes
- Fix them if at all possible

# Be Patient

- If a reporter does not understand, explain the science if you can. No one can know every area. Sometimes general assignment reporters call.
- If you think they are looking for the wrong expert, try to explain why and who they should speak to.

# Be a Conduit

- Allow reporters to speak directly with researchers
- Allow them to do interviews alone whether in person or on the phone

# Be a Potted Palm

- Prepare the researchers and then stand in the background like a potted palm
- Facilitate but do not interfere