

Bradford Fitch Jack Holt, Editor



# Media Relations Handbook

for Government, Associations, Nonprofits, and Elected Officials

Second Edition

 TheCapitolNet

Media Relations Handbook  
for Government, Associations, Nonprofits, and Elected Officials

Second Edition



Human communication is a constant, continuous, and dynamic phenomenon. You cannot not-communicate nor can you un-communicate. For an individual entity, there is only ONE communication. Not multiple, not varieties, only one. That one communication is the culmination of all that has been communicated by the entity until the "now" in time. You cannot go back and un-communicate something. You can only begin from the "now" to create the intended outcome. That outcome is always a negotiation with the receiver/audience/community to cultivate an agreed understanding.

For a communication professional, understanding this fact is essential. No matter where you work, someone has been communicating something before you began. You cannot un-communicate it. You cannot create a new beginning; but you can begin now to create a new outcome. Research continues into the changes in communication wrought by the Internet and public expectations that are experiencing mercurial change.

As best practices are now being developed, the *Media Relations Handbook, Second Edition*, can give you guidance and ideas that will spark your innovation.

[MediaRelationsHandbook.com](http://MediaRelationsHandbook.com)

 TheCapitolNet

Published by TheCapitol.Net  
PO Box 25706, Alexandria, VA 22313-5706  
[www.TheCapitol.Net](http://www.TheCapitol.Net)



Printed in the United States of America

# Summary Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	xxiii
<b>Chapter One:</b> <b>First Steps</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter Two:</b> <b>Tools of the Craft</b> .....	20
<b>Chapter Three:</b> <b>Developing a Message and Communication Plan</b> .....	48
<b>Chapter Four:</b> <b>Interacting with Reporters</b> .....	66
<b>Chapter Five:</b> <b>Overview of the Media:</b> <b>Print, Radio, TV, and the Internet</b> .....	90
<b>Chapter Six:</b> <b>Online Communication</b> .....	118
<b>Chapter Seven:</b> <b>Dealing with the Principal</b> .....	158
<b>Chapter Eight:</b> <b>Interview Preparation</b> .....	170
<b>Chapter Nine:</b> <b>Internal Issues: Experts, Policy,</b> <b>Numbers, Leaks, Lawyers, and Language</b> .....	186
<b>Chapter Ten:</b> <b>How to Interact with Congressional</b> <b>Campaign Operations</b> .....	202
<b>Chapter Eleven:</b> <b>Communication in a Federal Agency</b> .....	216
<b>Chapter Twelve:</b> <b>Crisis Communication in Public Affairs</b> .....	232
<b>Chapter Thirteen:</b> <b>Honest Spin: The Ethics of Public Relations</b> .....	264

## Back of the Book

Appendix One: Thirteen Rules of Media Relations.....	281
Appendix Two: Glossary.....	283
Appendix Three: Related Resources.....	287
Epilogue: Remember Gunter Schabowski.....	293
Index.....	295

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	xxiii
<b>Chapter One: First Steps</b>	
§1.1 Introduction.....	3
§1.2 Matching Convictions with a Job.....	4
§1.3 Getting to Know the Principal.....	5
§1.4 Assessing Your Strategic Position and Historical Record.....	6
§1.5 Learning the Office Strategic Goals.....	7
§1.6 Assessing the Issue Terrain.....	8
§1.7 Conducting a Resource Assessment.....	9
§1.8 Asset Inventory.....	11
§1.9 List Building.....	12
§1.10 Sample Database Checklist.....	13
§1.11 Media Directories and Software.....	14
§1.12 Getting to Know Your Reporters.....	15
§1.13 Internal Politics.....	16
§1.14 Creating a Communication Plan.....	17
§1.15 Finding Teachers and Allies.....	18
§1.99 Chapter Summary.....	19
<b>Chapter Two: Tools of the Craft</b>	
§2.1 Introduction.....	21
§2.2 The First Tool: The Written Word.....	21
§2.3 How to Test Your Document's Readability.....	22
§2.4 Press Release.....	23
§2.5 Email Press Releases.....	24
§2.6 Sample Press Release.....	25
§2.7 Press Advisory.....	27
§2.8 Sample Press Advisory.....	28
§2.9 Backgrounders.....	27
§2.10 Op-eds.....	29