Annotated Agenda

**DRIVING THE NARRATIVE: MAKING PERCEPTION MATCH REALITY**

**TIME ALLOTTED: 1 hour and 15 minutes**

**PRESENTER(S):**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

* Projector and PPT
* Handout: Upcoming Digital Trainings
* Handout: Facebook Best Practices
* Handout: Twitter Best Practices
* Flip Chart Paper
* Markers

**GOALS FOR THIS SECTION:**

* Understand why driving the narrative is a key component of issue organizing
* Understand how we tell our story on the issues through digital and earned media
* Identify what a strong earned media event looks like and best practices for organizing one

**SKELETAL AGENDA**

1. **Introduction and Goals**
2. **Why Driving the Narrative is Important**
3. **Day of Action Case Studies**
4. **Earned Media Breakout Discussions**
5. **Debrief and Closing**

**ANNOTATED AGENDA**

**0:00 – 0:06 Introduction and Goals**

0:00 – 0:03 Personal Story Intro

* **[Slide 1]** [Trainer should give a two-minute version of their personal story as relevant to driving the narrative through press and social media. Remember to include challenge – choice – outcome into your story and practice it like any other section of the training!]

0:03 – 0:05 Introduce session and goals

* **[Slide 2]** In this session, our goals are that you are able to:

1. Understand why driving the narrative is a key component of issue organizing
2. Understand how we tell our story on the issues through digital and earned media
3. Identify what a strong earned media event looks like and best practices for organizing one

0:05 – 0:06 Agenda review

* **[Slide 3]** So before we dive in, here’s a look at what we’re going to cover:

1. Once we get through the introduction we’ll talk about why driving our own narrative is so important.
2. Then we’ll look at a couple of Day of Action events and talk about best practices for telling the story of those events and other events like them.
3. After that, you’ll break out into small groups to dig into one of the four components of a strong earned media event, which we’ll cover shortly,
4. And then we will debrief and close.

* One thing I do want to note about today’s session: it will be very interactive, with a lot of large group and small group discussion. We are going to try to save all questions for the end, so if you think of one, just write it down, and if the answer doesn’t arise by the end of the session, feel free to ask! If we run out of time at the end, we’ll ask you to write your remaining questions on your end-of-day evaluation.
* So now that we’re through the introduction,
* **[Animation cue]** Let’s talk about why driving the narrative is so important.

**0:06 – 0:11 Why Driving the Narrative is Important**

0:06 – 0:08 Framing

* **[Slide 4]** What do we mean when we talk about driving the narrative, either around our organization or around an issue? (Ask a few participants to raise their hand and share.)
* That’s right, we’re talking about being the loudest voice on the scene, about having the most resonant and widely spread message, and most importantly, defining our work and why the change that we want on an issue is what’s best for the country, rather than allowing others to do it for us.
* We have another training session on how to craft a strong message; but we can’t just craft a message and be done with it - we have to get it out there.
* This is how we help our Members of Congress understand that *supporters of change are everywhere.*

0:08-0:11 Making Perception Match Reality

* **[Slide 5]** Fortunately, supporters of change are everywhere, so we have that fact on our side. Our job is to make sure our Members of Congress know that.
* Everything we do is designed to accomplish that goal. What are some ways we do that? **(**Ask audience members to raise hands)

1. Some answers will include holding large events with a lot of people to show our strength in numbers; holding press conferences, pushing stories on digital, etc.

* **[Animation cue]** That’s right. We organize events for supporters of our issues to come together, and then we tell that story far and wide. We have to take every opportunity to make sure the world knows about our work. That’s how we get Members of Congress to take note.
* **[Slide 6]** There are two ways we do this: one way we can control, and another way we can’t exactly control, but we can influence.
* I heard a lot of people mention things like tweeting about our events, posting pictures on Facebook, etc. That is what we can control, and it is going to be up to the people in this room to make sure that everyone in our chapters is telling our story in these mediums for every single action we take.
* I also heard a lot of people mention press conferences, giving interviews to the local paper, and writing letters to the editor. That is the part that we can’t control directly, but that we have learned a lot about how to influence.
* **[Slide 7]** So today, we are going to look at a few sample action events and discuss some best practices for getting that story out there as far and wide as possible, both through digital media we can control directly, and through earned media we can influence.

**0:11 – 0:23 Day of Action Case Study 1**

0:11 – 0:13 Case study explanation

* **[Slide 8]** [Insert photos from a past event in your state and describe the event’s purpose and a few details.]

0:13-0:18 Social media in Case Study 1

* If you were organizing an event like this, what are some of the things you’d do with digital tools to tell the story of your work? [Call on 1-2 people; answers will fall along the lines of taking photos and tweeting them, posting them to Facebook, tweeting at their MOC, etc.]
* Great - so every event we hold, we want to think of creative ways to amplify it using our social networks.

0:18-0:23 Best practices for driving the narrative on social networks:

* **[Slide 9]** We should all live by two rules for social media, and this is only the beginning - a lot more digital training is coming your way in the next few weeks.
* The first rule is that great content is “searchable, snackable, and shareable.” The Three S’s. You want to use words people are going to look for if they’re thinking about your issue, you want your content to be easy to digest, and you want it to be easy to share.

1. Example: Facebook post with a photo and 2-sentence caption.

* The second rule: Volume matters. It’s not just the job of the Digital Lead to push our narrative on social networks. It works best if everyone does it. The Digital Lead’s job is to make it easy for everyone in your chapter to do this - so training them on the tools and creating content that is easy for them to share.
* Following these basic rules will help us all get our content to reach as many people as possible, and when we all do it at once, that’s how we shape the narrative.

**0:23 – 0:35 Day of Action Case Study 2: Press Conference**

0:23 – 0:25 Case study explanation

* **[Slide 10]** Choose a press conference that has happened in your state and insert photos in the PowerPoint. Explain the basics of the event, including what issue it was for, where and when it took place, and who the talkers were.

0:25-0:30 Analyzing the case study through probing questions

* Keeping this very brief description and photo in mind, what stands out to you regarding...

1. The speakers?
   1. [Ask the audience for their thoughts. People should note that the speakers fall into three categories: surrogate, validator and real person.]
2. The signage?
   1. [People should note that the signs reinforce the message. They are clear and readable and simple. You can ask if there is anything additional they would have done with the signs..]
3. The background?
4. [What can you tell about the setting of where this event took place? What would have been a good setting for this event? How could have the photos portrayed that?]
5. This is great. You all have a great eye for an excellent press conference!

0:30-0:35 The four key components of a strong earned media event

* **[Slide 11]** A strong earned media event has four key components:
* Message—You need to have a clear understanding of what the message is you want conveyed at the event.

1. This message should be weaved in the signage, the talking points of each talker and reflected in your location.
2. The message must include which MOC you are targeting for the event (either positively or negatively)
3. The message must include organizations represented at the event
4. Keep in mind the signage piece is so important, and judge the strength of your signage by asking yourself: if I were watching the news while doing the dishes in my home, and the TV were muted, would I understand the purpose of this event?

* Talkers—The people who are going to help spread the message of the event.

1. Surrogates: People who attract media attention—elected official or celebrity
2. Validators: Someone who is seen as an expert on the issue. They validate the issue to the local community—community leader, scientists, doctors, etc.
3. Everyday person: Someone who is an everyday person who can speak personally on the issue. They bring the human element to the issue

* Location

1. Where and when possible, your location should reflect the message of the event
2. Make sure you have a location that you can control
3. Keep locations close to news stations (the less they have to travel, the more likely to get press)
4. Think about the background image.

* Connecting Local issues with national issues:

1. Earned media events are more appealing to news outlets when they are able to cover a national story and give it local flavor

* **[Slide 12]** Excellent. So now that we’ve gotten our feet wet with the key components of an earned media event, we’re going to break out!

**0:35 – 1:05 Earned Media Breakout Discussions**

0:35-0:40 Setting up the breakouts

* **[Slide 13]** In just a moment, we are going to break out into four groups. Please don’t move until I say go.
* First, we’ll count off by four, then 1s will go to [point to and describe corner of the room], 2s will go to [point to and describe corner of the room], 3s will go to [point to and describe corner of the room], and 4s will go to [point to and describe corner of the room].
* Then, each group is going to focus on one of the four components. Group 1 will focus on Message, Group 2 will focus on Talkers, Group 3 will focus on Location, and Group 4 will focus on connecting national to local.
* Each group will have five minutes to discuss a set of questions coming up on the next slide, and then you’ll have one minute to report back your answer - no more, and no less! - so make sure you have a designated note taker and reporter!
* Does that all make sense to everyone? Okay, great, here’s the scenario.
* **[Slide 14]** Can someone volunteer to read the scenario at the top of the slide in the grey box? [Have a volunteer read it out loud.]
* And who would like to volunteer to read out the discussion questions for group 1? Group 2? Group 3? Group 4? [Have a different volunteer read each set out loud.]
* Okay, let’s go ahead and count off! [Ask participants to count off by four.]
* Remember, Group 1 is here, Group 2, is here, Group 3 is here, Group 4 is here.
* And, GO!

0:40-0:46 Breakout discussion 1: The four components of an earned media event

* [Make sure to walk around the room to listen in on conversations and help participants who may be stuck.]
* [Give participants warnings when there are 2 minutes, 1 minute, and 30 seconds remaining.]

0:46-0:52 Report-backs from Breakout 1

* [Re-gain the attention of the crowd. Best practice: Shout, “If you can hear me, clap once! If you can hear me, clap twice!” As many times as needed until room is silent.]
* Okay, go ahead and stay in your corners, but turn your attention back to the front of the room.
* Here’s what we’re going to do. Each group is going to have one minute to read out their answers. No more, no less!
* I need someone loud to volunteer to be the time keeper. Any volunteers? Okay, great. [Volunteer name], please make a very loud and obnoxious noise when one minute is up, okay?
* And if you’re reporting back, don’t think that you can just stop talking after 30 seconds. If you run out of things to say, you’re going to have to expand upon some of your previous points!
* Okay, let’s go to Group 1. [Group 1 reports back]
* Group 2! [Group 2 reports back]
* Group 3! [Group 3 reports back]
* Group 4! [Group 4 reports back]

0:52-0:54 Setting up the 2nd breakout discussion

* This is fantastic. You are all so good at this! It’s clear that everyone in the room has a solid vision of what a strong earned media event looks like.
* Now - we talked earlier about how we drive our narrative through digital tools, because that’s free publicity that we can 100% control.
* The other way to get free publicity is by having reporters actually show up to cover these great events - which is what we’ll talk about next.
* **[Slide 15]** Staying in your groups, you’re going to take 5 minutes to brainstorm ways to get the press to cover your earned media event.
* **Please don’t move until I get through the instructions.**
* Each group should use the butcher paper on the wall to write your brainstorm. Draw a line down the middle of it to form two columns.
* The note taker for each group should write two headers at the top of those columns: the column on the left should be labeled “What,” and the column on the right should be labeled “When.”
* Take five minutes in your group to write down the things you can do in the “What” column, and when you should do them in the “When” column.
* Okay - GO!

0:54-1:00 Breakout Discussion 2: Best Practices for getting press at your event

* [Make sure to walk around the room to listen in on conversations and help participants who may be stuck.]
* [Give participants warnings when there are 2 minutes, 1 minute, and 30 seconds remaining.]

1:00-1:05 Report-backs from Breakout 2

* [Re-gain participants’ attention in front of room.]
* Who would like to go first?
* [Have each group report back their “Whats” and “Whens.” Ask probing follow-up questions to reveal additional details to their best practices.
* Awesome, those are all some really great practices. A lot of them are what we have up here:
* **[Slide 16]** I would say there are four main things to keep in mind.

1. First, send out a press advisory to local press outlets. This is most effective when sent 1-3 days out, and then followed up with a phone call. It also doesn’t hurt to send it multiple times.
2. Secondly, an advisory on its own is usually not enough - it takes a phone call to really break through to the new outlet.
   1. We recommend calling them once a day after you’ve sent the advisory.
   2. Make sure to call them the morning-of.
   3. Something you may not know is that news outlet staff will typically go into a morning meeting at 9:00 AM to decide what they’re going to cover that day. Try calling at 8:30 AM so it’s at the top of the assignment desk’s radar, and then again at 10:00 AM after that meeting is done.
3. Thirdly, the ask is just as important as in a volunteer recruitment call!
   1. Make sure to highlight all of the four elements that make your event strong. This makes a compelling case for the reporter to cover the event.
   2. Make a bold ask! Ask if you can count on them to add the event to their scheduling book.
4. Finally, getting pretty bold here, but don’t be afraid to do creative things like tweet at reporters and news outlets. Some great things you can do are include photos of you and your team prepping for the event, doing things like sign making, and of course include the main details.

* All right, give yourselves a round of applause!
* **[Slide 17]** Now we just need to debrief the session and wrap up.

**1:05 – 1:15 Debrief and Closing**

1:05-1:07 Key takeaways

* **[Slide 18]** We’ve done a lot of discussion today, but I want to make sure everyone leaves with three key takeaways:

1. We must use every opportunity to tell the story that supporters of our issue priorities are everywhere - this is what moves Members of Congress to make the decisions that can create the change we want.
2. Every time we take action, we all need to tell that story directly through social media and also indirectly through news outlets.
3. A strong earned media event has a clear message, the right talkers, the right location, and a local take on the issue.

1:07-1:10 Next steps

* **[Slide 19]** [Outline what next steps you want participants to take to put these skills to use taking action.]

1:10-1:15 Final Q and A

* **[Slide 20]** We probably won’t get to every question, but will answer as many as possible.
* If you have more, please take a moment to write them down now, and ask them in your evaluation at the end of the day.
* Thank you!