



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES

MEDIA RELATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES

For Municipal Elections 2020

Better government. Stronger communities.





EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

GUIDE TO MEDIA RELATIONS

- Journalists are not your enemy ... nor are they your friend.
- They have a job to do ... and so do you.
- Their Job: Deliver a good story that attracts readers.
- Your Job: Deliver a message that attracts voters at the polls.





ENCOUNTERING THE
MEDIA

RULES OF MEDIA ENGAGEMENT:

- Well prepped, effective = message delivered
- Strategize – what is your key message?
- **CALL TO ACTION:** Messaging should provide voters with empowerment
- Vote for me = positive benefit



MEDIA STRATEGY:

Where can you control the message in your campaign?

Proactive - Media release

- Website
- Paid advertising
- Direct mail

Where do you have less control over the message?

Proactive - Campaign Event or Debate

- Social Media

Reactive - Earned Media



MEDIA EVENT

DEVELOP A PLAN

- Purpose?
- What is your key message?
- Brief background on issue
- Desired outcome of event?
- Media release?
- What media are being invited?
- Logistics such as where, when, and who will staff?
- What are your prepared lines?





MEDIA RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

- Purpose?
- What is the your key message?
- Brief background on issue
- What media will receive the release, how and when?
- When, why and who is preparing release?
- What are your prepared lines?





**RESPONDING TO
MEDIA REQUESTS**

ASK THE REPORTER:

- What is the request about?
- Print, radio, television or Internet?
- Print, airdate or posting deadline?
- Where and when?
- Who else will the reporter be talking to?
- Length of interview?
- Photos?



DO THE BACKGROUND WORK:

- Prep interview
- Brief background on story
- Background on interviewer
- Background on where, when, why and who will staff
- Your key message
- Prepare lines



USE THE LAW OF ADVERTISING

- **Reach and Frequency**
- **An advertisement must be heard seven times before a listener will absorb the message**
- **Repetition is key**



MESSAGING

- Take every opportunity to reinforce your key message
- It's not about how catchy your slogan is ...
- It's about how often you say it
- Get your “elevator pitch” down



DURING INTERVIEWS

- One thought per sentence
- Your interview could be clipped to contain one thought ... maybe two
- Keep your message concise and to the point. Don't ramble
- You won't be quoted on something you didn't say
- Stay on message....go to your "happy place"

DURING INTERVIEWS

- Don't provide unnecessary detail
- It will detract from your key message
- Think of your message track as the road
- And your opinions, observations and extraneous detail are the ditch

DURING INTERVIEWS

- Do not argue
- If you disagree with a premise, say so then go directly to your key message
- Always validate a questioner's concerns
"I understand that concern, however my focus in this election is ..."
- Take every opportunity to repeat your key message ... it may seem repetitive to you but there are those who haven't heard it

DURING INTERVIEWS

- Refer to the interviewer formally until they ask you to use their first name
- Be deferential, respectful and polite to all participants
- Refer to other Councillors, opponents and other figures formally



THINGS YOU NEVER WANT TO SAY AFTERWARD:

"That's not what I said!"

"They only took one line ... and it's out of context!"

"That's not what I meant!"

"I said a lot more than that but they didn't use it."

EARNED MEDIA



REASONS NOT TO DO AN INTERVIEW

- There is no point doing an interview with a media outlet if it is not accessible to YOUR voters in YOUR area.
- Ask yourself honestly “How many votes will this interview earn?”





THE UNEXPECTED INTERVIEW

Do not get drawn into irrelevant issues

Before being hit with an unexpected media encounter, ensure you understands the principle of **bridging thoroughly ...**



SUCCESSFUL BRIDGING

“Affordable housing is an important issue but what I’m hearing on the doorstep is we need transit ...”

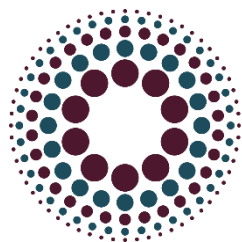
“My opponent may be worried about urban chickens but my focus is ensuring we access transit ...”

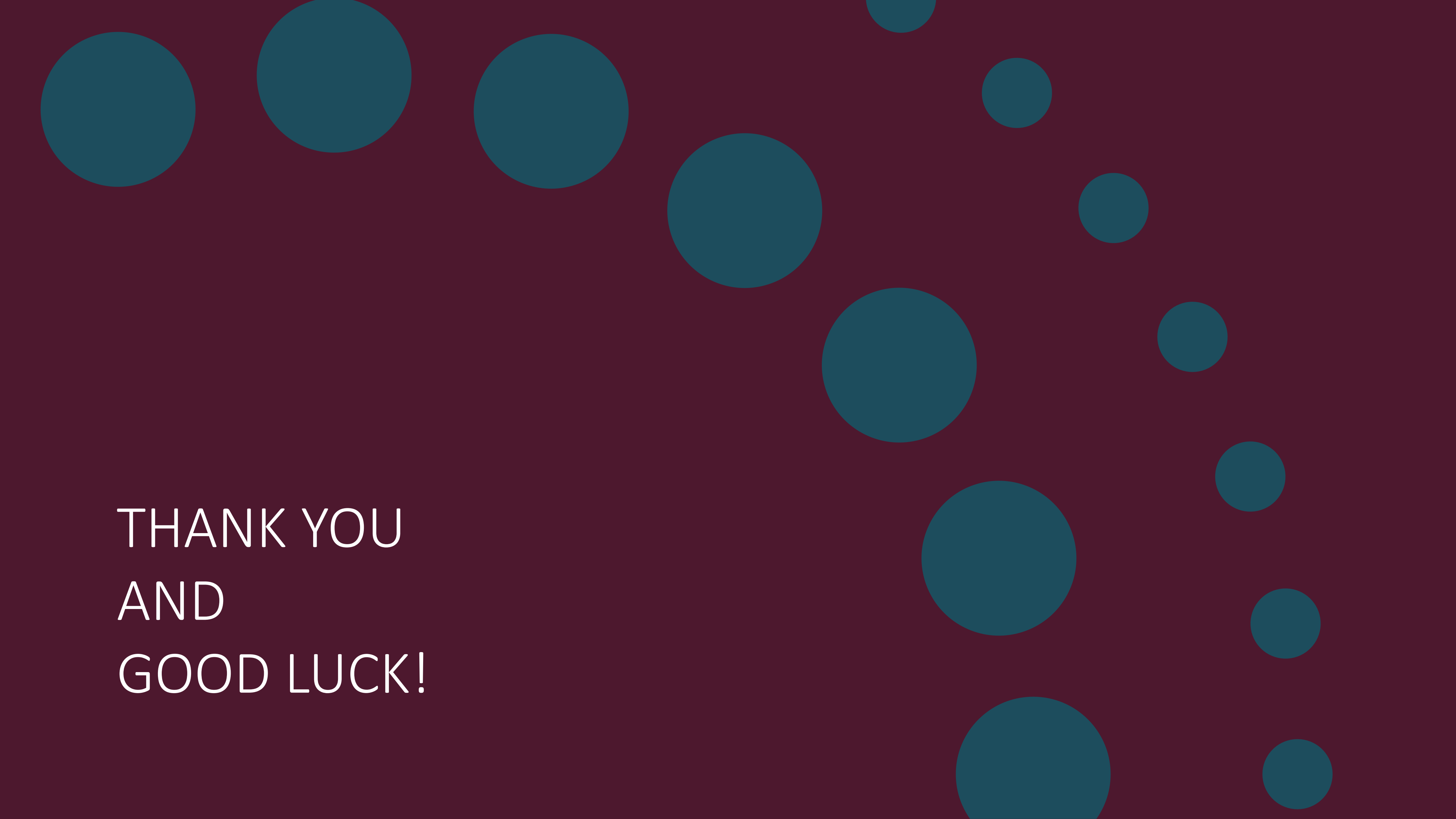
“What we are talking about is smart growth, that’s why I’m focused on providing transit ...”

“Your question once again shows the importance of sensible taxation, it’s another reason I will work to provide transit ...”

FINALLY, THE TRUTH:

- Never lie
- Never guess
- And relax, be yourself!



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THANK YOU
AND
GOOD LUCK!