

AID Conference 2004

Minutes for Session Named Using Media for Outreach

Date: May 30th 2004

Time From: 2:45 pm (supposed to start at 2:30)

To: 3:35pm (supposed to end at 3:20)

Minutes Taken By: Sukant Khurana

Number of attendees: 80

Audio/Visual Component?

None

Speaker/Panelist Names:

1. Bob Jensen
2. Dilip D' Souza

What they are speaking about:

Using tools of media

Main Presentation:

Robert Jensen – Various media strategies: 1. Alternate media like Internet sites, radio. These include the components of media which can go unfiltered by corporate media. 2. Critique of corporate media. 3. Using mainstream media. The focus of the talk is using the third option.

Dilip D' Souza – How to make the communication with public especially writing articles? You can write in newspaper, but still not be read. How can one be persuasive and not just controversial? The basic premise should be assumption that like the person we are arguing with we also have a stand. This means regarding that your opponent has a point.

Robert Jensen – Media is most of the time not overtly against or in favor of you. The most important thing is not the technical expertise but good relation with the reporter. You have to deal with media at their own terms. Most of the time journalist is not biased, but the system biases the news. Never move into the category of “a nut case”, by moving from persistent to overly persistent. So never be very pressing. It can lead to damage to your and your organization in media.

Dilip D' Souza – For organization like AID this task is going to be difficult, as majority in present time may not agree with AID's idea of development. This makes the task of effective communication and good relations with media, still more important.

Robert Jensen- What is the strategies to get news published?

1. You have to understand, what makes story in eyes of journalist. For example, there has to be a local angle if you want to publish in local newspaper. A good example is visit of local people to Iraq leading to a case for lifting economic embargo on Iraq.
2. You have to understand newsroom. You have to know, who the people are dealing with specific aspect of news.
3. Understanding what the journalist needs is crucial. Most of the time local journalist needs lot less information, than you have. Second aspect is to give them credible information. That means giving them news from established, esteemed channels.
4. Understand that journalists are on tight deadline. Do not contact journalist with non-deadline information when they are on tight deadline.

Final comment: Being proactive in news is very necessary. This will result in establishing your group as a professional group.

Question/Answer Session:

Priya – What is the difference between American and Indian media?

D' Souza – I do not see much of difference. Both are equally vibrant.

Jensen- US journalists are poorly informed about world, than Indian journalist. There is a similar trend in India. The standard of Indian journalism is falling. Still,

Nishant – What are the weakness and strengths of AID Austin writing?

Jensen- With a group of well-educated and proactive people the real challenge now is for AID to learn journalistic American to be able to communicate well in local newspaper.

Shrikant- Are activist in US are trying to get into infotainment and if yes then how effective can it be?

Jensen- Most of the editors in US prefer serious issue. Using celebrities is a good idea, but one has to be really careful.

Question – If you have to play game according to reporter's terms, then how will your voice be heard?

Jensen- It is about techniques. You can be professionally controversial but not be nuts. Media likes to be controversial, so you can still be heard. You can be right and be utterly ineffective. It is important to make pragmatic compromises.

Additional Notes/ Observations: