

# SERVING IN THE CHURCH:

## *Public Affairs*

# 2010

SEE: [www.lds.org/Serving in the Church/Public Affairs](http://www.lds.org/Serving_in_the_Church/Public_Affairs)



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# GETTING STARTED

**W**elcome to Church public affairs work! Your service in public affairs will be different from your previous Church callings, but it should be just as exciting and spiritually rewarding.

The perceptions that community leaders, government officials, news media, and others hold about the Church can directly affect its success. In public affairs work you will have the opportunity to help shape those perceptions as you communicate accurate and positive information and help to develop trusting relationships on behalf of priesthood leaders.

Above all, you will be helping influential people who are not of our faith to recognize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a positive influence in the world and its members as sincere and diligent disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## What Is Public Affairs?

Public affairs is a priesthood program that helps Church leaders build positive, trusting relationships with influential individuals not of our faith. Public affairs work in the Church is similar to the secular practice of public relations, a leadership function that helps organizations and individuals to build positive relationships and communicate positive and accurate messages. Through your efforts in public affairs, the Church in your area will be better understood and more appreciated.

## Public Affairs—A Priesthood Program

Public affairs is different in many ways from other Church callings, but like all others, it is directed by priesthood authority. Faithfully following the inspired direction of your priesthood adviser is one of the most important aspects of your calling.

## The Core Purpose of Public Affairs

Though public affairs work focuses on those not of our faith, conversion is not its main goal. Public affairs is primarily concerned with helping priesthood leaders to establish positive relationships with key individuals. These individuals, commonly referred to as opinion leaders, are those who can affect the public reputation of the Church or who can help or hinder the Church in the achievement of its mission. Building these relationships constitutes the core purpose of public affairs. Public affairs also helps the Church communicate its message through positive media relations.

## Personal Preparation

Personally preparing yourself to serve through study, prayer, and pondering is essential to your success. Learn all you can from the public affairs materials published by the Church (including this site) so that you can equip yourself with knowledge that the Holy Ghost can use in guiding your decisions and actions.

## A Unique Call

The outward focus of public affairs toward those not of our faith and the sometimes secular nature of public affairs work make it unique among Church callings. This can sometimes make it difficult to understand and explain to others. But like other Church callings, public affairs is a spiritual work that is wholly dependent on the guidance of the Holy Ghost for its success. Though the work itself often bears more resemblance to activities from the professional and secular world than service rendered by other Church members, it should be spiritually satisfying to those called by inspiration into public affairs councils.

## A Worldwide Work

Public affairs is a worldwide Church function providing service nearly everywhere the Church is organized and in many places where the Church is not yet fully organized. The full-time work of the Department, conducted under the supervision of the First Presidency and the Church Public Affairs Committee, is complemented by the work of thousands of called public affairs directors and public affairs council members at the stake, multistake, national, and Church area levels throughout the world. You and the members of your public affairs council should recognize that you are part of a worldwide team and that your efforts reflect on the Church as a whole.

## Public Affairs Councils

The inspired system of Church councils also applies to public affairs. A public affairs council typically consists of a priesthood adviser, a director of public affairs, and two assistant directors. Priesthood leaders may call other specialists to the council as needed. The council develops an annual plan and budget and meets regularly to counsel together and to seek inspiration. Council meetings should be used for planning, proposing, and evaluating new ideas, preparing for activities, and evaluating past efforts.

## The Value of Relationships

Church history is replete with examples of influential individuals, not of our faith, who have befriended the Church. Favorably impressed with the good that the Church represents, such individuals frequently endorse Church actions, authorize Church requests, or defend the Church in times of need. Positive relationships provide the foundation for all of these benefits.

## A Three-Step Process for Building Opinion Leader Relationships

The recommended approach to building relationships involves three steps: (1) identify the objectives of the Church leaders in the area (the “What”); (2) identify opinion leaders who are most likely to affect the outcome of efforts to meet those objectives (the “Who”); (3) plan and implement appropriate and relevant activities that will help establish strong relationships with identified opinion leaders (the “How”). This approach is recommended for public affairs councils at all levels.

## Working with the Media

Key members of the media are important opinion leaders. Because of the media’s unique work and influence, building relationships with them requires special understanding and effort. Public affairs councils should become very familiar with and proficient in the specifics of working with the media.

## Church Newsroom

All public affairs council members should become very familiar with the Church Newsroom for news media, where the Church publishes current events and news for media representatives and opinion leaders. The Newsroom is also filled with helpful background and statistical information on the Church, its history, and its programs, as well as valuable resources such as photos and video clips that help to tell the Church’s story. Corrections to erroneous reporting about the Church and Church editorials on current issues are also posted on the Newsroom.

## Other Public Affairs Resources

This Web site is your best guide to doing Church public affairs work and supersedes all previously published guidelines. Here you will find many resources, such as photographs, videos, document templates, and more that will help to enhance your local public affairs efforts. New resources will be added continuously to this site so return often for additional helps.

## Getting Help

Beyond this Web site, your priesthood adviser is your best and most appropriate source for help and training. Other help is available from affiliated Church public affairs councils (such as a multistake public affairs council, if you belong to a stake or area public affairs council). On occasion it may be appropriate to contact your nearest full-time Public Affairs Department office or the Church Public Affairs Department. Before doing so, you should exhaust all other local sources of assistance and should always first seek the approval of your priesthood leader.

## Newswatch

Occasionally a public affairs issue or situation will arise that has Churchwide implications. When that happens, information and resources for handling the issue in your local area will be posted by the Public Affairs Department in the Newswatch section of this site. **To access Newswatch, you will need an LDS Account user name and password and will need to be listed by your stake clerk in the Member and Leader System** as the director of public affairs for your stake, multistake, or national public affairs council.

# SERVING IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**Y**our public affairs calling may be very different from other callings that you've held. For example, rather than interacting primarily with Church members in a religious setting, your calling in public affairs will require you to reach out primarily to those not of our faith and to meet with them in largely secular settings.

Public affairs work in the Church is related to the public relations profession, which helps organizations and individuals to communicate positive and accurate messages and project a positive image. Through your efforts, the Church in your area may be better understood and appreciated, and prominent individuals may feel more inclined to help the Church in various ways to accomplish its important work.

On rare occasions, public affairs work helps to lead individuals into the waters of baptism, but this is not its primary aim. Rather, the purpose of public affairs is to assist priesthood leaders in forming meaningful relationships with individuals who can help or hinder the Church in the accomplishment of its mission. Even individuals who reject our doctrine, or who know very little about it, may become close friends of the Church and be willing to assist when called upon.

## Keys to Success

Although the work of public affairs is unique and certain special skills are helpful, the basic qualifications for service are the same as with other Church callings. Church members who possess strong faith, who seek the companionship of the Spirit, and who diligently prepare and magnify their calling—even in the face of doubt and uncertainty—will succeed in public affairs work. These qualities often are more than adequate to compensate for a lack of professional skills, education, or prior experience.

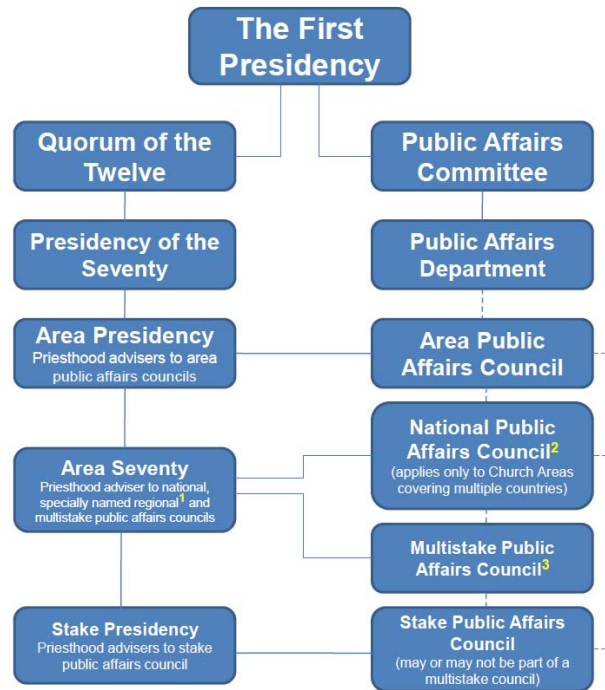
Familiarity with government, business, media, academics, and other professional fields will help, as will previous experience in a communications discipline such as journalism, marketing, public relations, and advertising.

Individuals who follow current events and social trends, who are aware of the activities of local public figures (elected and otherwise), and who stay informed about the progress and needs of local government will benefit as well.

But most importantly, public affairs council members need to recognize that they are called by inspiration and have the right and responsibility to call on the Lord for help in overcoming any weakness or lack of credentials. Even the seemingly least qualified can have confidence in their call and know that the Lord will sustain them.

# How Public Affairs Is Organized

## Public Affairs Worldwide Organization



### Stake Public Affairs Councils

The stake public affairs council is the basic unit of public affairs work in the Church. Except in areas where Church members make up a large percentage of the population, or where other circumstances suggest otherwise, every stake should have a public affairs council. The priesthood adviser to this council is a member of the stake presidency. There are no ward public affairs councils or ward directors of public affairs.

Stake public affairs councils base all of their objectives and activities on the objectives of the stake presidency. Priesthood advisers should attend public affairs council meetings as schedules permit and should give frequent direction on the council's plans. Priesthood leaders should also actively participate in outreach to key opinion leaders.

Through the Area Seventy, the stake priesthood adviser may call on the appropriate multistake, specially named regional, national, or area director of public affairs for help in training the stake public affairs council. Funding for stake public affairs councils is provided by the stake.

### Multistake Public Affairs Councils

Multistake public affairs councils should be organized in areas where multiple stakes share the same key opinion leaders (such as media or government officials). The priesthood adviser to this council is typically an Area Seventy.

Multistake councils help coordinate relationship building, media relations, and other activities between stake public affairs councils in the multistake area so that outreach efforts are not duplicated. Multistake councils also sponsor and implement opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives across the participating stakes. At the invitation of priesthood leaders, they may also provide training to stake public affairs councils. Stake directors of public affairs in a multistake area should be invited to participate in the multistake council.



The priesthood adviser may call on the appropriate national, specially named regional, or area director of public affairs for help in training and supporting a multistake council. Funding for multistake public affairs councils is provided by the stakes in the multistake area.

## National and Specially Named Regional Public Affairs Councils

Area Presidencies may organize a national public affairs council for each country *where multiple countries make up a single Church area*. This council is a coordination, training, and support body for the stake and multistake public affairs councils within the country. National public affairs councils may also sponsor and implement nationwide opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives. Support for this council is provided by the area public affairs council. An Area Seventy serves as the council's priesthood adviser.

Area Presidencies (or the supervising member of the Presidency of the Seventy in the United States and Canada) may organize specially named regional public affairs councils in areas with a high concentration of stake and multistake public affairs councils. Specially named regional public affairs councils are not organized in areas where there is an existing national public affairs council. This council is a coordination, training, and support body for the stake and multistake public affairs councils within a portion of the area designated by priesthood leaders.

Specially named regional public affairs councils may also sponsor and implement opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives. Support for these councils is provided by the area public affairs council. An Area Seventy serves as the council's priesthood adviser. Directors of stake and multistake public affairs councils served by the respective specially named regional council should be invited to participate in the council.

## Area Public Affairs Councils

Each Church area has an area public affairs council. The director of the area council may be either a full-time Church employee or a called director from the area. This council is a coordination, training, and support body for national, specially named regional, multistake, and stake public affairs councils within the area. Area councils may also sponsor and implement area-wide opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives. National and specially named regional directors of public affairs should be invited to participate in the area public affairs council.

Coordination, training, support, and funding for area public affairs councils in the United States and Canada are provided by the Public Affairs Department under the direction of the supervising member of the Presidency of the Seventy and the Public Affairs Committee of the Church. A member of the Presidency of the Seventy or an assigned Area Seventy serves as the priesthood adviser to the area council.

Area public affairs councils in Utah differ from other area councils in that they do not support other public affairs councils in the area.

### **For Areas in the United States and Canada**

Coordination, training, support, and funding for area public affairs councils in the United States and Canada are provided by the Public Affairs Department under the direction of the supervising member of the Presidency of the Seventy and the Public Affairs Committee of the Church. A member of the Presidency of the Seventy or an assigned Area Seventy serves as the priesthood adviser to the area council.

Area public affairs councils in Utah differ from other area councils in that they do not support other public affairs councils in the area.

### **For Areas outside the United States and Canada**

Coordination, training, support, and funding for area public affairs councils outside the United States and Canada are provided by the Public Affairs Department under the direction of the respective Area Presidency and the Public Affairs Committee of the Church. A member of the Area Presidency or an assigned Area Seventy serves as the priesthood adviser to the area council.

# Calling Descriptions

**A**s a director of public affairs, you have been called by the spirit of revelation to direct the day-to-day work of a public affairs council. You do this under the direction of your priesthood adviser and in a united effort with your public affairs council members.

You should be familiar with all of the callings in the public affairs council and help others to become comfortable working in their respective assignments.

Following are guidelines for your calling and for the kinds of responsibilities that you might assign to your two assistant directors. A suggested division of labor is to assign the specialized work of media relations to one assistant, and to assign outreach to other key opinion leader audiences (such as government, academic, religious, ethnic, and

so on) to your other assistant. However, you should prayerfully determine with your priesthood adviser whether this is the best way to utilize the unique talents and strengths of your assistant directors. This sample division of labor is used below to illustrate the types of responsibilities that fall under these particular calling areas.

## Director of Public Affairs

### Major Responsibilities

- Under the direction of the priesthood adviser, direct and coordinate the day-to-day work of the public affairs council.
- Meet regularly with your priesthood adviser to discuss:
  - Stake priesthood leader objectives, especially those that may be addressed through building relationships with opinion leaders.
  - The progress and needs of the public affairs council and its members.
  - The public affairs council's annual project plan, assessing whether it is consistent with priesthood leaders' objectives.
  - Any upcoming activities that may require the involvement of the priesthood adviser or other priesthood leaders.
  - Any budgetary considerations for public affairs activities.
- Organize and conduct regular public affairs council meetings to counsel together, teach and learn new skills, evaluate progress of relationship-building efforts, plan and implement activities, and report and evaluate past activities.
- Ensure that a confidential record of interactions with opinion leaders is maintained by the public affairs council.
- Ensure that all local spokespersons (priesthood adviser, other priesthood leaders, or designated Church members) are well prepared for media interviews and news briefings.
- Visit the Church Newsroom to stay abreast of current Church activities and statements.
- Regularly read local and national news sources to stay abreast of current issues.
- Oversee the public affairs budget.
- Where applicable, participate in the local multistake public affairs council.

### Accountability

- Report to the public affairs council priesthood adviser.
- Submit annual plans and budget requests to the priesthood adviser for approval.
- Submit reports and information as requested by the priesthood adviser.

### **Training and Support**

- Receive training and support from the priesthood adviser, through the Serving in the Church/Public Affairs Web site, and from the appropriate multistake, specially named regional, or area public affairs council.
- Provide training as directed by the priesthood adviser.

## **Assistant Director of Public Affairs Assigned to Media Relations**

### **Major Responsibilities**

- Under the direction of the priesthood adviser and director of public affairs, oversee the day-to-day work of building strong working relationships with key media representatives.
- Serve as the Church's local contact for media, fielding calls, providing information, and arranging interviews when appropriate.
- Visit the Church Newsroom regularly to stay abreast of current Church activities and public statements
- Regularly read local and national news sources to stay abreast of current issues.
- Write and gain approval to distribute appropriate news releases or news or feature story ideas to local media. (Note: locally produced or published stories of national or international interest may be submitted to the Public Affairs Department for possible inclusion on the Church Newsroom. Stories from outside the United States and Canada may also be considered for use on the "Newsroom" section of country Web sites.)
- Help prepare designated spokespersons for interviews and media briefings, and accompany spokespersons to interviews (in coordination with the director of public affairs and priesthood adviser).
- Contact journalists, when necessary, to correct significant inaccuracies in their news reports.
- Help train and supervise any other council members who may be assigned to work in media relations.
- Help develop and maintain an inventory of informational materials that can be used in outreach to media.
- Maintain a confidential record of all interactions with media representatives.
- Help plan, implement, and evaluate all projects and activities of the public affairs council.
- Help prepare annual plans and budget requests for submission to the priesthood adviser for approval.

### **Accountability**

- Report to the director of public affairs.

### **Training and Support**

- Receive training and support from the priesthood adviser, through the Serving in the Church/Public Affairs Web site, and from the appropriate multistake, specially named regional, or area public affairs council.
- Provide training as directed by the priesthood adviser.

## Assistant Director of Public Affairs Assigned to Opinion Leader Outreach

### Major Responsibilities

- Under the direction of the priesthood adviser and director of public affairs, oversee the day-to-day work of building relationships between priesthood leaders and key opinion leaders.
- Help develop and implement the council's road maps for building relationships with opinion leaders.
- Maintain a confidential record of all interactions with opinion leaders.
- Help plan and implement all projects and activities of the public affairs council.
- Help develop and maintain an inventory of informational materials that can be used in outreach to opinion leaders.
- Visit the Church Newsroom regularly to stay abreast of current Church activities and public statements.
- Regularly read local and national news sources to stay abreast of current issues.
- Participate with council members in evaluating council activities.
- Help prepare annual project plans and budget requests for submission to the priesthood adviser for approval.

### Accountability

- Report to the director of public affairs.

### Training and Support

- Receive training and support from the priesthood adviser, through the Serving in the Church/Public Affairs Web site, and from the appropriate multistake, specially named regional, or area public affairs council.
- Provide training as directed by the priesthood adviser.

## Expanding Councils to Include Specialists and Project Committees

The priesthood adviser to the public affairs council may call specialists and form project committees to join the council as needed. Consistent with the Public Affairs Core Purpose, road maps—action plans or contact plans to reach opinion leaders—may call for projects that require specialists or project committees to serve until the project is completed.

Some specialists may be needed because of their professional skills or experience in areas such as journalism, advertising, marketing, public relations, radio, television, graphic design, photography, secretarial work, or database maintenance. Others may have helpful ties to ethnic or civic groups or with local clergy.

Specialists may be called to serve for an extended period and to work on several projects, or they might be called to help with a single activity, such as a specific event or project. Specialists attend public affairs council meetings and coordinate with and receive authorization from the director of public affairs before proceeding with plans.

Following are examples of possible public affairs specialists and responsibilities:

### Database Specialist

A database specialist may be called to assist the council in maintaining a confidential electronic or hard-copy record of interactions with key opinion leaders.

### Ethnic Outreach Specialist

The priesthood adviser may call a specialist to help build relationships with different ethnic groups in the area served by the public affairs council. This often applies best for councils serving large metropolitan areas.

**Media Specialist**

A media specialist works closely with the assistant director over media relations and may assist in developing relationships with media representatives and other media gatekeepers. This individual may also help to write and otherwise prepare materials for distribution to the media.

**Secretary**

The priesthood adviser may call a secretary to provide clerical and administrative assistance to the public affairs council. The secretary may be responsible for recording minutes and assignments from previous meetings and advising council members of such things as meeting times, meeting agendas, deadlines, and budget procedures.

**Service Specialist**

A service specialist may assist the public affairs council in organizing and implementing Mormon Helping Hands or other service activities in the community. The specialist may also research and approach possible partnering organizations—especially those associated with key opinion leaders.

**Ward or Branch Specialist**

Although there are no ward and branch public affairs councils, the priesthood adviser may call a ward or branch public affairs representative to serve on the public affairs council to assist with a special project or activity that the stake or multistake council needs to implement at the ward or branch level.

# Public Affairs Councils

The inspired system of Church councils also applies to public affairs. The public affairs council functions under the direction of a local priesthood adviser. His guidance is vital to the council's success. In addition to the priesthood adviser, all public affairs councils should include at least a director of public affairs and two assistant directors. Additional specialists may be added as needed [Serving in public Affairs].

## Serving on a Public Affairs Council

Public affairs council members should be excellent ambassadors for the Church, able to interact comfortably with individuals from across the social spectrum. As media and other issues may arise at any time requiring immediate attention, those serving on a public affairs council should not be given other demanding Church assignments.

## Public Affairs Council Functions

Acting under the direction of the priesthood adviser, public affairs councils develop an annual plan and budget and meet regularly to counsel together and to seek inspiration. Council meetings should be used for planning, proposing and evaluating new ideas, preparing for activities, and evaluating past efforts. The majority of the time in council meetings should be devoted to developing, acting upon, and revisiting road maps [link]—action plans or contact plans that help councils establish and expand relationships with opinion leaders. Road maps are the substance of a public affairs council's annual project plan.

The effectiveness of a public affairs council is measured by its achievement of priesthood objectives. Successfully implementing the Three-Step Process for Building Opinion Leader Relationships [link] is a good predictor of council success. Priesthood leaders should work closely with council members to ensure they remain focused on what should be done, rather than only on what can be done.

## Receiving and Providing Training

The priesthood adviser to the public affairs council has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the council is properly trained. This responsibility can be shared with the director of public affairs, and assistance may be requested from multistake councils, as well as specially named regional, national, or area public affairs councils, as appropriate.

Most training should be based on material from [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) – Serving in the Church/Public Affairs.

With the approval of the priesthood adviser, some aspects of public affairs training should be provided to other priesthood and auxiliary leaders or other Church members who may be included in outreach to opinion leaders.

## Funding for Public Affairs Councils

All public affairs councils should establish a budget as part of the public affairs annual plan. These funds come from local budgets.

All Church funds are sacred and should be handled accordingly and always with priesthood approval. Experience has shown that most public affairs activities require little or no funding and that even significant Church objectives can be achieved at very little expense.

To the degree possible, expenditures should be anticipated in the public affairs annual plan and tied to specific elements of the plan, such as activities that are part of a road map for building a relationship with an opinion leader.

Funding for stake and multistake public affairs councils should be provided by the Church units represented by these councils. Funding for specially named regional and national public affairs councils is provided by area public affairs councils, which in turn receive funding from the Public Affairs Department.

# FOR PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

A public affairs council is a tool of the priesthood. Its primary purpose is to help priesthood leaders build positive relationships with opinion leaders who affect the reputation of the Church and whose actions and influence can help or hinder the Church's mission.

Building relationships of trust and respect with opinion leaders—including the media—can result in greater dialogue, mutual understanding, dispelled myths about the Church, and effective communication of the Church's messages. These relationships allow the Church to partner with leaders of other faiths, charitable organizations, civic groups, educational institutions, and government agencies to meet joint objectives and address community needs.

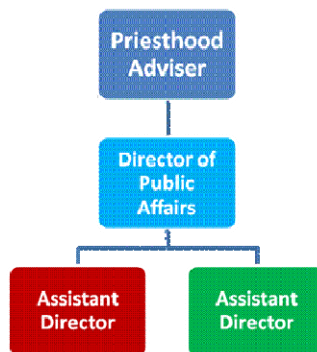
Such relationships also increase the likelihood that opinion leaders—especially the media—will go to representatives of the Church when trying to understand Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices, instead of going to other sources.

Whether you serve as a member of an Area Presidency, an Area Seventy, or a member of a stake presidency, you can use your public affairs council to meet a wide range of priesthood objectives and address issues that affect the progress of the Church within your geographic stewardship. Your public affairs council can help you determine how you can meet certain objectives through relationship building and partnerships with selected opinion leaders and organizations.

## Organizing a Public Affairs Council

Public affairs councils may be organized at the stake, multistake, national and area levels. In some areas, specially named regional or national councils are organized. A former designation called "key city public affairs councils" is no longer used. Additionally, there are no ward public affairs councils or directors. Ward public affairs representatives can be called to the stake public affairs council when it is deemed the best way to manage the program in stakes covering large geographical areas.

A basic public affairs council, consists of a priesthood adviser, a director of public affairs and two assistant directors. Additional specialists may be added as circumstances require.



### Specific Types of Public Affairs Councils

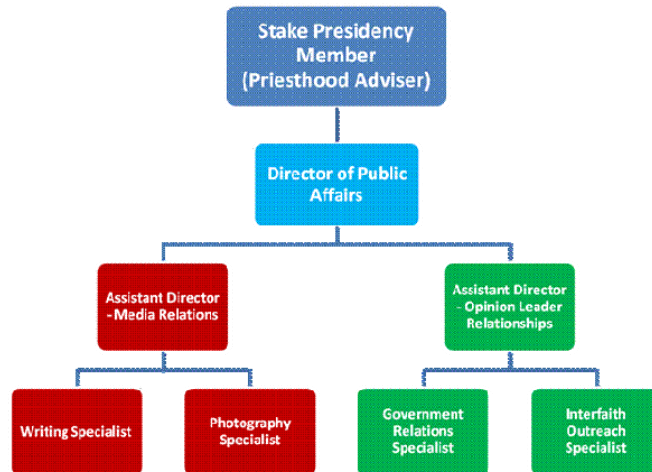
#### Stake Public Affairs Councils

The stake public affairs council is the basic unit of public affairs work in the Church. Except in areas where Latter-day Saints make up a majority of the population, every stake should strive to have a public affairs council. The priesthood adviser to this council is typically a member of the stake presidency.

Stake public affairs councils base all of their objectives and activities on the objectives of the stake presidency. Priesthood advisers should attend public affairs council meetings as schedules permit and should give frequent direction on the council's plans. Priesthood advisers should also actively participate in outreach to key opinion leaders.

Through the Area Seventy, the stake priesthood adviser may call on the appropriate multistake public affairs director or a specially named regional, national, or area director of public affairs for help in training the stake public affairs council. Funding for stake public affairs councils is provided by the stake.

A fully organized stake public affairs council might look something like the following. Please keep in mind that this is only one example. Every stake will have slightly different needs and public affairs councils should be organized accordingly under inspiration.



### Multistake Public Affairs Councils

Multistake public affairs councils should be organized in areas where multiple stakes share the same key opinion leaders (such as media or government leaders). The priesthood adviser to this council is typically an Area Seventy.

Multistake councils help coordinate relationship building, media relations, and other activities between stake public affairs councils in the multistake area so that outreach efforts are not duplicated. Multistake councils may also sponsor and implement opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives across multiple stakes. At the invitation of priesthood leaders, they may also provide training to stake public affairs councils. Stake directors of public affairs in a multistake area should be invited to participate in the multistake council.

The priesthood adviser may call on the appropriate director of the national, specially named regional or area public affairs council for help in training and supporting a multistake council. Funding for multistake public affairs councils is provided by the stakes in the multistake area.

## National and Specially Named Regional Public Affairs Councils

Area Presidencies may organize a national public affairs council for each country where multiple countries make up a single Church area. This council is a coordination, training, and support body for the stake and multistake public affairs councils within the country. National public affairs councils may also sponsor and implement nationwide opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives. Support for this council is provided by the area public affairs council. An Area Seventy serves as the council's priesthood adviser.

Area Presidencies (or the supervising member of the Presidency of the Seventy in the United States and Canada) may organize specially named regional public affairs councils in areas with a high concentration of stake and multistake public affairs councils. (For example, the Southern California Public Affairs Council serves an area with 11 multistake councils in close proximity to one another.)

Specially named regional councils are not organized in areas where there is an existing national public affairs council. They do not necessarily coincide with a Church ecclesiastical area but are organized in special situations when coordination across multistake councils is not appropriately managed at an area or national council level.



The specially named regional council is a coordination, training, and support body for the stake and multistake public affairs councils within the designated region and may also sponsor and implement regional opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives.

Support for specially named regional public affairs councils is provided by the area public affairs council.

An Area Seventy serves as the council's priesthood adviser. Directors of stake and multistake public affairs councils served by the respective specially named regional council should be invited to participate in the specially named regional council.

## Area Public Affairs Councils

Each Church area has an area public affairs council. The director of the area council may be either a full-time Church employee or a called director from the area. This council is a coordination, training, and support body for national, specially named regional, multistake, and stake public affairs councils within the area. Area councils may also sponsor and implement area-wide opinion leader, media, and other public affairs initiatives. National and specially named regional directors of public affairs should be invited to participate in the area public affairs council.

### **For Areas in the United States and Canada**

Coordination, training, support, and funding for area public affairs councils in the United States and Canada is provided by the Public Affairs Department under the direction of the supervising member of the Presidency of the Seventy and the Public Affairs Committee of the Church. A member of the Presidency of the Seventy or an assigned Area Seventy serves as the priesthood adviser to the area council.

Area public affairs councils in Utah differ from other area councils in that they do not support other public affairs councils in their respective areas.

### **For Areas Outside the United States and Canada**

Coordination, training, support, and funding for area public affairs councils outside the United States and Canada is provided by the Public Affairs Department under the direction of the respective Area Presidency and the Public Affairs Committee of the Church. A member of the Area Presidency or an assigned Area Seventy serves as the priesthood adviser to the area council.

## Qualifications for Public Affairs Council Members

A brother or sister called to be a public affairs council director should have extensive Church experience. He or she should be called for an extended period of time and not have other demanding Church callings. The director and other Church members called to serve in public affairs councils should be comfortable interacting with opinion leaders in government, academics, other religions, business, and the media. Their primary function is to help build and nurture relationships with these opinion leaders. Building relationships takes time and patience.

Although the work of public affairs is unique and certain special skills are helpful, the basic qualifications for service are the same as with other Church callings. Church members who possess strong faith, who seek the companionship of the Spirit, and who diligently prepare and magnify their calling—even in the face of doubt and uncertainty—will succeed in public affairs work. These qualities often are more than adequate to compensate for a lack of professional skills, education, or prior experience.

However, some familiarity with government, business, media, academics, and other professional fields will help, as will previous experience in a communications discipline such as journalism, marketing, public relations, and advertising. Individuals who follow current events and social trends, who are aware of the activities of local public figures (elected and otherwise), and who stay informed about the progress and needs of local government will benefit as well.

Most importantly, public affairs council members need to recognize that they are called by inspiration and have the right and responsibility to call on the Lord for help in overcoming any weakness or lack of credentials. Even the seemingly least qualified can have confidence in their call and know that the Lord will sustain them.

## Extending Public Affairs Callings

The outward focus of public affairs toward those not of our faith and the sometimes secular nature of public affairs work make it unique among Church callings. This can sometimes make it difficult to understand and explain. But serving on a public affairs council is a spiritual work that is wholly dependent on the guidance of the Holy Ghost for its success. Though the work itself often bears more resemblance to activities from the professional and secular world than the service rendered by other Church members, it can and should be spiritually satisfying to those called by inspiration into public affairs service.

The following checklist may be helpful to you as you extend public affairs callings.

### **Before extending the calling:**

- Review the Getting Started section of this Web site.
- Review and print the appropriate calling description from this Web site.

### **As you extend the calling:**

- Provide a copy of the appropriate section of the *Church Handbook of Instructions*.
- Encourage the individual to study this Web site.
- Share local priesthood objectives and priesthood leaders' assessment of local issues faced by the Church.
- Explain expectations for what should be accomplished by the individual.
- Provide the name and contact information of the public affairs council director and/or your own contact information, explaining how and from whom the newly called member will receive direction, training, and support.
- Share information about days, times, and locations of public affairs council meetings.
- Explain that public affairs callings do not require a sustaining vote and that all public affairs council members are set apart.
- Cover the points from the list above.
- Review the public affairs council budget and disbursement procedures.
- Establish a schedule for regular one-on-one accountability interviews with you as the council's priesthood adviser.
- Consider inviting the director of public affairs to attend Stake Council Meeting.

## Training Your Public Affairs Council

As priesthood adviser, you are responsible for ensuring that your public affairs council receives ongoing support and training (in addition to what is available through this Web site) from the appropriate person or council. Much of the success of your public affairs council will depend on the working relationship you have with your supporting council and its priesthood adviser as you request and schedule training and update sessions for your council. The public affairs priesthood training you receive during area council or coordinating council meetings will be important information to pass along to your public affairs council.

If your council is a –	Your supporting council is –
Stake public affairs council	The multistake council, specially named regional council, or national public affairs council assigned by your Area Seventy to support you
Multistake public affairs council	The specially named regional council or national public affairs council assigned to support you, or your area public affairs council (consult with the priesthood adviser to whom you report)
Specially named regional council or national public affairs council	The area public affairs council
Area public affairs council	The Public Affairs Department at Church headquarters through your contact in the Area Relations Division

Many public affairs councils set aside time at each council meeting for training—whether from you or another council member. Training could be based on a section from this Web site, from past training given by your supporting council, or from information you receive through priesthood channels.

# Priesthood Adviser Responsibilities for Various Public Affairs Councils

<u>Public Affairs Council</u>	<u>Priesthood Adviser</u>	<u>Priesthood Adviser Responsibilities</u>
Area public affairs council	<p>For areas in the United States and Canada: Member of Presidency of the Seventy or assigned Area Seventy</p> <p>For areas outside the United States and Canada: Area President or assigned counselor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizes the council</li> <li>• Calls and releases council members</li> <li>• Presides at council meetings or delegates presiding authority</li> <li>• Helps the council to identify priesthood objectives</li> <li>• Has primary responsibility for building and nurturing relationships with opinion leaders</li> <li>• Supervises preparation and implementation of the council's annual public affairs plan</li> <li>• Designates local spokespersons</li> <li>• Coordinates on public affairs matters with –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the priesthood leader to whom he reports</li> <li>○ his public affairs council director</li> <li>○ priesthood advisers of related public affairs councils</li> <li>○ Public Affairs Department staff as needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensures that the members and priesthood leaders of associated, lower councils receive ongoing support and training</li> <li>• Communicates immediately with priesthood adviser of next-highest-level public affairs council when negative or sensitive news coverage or opinion leader contact may have Church-wide ramifications</li> <li>• Supervises public affairs council funding</li> </ul>
National public affairs council	Area Seventy	Same as above
Specially named regional public affairs council	Area Seventy	Same as above
Multistake public affairs council	Area Seventy	Same as above

<p>Stake public affairs council</p>	<p>Stake president or assigned counselor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along with members of the stake presidency, determines extent to which the public affairs program is organized in the stake, considering the strength and experience of members and priesthood leaders</li> <li>• Organizes the council</li> <li>• Calls and releases other council members</li> <li>• Presides at council meetings or delegates presiding authority</li> <li>• Helps the council to identify priesthood objectives</li> <li>• Has primary responsibility for building and nurturing relationships with opinion leaders</li> <li>• Supervises preparation and implementation of the council's annual public affairs plan</li> <li>• Designates local spokespersons</li> <li>• Supports his stake public affairs council's possible representation on a multistake public affairs council</li> <li>• Coordinates on public affairs matters with – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the Area Seventy assigned to his coordinating council</li> <li>○ his public affairs council director</li> <li>○ the public affairs priesthood adviser to the council which supports and trains his stake public affairs council</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensures that his stake public affairs council receives ongoing support and training</li> <li>• Requests, if needed, and receives public affairs <i>priesthood</i> training during coordinating council meetings</li> <li>• Communicates immediately with priesthood adviser of next-highest-level public affairs council when negative or sensitive news coverage or opinion leader contact may have Church-wide ramifications</li> <li>• Supervises public affairs council funding</li> </ul>
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# Counseling with Your Public Affairs Council

**T**he Lord's Church is organized with councils at every level, beginning with the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and extending to stake, ward, quorum, auxiliary, and family councils. Public affairs work is organized and implemented through councils. President Stephen L. Richards said: "The genius of our Church government is government through *councils*. . . . I have had enough experience to know the value of councils. Hardly a day passes but that I see . . . God's wisdom, in creating councils: to govern his Kingdom. . . . I have no hesitancy in giving you the assurance, if you will confer in council as you are expected to do, God will give you solutions to the problems that confront you" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1953, 86).

You will be guided as you meet regularly with your public affairs council, search the scriptures together, and pray for guidance. Acting in a united effort, you will create spiritual synergism, which is increased effectiveness or achievement as a result of combined action or cooperation, the result of which is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

All councils in the Church should encourage free and open discussion by conferring with one another and striving to have clear, concise communication.

Focusing on the core purpose of public affairs work, public affairs councils should follow the Three-step Process for Building Relationships with Opinion Leaders. Step one involves identifying the priesthood objectives that the public affairs council should be working to achieve. Consequently, your involvement at this stage is most critical.

Priesthood advisers to public affairs councils are encouraged to attend as many regularly scheduled council meetings as schedules permit. Directors of public affairs should be assigned to prepare an agenda for council meetings and review it with you in advance. Also in advance of the meeting, you may wish to consult with the priesthood leaders of the units that correspond to your public affairs council regarding any specific agenda items—especially those regarding priesthood objectives and local issues that are currently affecting or may affect the Church's mission and/or reputation.

## Identifying Priesthood Objectives and Local Issues for Public Affairs Councils

The Three-step Process for Building Relationships with Opinion Leaders can be summarized as follows: (1) identify priesthood objectives and local issues, (2) identify key opinion leaders, and (3) create a "road map" or action plan for establishing or strengthening relationships with the opinion leaders identified in step two.

As the priesthood adviser to your public affairs council, you oversee this work—beginning with the step of identifying priesthood objectives and local issues that can or will affect the Church's reputation or ability to fulfill its mission.

Although your calling entitles you to receive inspiration about such objectives and local issues, you have the opportunity to counsel with your public affairs council members and others for their inspiration and insight.

### Utilizing Other Priesthood Leaders and Councils

You may consider surveying the other priesthood leaders within your geographic area of stewardship (bishops, stake presidents, Area Seventies) regarding their priesthood objectives and the issues in their communities that can or will help or hinder the Church's mission or affect its reputation. Members of the Presidency of the Seventy and Area Presidencies can do this in an area council meeting; Area Seventies can do this in a coordinating council meeting; stake presidents can do this in a meeting with bishoprics. Or you may wish to assign a member of your public affairs council to survey these priesthood leaders by phone or in a personal visit.

In addition to benefiting from the information and inspiration of priesthood leaders, your public affairs council may wish to survey other associated public affairs councils. This surveying could also take place in stake and ward council meetings where auxiliary and other leaders are present.

This work of surveying and compiling can be repeated as often as needed. Changes in community issues and leadership and progress toward building relationships and resolving local issues could all indicate a need for further surveying.

### **Possible Questions to Pose When Surveying and Identifying Priesthood Objectives and Local Issues**

Some questions that may help to identify priesthood objectives and local issues include:

- What do priesthood leaders feel are the needs that the Church and its members face now or will face over the next five years?
- Have priesthood leaders set specific objectives, and if so, what are they?
- What do priesthood leaders specifically want to have happen in their area, nation, or community?
- What are priesthood leaders' current and planned initiatives?
- What obstacles or threats are hindering the Church's progress?
- What issues affecting the Church are likely to arise over the next five years? (racial problems or contention? social issues? relationship challenges with other faiths? confusion or ignorance in the media about Church doctrines or practices?)
- Which of these issues will affect the Church's reputation?
- Which of these issues will hinder the mission of the Church or have an impact on what priesthood leaders want to achieve in their area, nation, or community over the next five years?

### **Possible Priesthood Objectives**

Because they are primarily concerned with building relationships and with creating understanding, your public affairs council can be a remarkably versatile tool for achieving or positively affecting a wide range of priesthood objectives. Following are some of the ways that priesthood leaders at various levels have utilized public affairs councils to achieve their objectives.

- Helping, when appropriate, to clearly communicate the Church's position on important moral and social issues.
- Helping to respond to attacks on the Church's credibility and integrity.
- Helping missionaries find greater acceptance in an area.
- Helping the Church receive official recognition in a country.
- Helping missionaries to receive visas to enter a country.
- Helping to enable the distribution of Church humanitarian aid in a country.
- Helping to open doors to the filming of genealogical records.
- Helping to mitigate the negative effects of inappropriate actions by Church members.
- Helping the community accept the Church's plans to build a new temple, meetinghouse, or other facility.
- Helping to build better relations between the Church and ethnic communities.
- Helping to organize and appropriately communicate Church relief efforts in the case of natural or man-made disasters.
- Helping to communicate the progress of the Church in the area.
- Helping Church members feel more comfortable about discussing their beliefs with friends and neighbors.
- Helping local Church units to identify, plan, and carry out large-scale Mormon Helping Hands or other service projects.
- Helping to build bridges of understanding with other faiths, local government, media, or other organizations that harbor unkind feelings or misinformation about the Church.

- Helping to defend the Church's reputation when it is falsely accused of being involved in inappropriate activities.
- Helping the Church to recognize good works performed by members of the community who are not members of our faith.
- Helping the Church to appropriately defend and bolster traditional community or family values.
- Helping to "localize" and clarify national or international stories about the Church that may be misunderstood by the local media and their readers, viewers, or listeners.

#### **Assigning Council Members to Compile and Monitor Priesthood Objectives and Local Issues**

Once priesthood objectives and local issues are gathered, a public affairs council member could be assigned to compile them and identify the most frequently mentioned ones from which your public affairs council can select one or two.

This council member could be the council's steward or monitor of these priesthood objectives, updating the information as needed and regularly keeping it in front of the public affairs council. He or she or other council members could be assigned to do the same with local issues.

Sometimes, extra work is required to identify local issues in the community that are affecting or will affect the mission of the Church or its reputation. The assigned council member should regularly check local newspapers or their Web sites, blogs, television and radio news reports, organizations that address and speak out on specific local issues, and other sources. He or she should visit the Church Newsroom daily to stay current on how Church Public Affairs is dealing with and responding to the same or similar issues.

### **Measuring the Success of Your Public Affairs Council**

The effectiveness of a public affairs council is measured by its achievement of priesthood objectives. Successfully implementing the Three-step Process for Building Opinion Leader Relationships is a good predictor of council success. Priesthood leaders should work with the council members to ensure they remain focused on what *should* be done, rather than only on what *can* be done.

It is a normal human tendency to aim for what appears more easily achievable. Public affairs councils should be constantly reminded of what is truly needed, then exercise faith in the Lord to help them achieve it. Council meetings should be devoted to developing, acting upon, and revisiting road maps—action plans or contact plans that help your council establish and nurture relationships with opinion leaders. These road maps are the substance of a public affairs council's annual project plan.

Your personal involvement in outreach activities with opinion leaders will also help you to gauge your council's success.

### **Dealing with Sensitive Issues**

As priesthood adviser to your public affairs council, it is crucial that you immediately contact the priesthood leader to whom you report, your area public affairs council director, and your area's contact in the Public Affairs Department at Church headquarters if you become aware of a highly-sensitive incident that has drawn or could draw media attention locally, nationally, or globally.

Examples may include charges of abuse or other serious crimes by Latter-day Saints or media inquiries about Latter-day Saints as victims of serious crimes. In such cases, and until clear spokesperson instructions and an official statement are communicated to you through your priesthood leader or the Public Affairs Department (working closely with the Church's Office of General Counsel), nothing should be said to the media.

When facing negative or inaccurate information about the Church in local media reports, please refer to the section of this Web site titled, "Dealing with Negative or Inaccurate News Reports."



# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

## The Value of Relationships

Church history is replete with examples of influential individuals, not of our faith, who have, often courageously, represented and even defended the Church. That these influential individuals would speak favorably in behalf of the Church, sometimes taking an unpopular position to do so, is a testimony to their honesty and integrity. It also speaks well of those who invest their time and effort to build relationships of trust with them, allowing them to see beyond the stereotypes and caricatures to gain a true understanding of Mormonism.



Such was the case with Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a dear friend to Brigham Young and the early Saints. Elder Lance B. Wickman of the Seventy has researched and written extensively on the life and contribution of Colonel Kane. In an *Ensign* article, Elder Wickman extols the character and courage of this valiant “outrider for Zion,” prepared by the Lord to assist the Church at a pivotal time in its history. He concludes with these words:

*“In a larger sense, Thomas L. Kane is but representative of numerous others—some great and others less noticed—down to our own day whom the Lord has posted out on the horizons in all directions and in every land as this great caravan moves on. These also are ‘outriders’—friends to assist His cause and His kingdom. May we be ever vigilant to search them out, to befriend them, and to hold them in honorable remembrance” (“Thomas L. Kane: Outrider for Zion,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2003, 63).*

The following examples are based on actual recent events and illustrate how such individuals can have a significant and lasting impact on the work of the Church in our day.

### Brazil

In 2005, a group known for its history of sometimes violent occupations of private land overtook a Church welfare ranch in central Brazil. The group claimed the land belonged to all people and as a result took control of the ranch.

Upon learning of the takeover, the Brazil Area public affairs director contacted a Brazilian presidential adviser. The director had come to know him and had developed a good relationship with him. The presidential adviser e-mailed the leader of the group and strongly encouraged him to leave the farm. The rebellious group later left and the problem was resolved. The success of this resolution was made possible because the director of public affairs had established a good relationship with the presidential adviser through the Mormon Helping Hands program (see Mormon Helping Hands).

### United States

Members of a public affairs council in a large city in the United States sought for ways to more effectively interact with the city’s sizable African American population. Council members and their priesthood leaders were inspired to host a luncheon where Church resources for researching African American family history were discussed. One invitation was extended to the pastor of a large downtown congregation. This led to a series of positive interactions and the establishment of a fast friendship between the pastor and various Church members, including priesthood leaders. Because of his great interest in family history, arrangements were made to establish a family history center in his church.

One Christmas morning, the pastor’s church suffered a devastating fire and burned completely. The public affairs council made arrangements for him to use temporary office space at a nearby stake center. A supply of family history equipment and other resources were donated as well to help re-establish his church’s family history center. As a result, he has become a vocal supporter of the Church and has done many things “behind the scenes” to benefit numerous Church members and people of all faiths. He remains a strong friend of the Church.

## United States

A new chapel was needed in a suburban location in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Attempts to obtain building permits were rebuffed by the city council because of protests from local residents. Legal avenues were pursued clear through the state supreme court, but to no avail.

A new approach was tried involving public affairs principles. A local LDS spokesperson was identified from the neighborhood. Leaders in the neighborhood were identified and contacted. Informal community gatherings were held and objections were heard and discussed. Based on the feedback, multiple options for the building site were developed. A Web site was created showing the options, answering questions, and giving examples of other LDS chapels. Vocal opponents were contacted privately and given the opportunity to share their feelings with local Church leaders.

As a result, several who were previously opposed became open supporters of the plan in public hearings. Media covering the process reported on a new spirit of cooperation and a genuine desire among participants to identify a solution that would benefit all interested parties. Following a new vote by the city council, building permits were granted and a new chapel was constructed, adding to the beauty and overall character of the community.

# Relationship Building Basics

## Who Are the Opinion Leaders?

Opinion leaders are those who, by virtue of their position or prominence, have influence on the opinions and beliefs of other people. Often they are empowered to make decisions that affect many others, including the Church. Some examples include elected or appointed officials, leaders of academic institutions, prominent business people, religious leaders, and members of the media.

Opinion leaders may have a profound influence on the Church's ability to build temples or chapels, proselytize in a given country, microfilm genealogical records, or distribute humanitarian assistance. Their positive or negative opinions of the Church may be shared with other influential individuals or the media, ultimately shaping perceptions. As opinion leaders learn more about the Church and its doctrine and practices, see its good works, and become acquainted with Church members, they may be more willing, in appropriate settings and circumstances, to endorse and legitimize the Church, authorize the Church's activities, and, when necessary, even defend the Church.

## What Makes One Relationship More Vital than Another?

A positive relationship between Church leaders and any opinion leader is valuable and should be considered a blessing to the Church. However, some opinion leaders occupy more influential positions than others. Moreover, their influence can change over time. Consequently, relationships with those who are *currently* in a position to help or hinder the work of the Church are considered more vital than with those who do not presently occupy such a position.

The most vital relationships of all are those with individuals who can directly affect the outcome of a specific and current Church initiative in a given area. Assisting Church leaders in building positive relationships with these individuals should be the primary work of the local public affairs council.

## Principles of Relationship Building

Nearly all positive relationships, whether personal or professional, rely on the same basic principles for success. For anyone with a personal friend, the principles for establishing relationships with opinion leaders should seem fairly natural and intuitive. However, public affairs councils should keep in mind that there are also some fundamental differences between personal relationships and the largely professional and secular working relationships that are formed with opinion leaders.

While many of these principles may seem basic and intuitive, public affairs councils and priesthood leaders should carefully consider how they apply to relationships formed with specific opinion leaders.

- Relationships are formed between individuals, not institutions. It is not the Church that is seeking for a relationship with a government office, academic institution, or media outlet. Rather, individuals representing the Church desire a working relationship with individuals representing these organizations.
- There must be some common interests between the parties in a relationship. Finding topics of common interest creates opportunities for conversation, understanding, and mutual appreciation and respect.
- To endure, relationships must be mutually beneficial and fulfilling. Relationships where one party consistently asks for favors or assistance without providing some benefit in return will not endure over time.
- True relationships are sincere, natural, and voluntary. They are not forced but develop on their own as individuals are drawn to one another out of mutual respect and appreciation.
- Parties in a positive relationship enjoy an environment of mutual respect and fulfilling dialogue. Moving from mere acquaintances to a true relationship occurs naturally when parties treat each other with respect and engage in dialogue that is interesting and satisfying.

- Relationships require ongoing maintenance and nurturing to endure and grow. Neglected relationships quickly go cold. Professional working relationships, especially, require varied forms of repeat contact to remain vibrant and productive.

## Working Relationships vs. Personal Relationships

A productive relationship, one that benefits the Church, does not have to be personal in nature. In fact, some opinion leaders might consider it inappropriate for an official representative of the Church to try to forge a personal relationship. This is not to say that some working relationships formed on behalf of the Church won't eventually evolve to become personal relationships—it is almost certain that they will and will prove beneficial to the individuals involved as well as the Church. However, this is not the type of relationship that public affairs council members should be primarily working toward, and it's important that they understand what constitutes a working relationship.

### Relationships with Opinion Leaders Are Essentially Professional or Secular in Nature

Relationships with opinion leaders are generally founded on a professional or secular basis, rather than on a personal understanding of one another. Relationships may grow to become personal but must develop in ways and settings that are natural and familiar to the opinion leader. For example, professional government, business, and academic leaders are accustomed to receiving professional correspondence, formal invitations, and scheduled visitors. In some countries, a formal introduction by an individual already acquainted with the opinion leader is expected. At other times, opinion leaders would expect to be approached only by a person that they consider to be their professional or academic peer.

Bypassing expected formalities and protocol, especially on an initial approach, will almost certainly result in failure. At the very least, a willful disregard for professional or cultural protocol would reflect poorly on the Church. Public affairs councils should be well versed in the details of what is appropriate to ensure that outreach efforts are effective.

### Relationships with Opinion Leaders Must Respect Their Secular Position

Opinion leaders may be personally spiritual, but unless they are a faith leader their influence generally stems from the secular position they occupy in government, academia, business, or the media. The approach of the public affairs council must not assume that opinion leaders will be sympathetic to or influenced by Church doctrine or practices, but rather must appeal to their secular position.

Experience has shown that opinion leaders are generally impressed by Church activities that can be measured by secular standards. Examples may include descriptions of disaster or humanitarian relief provided by the Church, service rendered by Church members, and secular accomplishments by Church members. Once familiarized with the Church's activities, opinion leaders may be more receptive to appropriate explanations of gospel principles, but opinion leaders should generally initiate such discussions themselves.

## Reaching Out to Opinion Leaders



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Excellent planning and preparation are hallmarks of successful public affairs councils, but true success can be measured only by the strength of the relationships formed and the beneficial results that those relationships produce. Such results are directly related to the experiences opinion leaders have with Church members and priesthood leaders.

### Positive Experiences = Positive Beliefs

People are generally a product of their deeply held beliefs. They make choices and act on those choices based largely on what they believe to be true. But where do beliefs come from? Most often they come from experiences.

An opinion leader who has good experiences interacting with Church members and leaders may develop positive beliefs about Mormons.

For example, local government leaders who witness Latter-day Saints performing service on behalf of the local community may develop feelings of admiration that are then projected in the opinion leader's mind to the Church as a whole. Later, these thoughts and feelings, reinforced by other positive experiences involving Church members, may persuade the opinion leader to act in ways that benefit the Church. The lesson for public affairs councils is this: Every interaction with and activity involving opinion leaders must be appropriate, relevant, and well planned in order to provide the right kinds of experiences. These in turn will lead to the formation of accurate and positive beliefs about the Church.

### **How to Be Appropriate and Relevant When Interacting with Opinion Leaders**

To be appropriate means acting in ways that are mindful and respectful of the opinion leader and his or her time, responsibilities, and concerns. To be relevant requires an understanding of what is important, meaningful, and helpful to the opinion leader and providing experiences that complement the opinion leader's desires.

By "stepping into the world of opinion leaders" (see below) public affairs councils will develop the necessary and specific understanding about each opinion leader required to be appropriate and relevant. Until this understanding is established, efforts to reach out to opinion leaders may suffer and should probably be postponed.

The specific details of what constitutes appropriate and relevant interaction will differ among opinion leaders; however, the following general guidelines may prove helpful.

Before a meeting, interaction, or other contact:

- Prepare thoroughly and always have a meaningful purpose for the interaction.
- Stay current on what is going on in the opinion leader's "world" (for example, research their recent public statements, follow any recent news coverage about them or their organization).
- Keep communications professional in nature (brief, to the point, not too personal).
- Always thoroughly review and edit all correspondence to the opinion leader.
- Know details about ways the Church can and cannot assist the opinion leader.
- Anticipate questions or concerns from the opinion leader and develop appropriate responses.
- Prepare materials with the opinion leader's interests and concerns in mind.

During the meeting, interaction, or other contact:

- Make good use of the opinion leader's time.
- Be genuine and sincere and appropriately bold.
- Let the opinion leader initiate any "small talk."
- Show due respect for and an understanding of the opinion leader's position.
- Express appreciation for the opinion leader's good works.
- Only raise subjects that you are familiar with; avoid controversies.
- Respect the opinion leader's opinions even if they seem disagreeable.
- Err on the side of offering assistance rather than asking for favors; do not leave the opinion leader feeling obligated.
- Utilize appropriate gifts sparingly.

Following the meeting, interaction, or other contact:

- Follow up with a note of appreciation; then be in touch regularly but not so often that the opinion leader feels pestered or intruded upon.
- Recognize appropriate special events and special accomplishments.
- Look for other appropriate and relevant opportunities for interaction to further build the relationship and expand the opinion leader's understanding about Mormonism.

## Stepping into the World of Opinion Leaders

Stepping into the world of opinion leaders means developing a deep understanding of who they are and what is important to them. Success in outreach depends on knowing as much as possible about opinion leaders and their interests, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. With this information, much of which can be gathered from a variety of secondary sources such as newspapers and Internet sites, public affairs councils and priesthood leaders will know how to make their interactions with opinion leaders both appropriate and relevant.

As information is gathered, keep in mind the following:

- Start by looking for biographical and background information about the individual and his or her organization.
- Look not only for information that others have published about the opinion leader but for information that the opinion leader has published about himself or herself and his or her opinions, including personal Web sites or blogs, Web sites published by the organization that the opinion leader represents, and Twitter posts.
- Look both for things that have been said *about* the individual and *by* the individual. Pay particular attention to information contained in the opinion leader's public speeches and comments. Look especially for anything that the opinion leader has said that is relevant to the council's objectives or local issues.
- Look for information about what the opinion leader has accomplished recently and for any honors or recognitions bestowed on the opinion leader—especially any that might be related to the council's objectives or issues.
- Expand the search to include statistics and articles that are relevant to what the opinion leader has said or believes about the council's objectives or issues.
- Be aware of what detractors may be saying about the opinion leader and his or her position on various issues.
- Read [www.newsroom.lds.org](http://www.newsroom.lds.org) daily to keep updated on new information about the Church.
- For media opinion leaders, read or listen to their articles or reports to discern the types of topics they cover and to detect any consistent editorial bias or personal themes they may emphasize.

# The Three-Step Process for Building Opinion Leader Relationships

**K**nowing where and how to start building relationships is a common challenge for public affairs councils. The “Three-Step Process for Building Opinion Leader Relationships” answers that challenge for those who are just getting started, and it also provides a long-term way to measure if a council’s activities are something they *should* do, or just something they *can* do. Knowing the difference and following the steps below, in order, can be key to a council’s success. Just remember: “**What then Who then How.**”

## Step One: Determine the “What”—Priesthood Objectives and Local Issues

In order to identify key opinion leaders, public affairs councils must first have a firm understanding of the issues and circumstances that make them key in the first place. Asking, “*What* are the objectives of our priesthood leadership for the Church in this area?” and “*What* are the issues facing the Church in this area?” is the first step toward understanding where the public affairs council should focus its attention. It will also help determine *Who* relationship building activities should focus on and *How* the council should reach out to them.

In determining the What, members of public affairs councils should not assume that priesthood leaders will have a predetermined list of objectives or local issues that directly apply to the specialized work of the council. And it should not be assumed that priesthood leaders will have a sufficient understanding of public affairs to always recognize how a public affairs council can be instrumental in the achievement of the objective.

To help identify priesthood objectives and local issues, your public affairs council (including your priesthood adviser) could discuss the following questions:

- What do priesthood leaders feel are the greatest local needs facing the Church and its members today?
- How will those needs change in the next five years?
- What are priesthood leaders’ current initiatives or areas of emphasis?
- What local obstacles or threats are hindering the Church’s progress today?
- What are the emerging issues that may affect the local progress of the Church in the next five years?
- What are the major concerns of people in the local community and how can the Church help address those concerns?

All of these questions, prayerfully considered, will help public affairs councils as they meet with priesthood leaders to ultimately define the ways that they can do the most good for the Church in the local area.

Once priesthood objectives and local issues are identified and thoroughly understood by the members of the public affairs council and approved by priesthood leaders, they should be reviewed in subsequent public affairs council meetings to keep attention focused on the Church’s most important needs in the area. And don’t assume that priesthood objectives won’t be modified over time as new situations and challenges arise. Continue asking the questions about priesthood objectives periodically to be sure the council stays focused on activities that best meet the current and ongoing needs of the Church in the area.

## A Sample Priesthood Objective and Public Affairs Council Response

*One example of a priesthood objective might be the building of a new chapel in the area. Clearly the public affairs council doesn't design or build buildings, nor does it file for permits or draft related legal documents. However, the public affairs council may well play a significant role in the overall building project.*

*For example, recognizing that large-scale building projects often present opportunities to promote the Church, but may also be accompanied by opposition, the public affairs council would identify possible opportunities and challenges presented by the project—all of which may be affected by the perceptions and beliefs of opinion leaders in the community.*

*A major responsibility of the public affairs council in this situation is to know who the key opinion leaders are. Members of the planning commission, the city council, the media, other churches, local neighborhood groups, and even vocal individuals acting on their own, could all raise objections that would affect the project. Conversely, members of any of these groups might also be willing to step forward to endorse or defend the Church's plans, thereby improving perceptions of the Church in the area.*

*Once the issues and opportunities and key opinion leaders are identified, the public affairs council can prepare plans to mitigate any potential challenges to the project and use the building project to help the Church become better known and understood in the community—both of which strongly suggest the need for well-established relationships with strategic opinion leaders.*

## Step Two: Identify the “Who”—Key Opinion Leaders

With actionable priesthood objectives and issues identified, the public affairs council is prepared to identify the key opinion leaders—in other words, those who are in a position to help or hinder the Church's achievement of the objectives because they may share the same objectives or concerns.

It is probably best to limit the list of current relationship efforts with opinion leaders to a manageable size—as few as 10 individuals for stake public affairs councils. This will help the public affairs council to prioritize by focusing on the most vital relationships. The list may change over time and other names may be added. But ultimately it is the quality and not the quantity of relationships that will make the most difference.

Keeping the list small will also help the council to be disciplined in determining who should be on the list. Individuals should not be included simply because they occupy a position of authority or are prominent in the community. Likewise, individuals should not be included simply because a member of the council is acquainted with them or knows others who are acquainted with them. Rather, sufficient rationale should be presented before the council and council members should be willing to submit opinion leaders' names to the scrutiny of the council and priesthood leadership to ratify the inclusion of a given name.

The following questions may help the council to determine who might be included on a local opinion leader list:

- Is the person in his or her present position currently affecting the outcome of a decision or decisions that will positively or negatively impact the Church?
- Is the person specifically involved at present in the establishment of laws, policies, or decisions that are directly related to the identified priesthood objectives or issues that the Church is likely to face in the future?
- Is the person likely at some point in the future to have the necessary authority or influence to be specifically involved in the establishment of laws, policies, or decisions that are directly related to the identified priesthood objectives or issues that the Church is likely to face?
- Does the person share the same objective or concern as the Church leaders? Will he or she benefit from the relationship?

Once opinion leaders are identified and agreed upon by the council and priesthood leaders, a member of the council should be assigned to oversee the relationship with each opinion leader. This person will help to define the “road map” to establishing a relationship with the individual, will monitor the progress of the relationship, and



will help to keep a record of the relationship to ensure that it endures over time through changes in council personnel and priesthood leadership. The person assigned to oversee the relationship should also be aware as the influence of the opinion leader increases or decreases over time and bring any new developments to the attention of the council.

### Step Three: Identify the “How”—Building the Road Map

The substance of a public affairs council’s annual project plan is its collection of “road maps” or action plans for building relationships with each opinion leader on the council’s list. Each road map identifies information about a single opinion leader, identifies the council member responsible for managing the relationship, and outlines a series of projected activities with an associated time line and assigned individuals. These activities are the council’s best attempt at identifying how it plans to create experiences for the opinion leader that will lead to the desired relationship and results.

Each road map should be tailored to the individual background, interests, opinions, and protocol considerations associated with each opinion leader. Defining the road map can be likened to mentally “stepping into the world of the opinion leader” in order to find common ground or interests that the opinion leader shares with the Church in general or with local Church leaders. Doing so will help council members and priesthood leaders to better understand how to be appropriate and relevant in their interactions with each opinion leader.

**Note:** It is important that each member of the public affairs council read and understand “Relationship Building Basics” and “Stepping into the World of Opinion Leaders” before proposing steps in a road map.

Public affairs councils should expect a well-defined road map to require a significant amount of research, discussion, networking, and prayerful pondering. It should also be understood that road maps will likely evolve over time as new information is obtained or circumstances change.

Each road map should include:

- A statement indicating the reason for this relationship, including the relevant priesthood objective or local issue identified by the council (see Step One: Determine the “What”—Priesthood Objectives and Local Issues).
- Name and contact information of the opinion leader identified (see Step 2: Identify the “Who”).
- Road map research, including:
  - Known background of any prior contact between the opinion leader and other Church members, including any prior attendance at Church-sponsored events or existing relationships with Church members (enter specifics).
  - Background information relevant to the priesthood objective or local issue (a separate biographical sketch can be an attachment to the road map document).
  - Personally written, spoken, or reported statements from the opinion leader that are relevant to the priesthood objective or local issue (include statements and references).
  - Recent accomplishments or recognitions relevant to the priesthood objective or local issue (what and when).
  - Statistics (from sources other than the opinion leader) relevant to what he or she has said or believes about the objective or issue.
- A contact plan, indicating:
  - The type(s) of contact(s) to be made with the opinion leader (for example, personal letter, one-on-one appointment, lunch or dinner with small group and speaker, stake conference, pre-event reception, open house, community service project, award ceremony, and so on).
  - The names of public affairs council member(s) assigned to arrange interactions with the opinion leader. (Note: Generally relationships should be established between the public affairs council’s priesthood adviser or other priesthood leaders and the opinion leader. However, public affairs council members can be very supportive by helping to prepare priesthood leaders and accompanying them to meetings or other activities with opinion leaders.)

- Target dates for planned contacts.
- Subsequent planned follow-up contacts, including who will be responsible for them along with target dates and frequency. (A brief record of each contact or interaction with the opinion leader should be recorded in an addendum to the road map.)

Sometimes even the best attempts at defining a road map can leave a council uncertain as to how it will ultimately find a way to build the relationship with the opinion leader. At such times, the example of Nephi seeking to obtain the brass plates from Laban may prove instructive and comforting: “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do” (1 Nephi 4:6).

Councils that are faced with similar circumstances should prayerfully decide on a first step and then rely on faith and inspiration for subsequent steps to become more apparent over time. Those who have done so have often found that the result far exceeded what was hoped for or imagined as possible.

# Public Affairs Plan

<b>Develop Relationships with Opinion Leaders Who Can Help or Hinder the Church in its Mission</b>		
<b><i>What</i></b>	<b><i>Who</i></b>	<b><i>How</i></b>

# Public Affairs Plan – Sample

<b>Develop Relationships with Opinion Leaders Who Can Help or Hinder the Church in its Mission</b>		
<b><i>What</i></b>	<b><i>Who</i></b>	<b><i>How</i></b>
Eliminate or minimize public talk and writing about the Church (that is based on misunderstandings) coming from leaders of other churches	Names and titles of specific faith leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one meetings with specific faith leaders</li> <li>• Joint Helping Hands project with specific faith group/s</li> <li>• Present Family Values Award to specific faith leader/s</li> </ul>
Increase the number of missionary opportunities by increasing the public image of missionaries	Names and titles of specific religion journalists and other key media contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one meetings with each of these media contacts</li> <li>• Contribute excellent story ideas and content about missionaries</li> <li>• Train missionaries for interviews</li> </ul>
Increase the number of Church members joining online conversations describing and defending their beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priesthood and other local Church leaders</li> <li>• Church members</li> </ul>	Hold a fireside to invite members to blog, produce videos etc., for Internet posting. Show samples of what others are doing; and share guidelines for LDS online participation

# Interfaith Relations

**E**very public affairs council should consider the merits of building relationships with leaders of other faiths. Religious leaders are often influential in shaping community values and standards and can influence the opinions that others hold about our Church and its members.

Furthermore, religion and religious organizations in our day are under increasing pressure from myriad forces. These pressures are shaping public opinion and are threatening basic religious freedoms. A faith's ability to practice its beliefs and take a moral position is being called more and more into question, which fosters unfair scrutiny and hostile criticism. In some cases such criticism can lead to intolerant acts.

By reaching out in friendship to other faiths, priesthood leaders and public affairs councils can help to increase understanding and promote religious tolerance and cooperation. However, care must be taken to ensure that such cooperation is both appropriate and built on a foundation of common values, interests, and objectives.

## Objectives of Interfaith Outreach

The 11th Article of Faith states, "We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may." In keeping with this statement, objectives for engaging in interfaith outreach efforts may include:

- Promoting religious faith and basic religious freedoms for all people.
- Promoting harmony and fostering greater understanding between faiths.
- Engaging in joint initiatives and activities, such as humanitarian service, that bless the lives of those in need.
- Enabling the Church's efforts to fulfill its mission through building friendships with key religious opinion leaders.

## Working with Clergy from Other Faiths

Before you can build meaningful friendships with members of the clergy, you need to understand something about their "world."

Members of the clergy typically are honorable men and women who are sincerely dedicated to a life of service to God and their congregants. Many have a deep conviction of a divine calling that their congregations and other clergy accept as the authority to perform religious duties.

In most faiths it is the clergy who conduct most of the preaching, teaching, counseling, civic participation, and administrative duties. Many have heavy demands placed on them and their families and are open to appropriate help from others.

Some clergy members are interested in having better relations with members and leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but hesitate due to misunderstandings and fears. Sometimes misrepresentations, defamatory literature, or previous negative contacts with Church members have led to unfavorable perceptions.

Conversely, leaders of other faiths sometimes believe Church members do not want to associate with them or their congregations, or are interested only in proselytizing them. Some may view our family emphasis and welfare programs favorably but think we are only concerned with caring for our own members rather than the entire community.

## Guidelines for Developing Interfaith Relationships

The primary responsibility for interfaith relations lies with the local priesthood leader, assisted by the public affairs council. Personal contact between religious leaders usually is the most productive approach toward developing interfaith relations. Clergy usually prefer to develop relations with peers from other faith groups, rather than lay members. The priesthood leader often may be accompanied by the interfaith specialist on the public affairs council who manages the day-to-day organizational and follow-up work for the priesthood leader.

In dealing with the clergy of other faiths, be careful when using titles and forms of address such as pastor, father, or rabbi. The titles may indicate rank or seniority in a faith group and should be used correctly. Some titles are used in written correspondence but not verbal communication. If you are unsure of the form of address for a member of the clergy you are planning to approach, call his or her secretary or church office and ask.

Always take the time to learn the basic organization, belief, and theology of your interfaith contacts. If the clergy of other faiths inquire about our doctrines or beliefs, respond openly and frankly, at the same time showing respect for their beliefs. Use restraint and let the Spirit and their interest determine how much to say.

Other faith groups sometimes do not have the organizational and volunteer resources that we enjoy. They may need support to complete a project. In such cases, do all you can to be helpful without taking charge. Support their efforts and ideas.

Be modest about the accomplishments of the Church. Never act in a superior manner or boast about the success of the Church programs or growth. In clergy relations, attitude is important. Your personal concern, kindness, caring, and tolerance must be genuine.

## Important Considerations

Priesthood leaders and public affairs directors may join local interfaith councils or similar organizations, but should do so only after careful and prayerful consideration. Before joining, they should review the council's bylaws and the minutes of previous meetings to make sure the causes supported by the councils are in harmony with Church policies. For example, the Church maintains a policy of strict political neutrality and does not favor any party or candidate. Be especially aware if the interfaith councils you associate with advocate partisan political positions or endorse specific candidates.

Caution should also be taken to understand the types of activities the group supports or the positions it takes on moral issues. If some of the activities or positions are questionable or do not align with Church positions or policies, wisdom should be used in determining whether or at what level to join such a group. If council membership is inappropriate, priesthood leaders can still make contacts with clergy in the council and participate in appropriate sponsored activities.

Only the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles make policy for the Church. No Church member, ward, or stake may make binding commitments for the Church. Be aware that statements made by someone representing the Church may be interpreted by others as statements of general Church policy or doctrine. Always clarify that you are speaking as an individual and not for the Church as a whole. Remember also that only priesthood leaders may commit Church member participation or Church resources in support of interfaith activities.

The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have instructed Church members to not participate in activities that could compromise Church doctrine or principles in any way. Local public affairs councils or Church units should not participate in joint worship services where Church theology or the structure of regular Church meetings and practices will be altered or compromised.

The Church's name should generally not be placed on the letterhead of interfaith groups, especially when doing so would allow the group to declare a public position and give the appearance that the Church supports or endorses that position.

## Developing Interfaith Relations

The Three-Step Process for Developing Opinion Leader Relationships is your best guide to understanding the basic principles of developing interfaith relationships. Other keys to success include the following:

- Identify the interfaith councils or comparable organizations in your community, utilize your existing network of relationships, or look in a telephone or Internet directory. Such organizations may be listed under “Interfaith Council,” “Council of Churches,” “Ministerial Association,” or “Ecumenical Ministries.” If your stake spans several cities, multiple interfaith councils may exist.
- Assess the current sentiment about the Church in your area by talking with approachable local clergy. Be open about your purpose in wanting to talk to them.
- Ensure that priesthood leaders always approve any efforts to develop interfaith relations. Stake public affairs councils should also consult with their multistake council, if any.
- Review regularly the religion or churches section of local newspapers to be aware of the activities of different faith groups and to help you identify activities in which the Church may participate. Use local news sources to also identify the clergy who are most involved in community affairs apart from their involvement in local ministerial associations. Consider calling or assigning an interfaith specialist on your public affairs council to follow important interfaith-related news.
- Be informed on official titles and ways of addressing clergy before making contact.
- When meeting with the clergy, try to arrange a meeting place that is comfortable for them, such as their own office, to set them at ease.

## Examples of Successful Interfaith Relations

- A stake Relief Society made 120 quilts. The stake president then invited the Salvation Army, a major community relief organization, to a special lunch at the stake center where the Relief Society presented the quilts to the Salvation Army for distribution to the homeless. The event generated goodwill between the Church and the Salvation Army and contributed significantly to the community.
- In a major city, our Church provides volunteers regularly to help a relief agency of the Catholic Church to provide food for the homeless. Representatives of our Church meet regularly with members of the organizing and supervisory council to coordinate efforts.
- One interfaith coalition sponsors an activity four times a year to ease hunger among the needy. Churches donate and collect nonperishable food and fresh vegetables and fruits in season. The activity is publicized throughout the community within the churches and in the local media. Members of the participating churches canvass neighborhoods, solicit food, and collect and deliver it to the local food storehouse, where it is sorted, processed, and then given to the needy families and individuals.
- In Salt Lake City, the local Salt Lake City Public Affairs Council participates with the local Interfaith Roundtable and allows use of the Tabernacle on Temple Square for an annual Interfaith Music Tribute each February. Use of the Tabernacle is approved each year through priesthood channels. The event, which is free to the public, is put on by the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and includes worshipful music or dance numbers from a variety of faiths, including Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist, as well as a local LDS children’s choir and choirs or soloists from several other Christian denominations. It is not a joint worship service but is presented in more of a fireside format, with prayers being offered by representatives of the various faiths.
- Quarterly “appreciation lunches” are hosted by the local Salt Lake City Area Public Affairs Council where leaders of various community service organizations are invited to attend as a thank-you for all their organization does.

There are no awards given, nor is this a fund-raising opportunity for the organizations being recognized. However, it is a chance to express appreciation to those who work hard to make the community a better place to live. A representative of each organization, usually the executive director or chairman, is given an opportunity to share a little about what the particular organization does and explain its purpose and goals. The public affairs council chair, or a Church leader, expresses gratitude on behalf of the Church for these organizations and their efforts.





# MEDIA RELATIONS

A recent article in *Time* magazine about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said: “The LDS is the fourth largest church in the country, the richest per capita and one of the fastest-growing abroad. The body has become a mainstream force, counting among its flock political heavyweights like former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and Democratic Senate majority leader Harry Reid, businesspeople like the Marriotts and entertainers like Glenn Beck and *Twilight* novelist Stephenie Meyer. ... LDS spokesman Michael Otterson says, ‘This is a moment of emergence.’”

From a media perspective, this “emergence” means the Church is becoming increasingly relevant. Consequently, anytime a social issue becomes newsworthy, whether it is capital punishment, same-sex marriage, illegal immigration, or abortion, the Church will most likely be asked its opinion. Journalists are also interested in the Church itself, from its unique history and distinct doctrine to its humanitarian efforts and young missionaries. Being relevant is a good thing, but it also means the Church is open to greater scrutiny.

Sometimes depictions of the Church and its people are quite accurate. Sometimes the images are false or play to stereotypes (see the Publicity Dilemma). And while we don’t have control over what media ultimately print, broadcast, or blog, directors of public affairs (DPA) can have a great influence in how a story is reported. The role of the DPA is to inform, educate, explain, and promote the Church to journalists. Every interaction with a journalist should enhance trust, mutual respect, and understanding.

The most important aspects of media relations are:

- Understanding the media.
- Building relationships.
- Determining the message.
- Preparing a news release.
- Giving a media interview.
- Pitching a story.

# Understanding the Media

For most of us growing up, our morning routine included sitting down to breakfast with the newspaper delivered to the front door step. Our day most likely ended with watching the evening news on television. But with the proliferation of the Internet and new ways of communicating, all of that is changing. It's also changing the way DPAs interact with journalists.

Understanding the state of news media today will allow DPAs to help journalists in efficient and timely ways. Remember, a relationship is strengthened when it's mutually beneficial to both parties—the news organization and the Church.

## State of the Industry

According to the 2009 State of the News Media Report by the Pew Project, newspaper ad revenues have fallen 23 percent in the last two years and circulation continues to drop. Some 2,400 full-time professional newsroom jobs were lost at American dailies in 2007 and 5,900 more in 2008. That amounts to daily newspapers losing about 17 percent of their news staffs since the start of 2001.

Michael A. Chihak, executive director of the Communications Leadership Institute, said: "New technologies turned newspapering into a fragile sheet of glass, dropping it to the ground where it broke into dozens of pieces. Newspaper bosses tried putting it back together rather than recognizing each piece as a new opportunity. Now it's too late."

The situation isn't much better for television news, which saw ad revenues drop, cost cutting across the board, and continued layoffs. To keep up with demand, television operations are looking at innovative models of news gathering, which most often translates into multimedia journalists.

For example, a reporter at the Associated Press—traditionally a print wire service—will now often ask to shoot video as well as photographs when researching a story. A blog by that same reporter might also be posted on the Internet to complement the print story, along with additional photographs.

Newspapers and television news will continue to transform as more and more people turn to other forms of electronic media, dubbed "new media," for their information. According to Pew, a December 2008 poll found the number of Americans who said they got "most of their national and international news" online increased 67 percent in the last four years. The Internet is also greatly increasing the speed at which information travels and news is published.

In short, DPAs will be working increasingly with multimedia journalists in a changing media landscape. This changing landscape also creates an opportunity to form trusting relationships with journalists and provide them with fast, easy, digestible information to meet their constant deadlines.

## Media Types

DPAs work primarily with local newspapers and television stations. The basic positions found in a newsroom are as follows:

### *Newspapers*

- Managing editors are responsible for the overall editorial supervision of the newsroom, determining what stories the newspaper covers and how.
- Reporters are responsible for the interviews, research, and writing of their stories. They either find their own stories or follow up on stories and leads given to them by an editor. Many newspaper reporters have specific beats assigned to them such as local government, education, business, and religion. Reporters are expected to develop expertise and contacts in their beats.

- Editors are responsible for editing a reporter's story before it is printed in the newspaper, checking for spelling, grammar, style, and factual accuracy. The copy desk is responsible for writing the headlines for each story.

### *Television*

- News directors are responsible for overall editorial supervision of the newsroom, determining what stories the station covers and how.
- Assignment editors are responsible for determining how station resources such as photographers, reporters, and live trucks are allocated in covering stories.
- Reporters are responsible for the interviews, research, and writing of their stories. They either find their own stories or follow up on stories and leads given to them by a news director or assignment editor. They often present the story live during a newscast. A reporter-narrated story, referred to as a "package," is generally between 60 and 90 seconds in length. Most TV newsrooms assign reporters to specific beats, with the expectation that they develop expertise and contacts in those beats.
- Producers are responsible for organizing and creating both individual stories and entire newscasts.
- Line producers organize, edit, and write a newscast and oversee its live broadcast.
- Special projects producers prepare individual stories that air during a newscast. Examples include investigative pieces, special series and franchise reports, such as health or consumer stories.

### *New Media*

New media allows almost any individual with Internet access to publish and broadcast. It enables individuals and groups to participate in public discussions and often influence the news media. Included in the category of new media are blogs and social networking Web sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter.

These sites, which allow for immediate communication and relay of information among users, are emerging as a sort of ground-level resource for driving messages to audiences. Media outlets are now using these Web sites to instantly deliver breaking news alerts and developing details on stories to subscribers, outside the confines of a daily newspaper or a regularly scheduled newscast. Often it's an individual—not a mainstream news outlet—that distributes the first information on a breaking news story.

Bloggers are the most common type of communicator associated with new media. A blog, short for "Web log," is a type of Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function more as personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

New media is just that—new—and the roles and parameters of this kind of journalism are still being defined. It's common for traditional journalists, such as print and broadcast reporters, to maintain blogs in which they discuss and analyze the news of the day. These blogs are sometimes used to break stories independent of the newspaper or broadcast for which they report.

But because of the open, unregulated nature of the Internet, some bloggers have little or no journalistic training. The typical rules of traditional journalism—balanced reporting, fact checking, accuracy, source attribution, objectivity, and so on—generally don't apply online. Much of what appears on blogs would be better characterized as opinion or analysis, not news. But blogs have become increasingly pervasive and they wield considerable power in the national discussion of current events and issues. That means much of what is "reported" on blogs is finding its way into the mainstream media.

# Building Media Relationships

**T**he core purpose of Public Affairs is to build strategic relationships with opinion leaders who affect the reputation of the Church and whose actions and influence can help or hinder the Church's mission. From a media perspective, this translates into the art of building relationships of trust and mutual interest with reporters.

The content of news stories about the Church is a direct result of journalists' perceptions of the Church and a DPA's interaction with them as they write and broadcast stories. Because of this, a DPA's role is critical in this shaping process.

## Database

Start by developing a contact list of journalists who are most likely to write about the Church. These might be religion writers, feature writers, or journalists who work for wire services. Wire services such as the Associated Press and Reuters are news agencies which provide articles and photographs to subscribers including newspapers, television and radio stations, and Internet sites.

It's important to maintain an electronic database of the media representatives you contact and include summaries of your interactions with them. Your list will likely start out small but will expand as you serve in your assignment. Your records should include names, titles, and contact information such as phone numbers, mail addresses, and e-mail addresses. Each time you have contact with a reporter, it should be noted in the database. Track who you spoke with, what questions were asked and the answers given, notes on the reporter's style or approach, what worked well, and whether the resulting story was positive, negative, or neutral. These notes will become an invaluable reference as you work with individual reporters and decide how to respond to their questions.

## Initial Contact

Once a reporter has been identified, it's time to do some homework. Become familiar with the reporter's publication or television station. Does it have a religion section? Are religion stories covered as features? Does the publication or television station have an editorial point of view on issues? Research what the reporter has written about the Church in the past. Does he or she demonstrate an accurate understanding of the Church? What stories are of interest to the reporter?

Understanding the media outlet as well as the reporter will give you a starting point. For example, journalists who are unfamiliar with the Church usually respond favorably to an invitation to attend a sacrament meeting as a way to become more knowledgeable about our faith. If the reporter writes about community service, perhaps an invitation to a ward or youth service project would be of interest. The goal is to establish yourself as an information source who can help in a timely way with stories about the Church.

Generally, editors and reporters at weekly or small local newspapers will be more willing to meet with you in person than those working with larger media organizations. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, you can achieve similar success via e-mail. Here are some suggestions that will help with your initial contact.

- If possible, make an appointment for a brief introduction.
- Provide the journalist with information about the Church. You might want to create a fact sheet about the number of members in your area, as well as the number of chapels, temples, and missions. The history of the Church in your area will also be interesting. Most of this information can be obtained at [newsroom.lds.org](http://newsroom.lds.org) and from the Church Almanac.
- Ask what types of stories the journalist is interested in covering and come prepared with story ideas about the Church.
- Ask how the journalist prefers to receive story ideas: by e-mail, telephone, fax, or in person.

- Find out the reporter's deadlines and avoid contact immediately before, during, or immediately after them. For example, you wouldn't want to contact a television reporter late in the afternoon when he is editing his final stories for broadcast that evening.
- Finally, be sure the organization has your name, title, and contact information. To avoid confusion, each media outlet should have one Church contact for information purposes.

## When a Journalist Calls

Every interaction with a journalist should be positive, even if the story he is covering is not. Remember, he's just doing his job. Your job is to get the facts about the story, correct any misconceptions, and answer questions.

When contacted by a reporter, it's important to be helpful but not give out information during the initial phone call. This will give you time to learn more about the story and determine the best way to respond. An easy way to respond to any inquiry is, "I'd be happy to try to get answers to your questions. Let's talk about your story."

A DPA should ask questions of the journalist. "What is your angle or approach to the story?" "Who else are you talking with?" "What piqued your interest in this topic?" If you have any uneasiness about how a journalist answers these questions, you can politely correct or redirect the story.

One of the best ways to make sure you and the reporter are on the same page is to have the reporter e-mail you a short paragraph about his story and the questions he needs answered.

Ask for the reporter's deadline, and be realistic with your timeline to respond. It's much easier to respond to questions with a few days' notice rather than a few hours.

With the information in hand about the story, you can now contact your priesthood leader and decide how to respond. You have several options, depending on the media outlet, journalist, and story being reported:

- Decline to participate in the story.
- Give a short written statement.
- Answer questions via e-mail.
- Provide an interview.

Once a story has been printed or aired, it's important to give positive, constructive feedback to the reporter via a phone call or e-mail. This will help continue the relationship with the reporter. Closing a note with, "I look forward to working with you again" is an open invitation for future stories.

# Determining the Message

Some people prepare for a media interview in the same way they cram for an exam—they read up on the subject, gather every shred of information available, and try to memorize it in the hope that the questions they're asked will fall into their range of knowledge.

You can never prepare effectively that way. Former NBC News correspondent Richard Valeriani said: “The essential purpose of an interview is to present a point of view or to deliver a set of messages. It is not merely to answer a reporter's questions.”

“Messaging” is essential in any communication with the media, whether it be a news release, statement via e-mail, or an interview. It gives DPAs the opportunity to shape a deeper discussion.

A successful interaction with the press should not be measured in column inches or the length of a television news story. Instead, it should be measured by whether or not it captured your key messages.

## Messaging Case Study

Let's take a look at how effective messaging can change a conversation about the Church. During Mitt Romney's presidential run there were thousands of articles being written about Mormonism, many of them with erroneous information about the Church's doctrine and beliefs. It was challenging for political journalists, who were not familiar with religious faiths, to try to boil down what Mormons believed in a paragraph or a 10-second sound bite.

Instead of being asked what Mormons believed, Public Affairs found itself in the unenviable position of repeatedly commenting on what members of the Church did not believe. Consequently, the resulting articles did little to foster understanding about our faith.

Public Affairs realized it was important to help journalists understand from their own perspective how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fits into the religious mosaic.

Public Affairs started with determining what Mormonism had in common with other Christian faiths and then focused on important differences. The following messages were intended to help foster understanding of Church doctrine and beliefs. Notice the focus on Jesus Christ, the Bible, humanitarian service, the Restoration, and the Book of Mormon—all foundational principles for Church members.

### **Common ground with other Christian churches:**

#### ***Jesus Christ***

- We believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and our personal Savior.
- We try to model our lives on His teachings.
- We commemorate Christ's sacrifice in our Sunday worship services—equivalent to communion in other churches.
- We embrace as fellow Christians all who believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Savior of all mankind, regardless of doctrinal differences.

#### ***The Bible***

- We believe in the Holy Bible, both the Old and New Testaments.

### **Humanitarian service**

- We regularly join with people of many faiths to address humanitarian and other needs in the United States and around the world.

### **Differences from other Christian churches:**

#### **The Restoration**

- The Church is not Catholic or Protestant, but holds a unique place in the Christian world as restored New Testament Christianity. The “latter-day” Church, like the original Church in Christ’s day, is also led by apostles, served by a lay ministry, and emphasizes service and good works.

#### **New scripture**

- Along with the Bible, we use other scriptures, including the “Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ,” which serves as an additional witness to the ministry of Christ and His divinity.
- The Book of Mormon and our other scriptures add to our understanding of God and His plan of salvation for His children. We believe the family is eternal and that we will return to live together with our Father in Heaven. We believe that we will return to live with Him and continue to grow and progress after we leave this life.

#### **Meet our people**

- One of the best ways to understand what Latter-day Saints are about is to get to know them. You’ll see how faith influences our lives and how we embrace values and beliefs that are familiar to other people of faith.
- Our weekly Sunday services in tens of thousands of church buildings worldwide are open to everyone, regardless of whether they are members of the Church and without any obligation.
- Visitors find much that is familiar and comfortable in our Sunday worship services. *(Briefly review lay ministry; hymns, including some traditional Christian versions; men, women, and teenagers speaking from the pulpit; how the sacrament—*analogous to communion*—is prepared and passed; and the extemporaneous nature of our prayers. Point out the absence of elaborate ornamentation and icons, no kneeling as a congregation, and no congregational recitals or repetition common to other faiths.)*
- It’s in the everyday lives of Latter-day Saints where you can see firsthand the way in which their values are reinforced—honesty, integrity, care for the needy, and strong marriages and families in which love, trust, nurturing, and personal growth for parents and children flow from mutual commitment and acceptance.

Every time Public Affairs received an inquiry about Church beliefs, journalists were referred to these messages on [newsroom.lds.org](https://newsroom.lds.org), giving media a foundation from which to ask questions about the Church. This allowed Public Affairs to be proactive and accurately inform journalists about Church beliefs in a positive way rather than simply react to misinformation being reported by others.

These key messages were also the subject of an online news conference by the Church with national journalists as well as a series of editorial board visits by Church leaders.

## **Crafting Key Messages**

Every message should link back to the core belief that we follow Jesus Christ. For example, if asked why the Church engages in humanitarian efforts, a key message could be: “We follow the example of Jesus Christ in reaching out to those in need.” If asked why the Church conducts missionary work, the key message could be: “We are motivated to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to bring peace and happiness to others.”

Additional key messages can and should relate to the specific inquiry from a reporter. Let's say a reporter is calling about the dedication of a new temple. Before information is given or an interview takes place, consider what your primary objective is (see Interview Prep List). A sample objective might be to educate the general public about the purpose of the temple. Then ask yourself what headline you would like to see related to your story. A desired headline might be "New temple is dedicated as the House of the Lord." This becomes your headline message that can be bridged to during media interviews (see Media Interviews).

Three secondary key messages can also be identified to support the headline message. These could be as follows:

- Latter-day Saint temples provide a place where Church members make formal promises and commitments to God.
- Temples are places where the highest sacraments of the faith occur—the marriage of couples and the "sealing" of families for eternity.
- Temples point Latter-day Saints to Jesus Christ and their eventual life with Him and their Heavenly Father, and with their family members on the condition of faithfulness to Christ's teachings.

These messages should take center stage in any subsequent communication or interview with media concerning the new temple.

## Anticipating Questions

In addition to identifying key messages, DPAs should also make a list of anticipated questions the reporter might ask. Journalists will likely ask a wide range of questions, from those about the angel Moroni to why the temple is open only to members of the Church after its dedication. It's important for your priesthood leader or other designated spokesperson to know how to positively answer these questions and inject key messages in the process.

Part of anticipating what a reporter will ask includes considering controversial issues and how they might be addressed. In the context of a new temple being dedicated, spokespeople should be prepared to answer a widevariety of issues in a positive way (see Responses to Controversial Issues).

For example, if asked why the Church is often perceived as secretive because of its temples, a good response might be as follows:

- Latter-day Saints welcome people of other faiths, and many attend Church services with them. Millions visit chapels and other Church facilities every year. We want to share our faith.
- A temple is different. Not even all Mormons enter the temple. These are the most sacred places on earth for Church members. They are reserved for the highest sacraments of the Church and are entered only by members of the Church who are fully engaged in the sacramental activities of the faith.

If asked about the purpose of proxy baptism, a positive answer might be as follows:

- For nearly 180 years, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have performed baptisms in Church temples on behalf of deceased relatives. The practice is rooted in the belief that certain sacred sacraments, such as baptism, are required to enter the kingdom of heaven and that a just God will give everyone who ever lived a fair opportunity to receive them, whether in this life or the next.
- Church members who perform temple baptisms for their deceased relatives are motivated by love and sincere concern for the welfare of all of God's children. According to Church doctrine, a departed soul in the afterlife is completely free to accept or reject such a baptism—the offering is freely given and must be freely received.

Preparing properly for each media interaction by creating key messages, anticipating questions, and identifying negative issues will, in most cases, result in a positive outcome. The primary goal is to promote understanding and accurately reflect the Church and its teachings.



# Preparing a News Release

**A** news release is the best way to communicate information to journalists. Think of it as a news story with an agenda. While it's written in the style of a news story, a news release is carefully crafted to promote the Church and its message.

To avoid wasted effort, make sure your release is of interest to the media and the rest of your target audience. On average, assignment editors will give your release a five second read before deciding if it's newsworthy. If not, your release will end up in the trash can.

News is basically defined as a timely event or situation of extraordinary interest or importance to a specified audience. Here are five basic factors that determine what makes news.

## Timing

The word "news" means exactly that—things that are new. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting.

## Significance

The number of people affected by the story is important. A winter storm that leaves thousands of people stranded in an airport is more significant than a storm that knocks down tree limbs in a neighborhood.

## Proximity

Stories that happen near to us have more significance. The closer the story is to home, the more newsworthy it is. For someone living in Utah, a mayoral election in Salt Lake City has a different news value than a gubernatorial election in Colorado.

## Prominence

Famous people get more coverage just because they are famous. If you break your arm, it won't make the news, but if the Queen of England breaks her arm, it's big news.

## Human Interest

Human interest stories are a bit of a special case. They often disregard the main rules of newsworthiness. For example, they don't become dated as quickly, they need not affect a large number of people, and it may not matter where in the world the story takes place.

Human interest stories appeal to emotion. They aim to evoke responses such as amusement or sadness. Producers often place a humorous or quirky story at the end of a newscast to finish on a feel-good note. Newspapers often have a dedicated area for offbeat or interesting items.

Church stories of interest to the media generally fall into one of these categories. Such stories include features on missionaries, leadership changes, meetings or events, achievements of members, and new Church buildings and temples.

## Writing the Release

From the moment we hear our first fairy tale, which begins with "Once upon a time..." and ends with "They lived happily ever after..." we are conditioned to tell stories in chronological order. The story of the Three Little Pigs begins, "Once upon a time there were three little pigs. One lived in a house of straw, another in a house of sticks, and the third a house of bricks. The first two little pigs laughed at the third little pig for spending so much time building such a strong house when there were so many other fun things to do."

News writing is completely opposite. The lead or first paragraph contains the most important facts of the story, regardless of where they fit chronologically. This is called the "inverted pyramid" style of writing.

Stories are written with information at the beginning that will be of most interest to readers. The story of the Three Little Pigs written in inverted pyramid style would read like this:

“The Big Bad Wolf was killed today when he jumped down a chimney into a pot of boiling water after an apparent murder attempt at the brick home of the Third Little Pig, ending a crime spree that left two dead.”

Here are the principles of inverted pyramid writing:

- The most important information is given in the first two paragraphs: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- Supporting detail is added in decreasing order of importance.
- The local angle is played up.
- News value is also emphasized: timing, significance, proximity, prominence, and human interest.
- A good lead previews the main story ideas and gives the reader a map of the story.

The best way to begin the writing process is by listing all of the facts associated with your event or announcement and putting them in order of importance. This will help you resist the habit of writing chronologically and determine what you want the news release to accomplish:

- Do I want to increase or maintain awareness?
- Do I want to establish credibility or authority, build image?
- Do I want to get interviews on television, radio, the Internet?
- Do I want to drive traffic to a special event?

Answering these questions will help you establish what needs to be said and how the facts should be presented.

## Formatting the News Release

A news release will be most effective if it's credible. That means it does not contain editorializing or unsubstantiated claims, and all opinions appear as quotes. The release should also have the proper format.

- Use only one side of standard, letter-size white paper.
- Use one-inch margins.
- Copy should be double-spaced.
- Include release date or "For Immediate Release" in the top left-hand corner.
- Put contact information at the top right-hand corner of the release.
- Include an attention-grabbing headline.
- If there's more than one page, put "more" at the bottom to point to the following page.
- End the release with three pound signs (###).

## After Writing the Release

Once the news release is written and formatted, make sure it has been reviewed and has the proper approval from priesthood leaders. Refer to Pitching a News Story for more information on how to distribute the release. One final review is important to make sure the release is as effective as possible.

- Check spelling.
- Verify the accuracy of names, statistics, and statements.
- Have someone unfamiliar with your event or announcement read the release for clarity.
- Ensure that the release makes sense to people who are unfamiliar with the Church.
- Evaluate whether the release supports the Church's goals.

# Giving a Media Interview

**Y**ou've established a relationship with a reporter, have successfully written and pitched a story, and gone through the process of developing key messages. You are now ready for the media interview.

## Selecting a Spokesperson

You should coordinate with your local priesthood leader to determine a spokesperson. The designated spokesperson in a stake is the stake president. However, the stake president can delegate this responsibility as needed. Choosing a spokesperson will depend entirely on the nature of the story and the information that needs to be communicated. The spokesperson should be articulate and comfortable speaking with media.

## Preparation

Remember to utilize the "Interview Prep List" (see Determining the Message) to develop key messages for your interview and anticipate possible questions. The key to an effective interview is to know ahead of time what you want to say and then create opportunities to say it.

How you deliver those messages is also crucial. Know your subject matter well. You should be completely comfortable with your talking points. Practicing in a mock interview can also help you prepare to respond to a reporter's questions.

The most important technique in an interview is called "bridging." Bridging simply means answering or acknowledging the interviewer's question and then delivering your own positive message. For example:

- "Yes," you answer, "and in addition to that..."
- "No," you answer, "let me explain why..."
- "That's the way it used to be. Here's the way it is now."
- "That's not how I would put it. What I would say is..."

"Flagging" is closely related to bridging. Flagging emphasizes a point you want to stand out. For example:

- "The point I really want to make is..."
- "The most important thing to remember about this is..."

## Types of Interviews

Not all media interviews are created equal. They may be conducted live or taped for later broadcast. Whether you are participating in a television, radio, or print interview will also determine how to you respond to a reporter's questions.

Television journalists are looking for a short quote, called a "sound bite," when conducting an interview. An ideal sound bite is about 10 seconds. It takes practice to keep your responses short and specific, but also thoughtful. Live television interviews will give you an opportunity to respond to multiple questions, but the same principle applies.

Television journalists generally come to you to conduct interviews. It's important to choose an environment that accurately reflects the story and one in which you feel comfortable. For example, if the story is about a youth service project, the interview would naturally take place at the event. Choose a quiet place without distractions where you can concentrate on the discussion. Determine whether you are more at ease sitting or standing. If the sun is bothering you, change the location to a shady area. Most journalists are very accommodating and open to your suggestions.

Television stations will often send a cameraman instead of a journalist to conduct interviews at events. In these cases, general questions are typically asked, which gives you the opportunity to discuss your key messages. Television journalists may also “piggy-back” an interview, which means you may find yourself giving one interview to multiple cameras at the same time. Don’t be intimidated. Speak directly to the reporter asking the questions and ignore the cameras.

Radio interviews also focus on short sound bites called “actualities.” A radio interview can be recorded over the phone, in a studio, or on location. You may also have the opportunity to participate in a live radio interview. Live radio interviews are generally more conversational. You will have your own microphone and can refer to notes.

Interviews with newspaper reporters are more lengthy and in-depth. A print journalist will often use multiple quotes of varying lengths in the final story. Everything you say and do in a print interview is on the record. Newspaper journalists will also often describe the location of the interview, your demeanor, and the people around you. Photographers will usually accompany print journalists to take both candid and posed photographs.

## The Interview

Relax and be positive when giving an interview. Think of questions as an opportunity to inform, educate, and enlighten. You are not offering an answer; you are giving a response. A response is your answer plus your message.

What a journalist wants from an interview is a quote that will add insight, emotion, or thought to a story. Here are some suggestions:

- Think before you speak. Feel free to restate a reporter’s question to make sure you understand it. Take a moment, collect your thoughts, and speak conversationally.
- Anticipate a non-member audience and avoid Church jargon. For example, call a ward “a local congregation” or a bishop “a local ecclesiastical leader.”
- When using facts and statistics, keep them simple and round the figures. Don’t say the Church has members in 138 countries when you can say, “The Church has members in almost every country in the world.” Don’t say “47 percent” when you can say “nearly half.”
- Be descriptive. Don’t just say, “We had five thousand convert baptisms in this country last year.” Instead say, “Five thousand people have joined the Church in this country since January. That’s a thousand more than a year ago.”
- Try to create visual images. In describing the United States’ trillion-dollar debt, President Ronald Reagan compared it as being equal to a stack of \$1,000 bills that was 67 miles high. Such mental images create impact. A Church-related example might be, “On average, a convert enters a Latter-day Saint baptismal font somewhere in the world every two-and-a-half minutes.”
- Be truthful and straightforward. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so, and offer to find someone who does.
- You are always on the record, even when the tape recorder and camera have been shut off and the reporter has closed his notebook. If you don’t want to read it in the paper or hear it on the air, don’t say it.

## How You Look

It may seem impossible, but ignore the television cameras, still cameras, and tape recorders as much as possible during an interview. Instead, concentrate on maintaining eye contact with the journalist. The more natural and personable you are, the better you will appear on camera.

Reporters will usually take a small portion of what they record for their final product, so not everything you say and do will be used. However, everything you say and do will be captured, so you must conduct yourself as if you are being recorded at all times.

On television, how you look is just as important as what you say. In a studio setting, conservative and professional attire is preferred. Strong, solid colors look good on camera. Avoid narrow stripes, tight pinpoint patterns, and flashy jewelry, which can all cause problems for the cameras. If you are being interviewed “on location,” job-specific clothes are expected. For example, if you are with Church volunteers providing disaster relief, you might be wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and a Mormon Helping Hands vest.

## Correcting Misinformation during the Interview

It may be necessary to correct information about the Church during the course of an interview. Don't get defensive, but do politely correct inaccuracies. Misinformation often comes in the following forms.

- The Loaded Preface

EXAMPLE: *“Although Mormons are not Christians, they do believe in living upright lives.”* Watch for serious inaccuracies in interview introductions, and don't let them go unnoticed, because they then carry with them implied accuracy. A good response to this example might be: *“Your statement is rather ironic because it is precisely our strong belief in Jesus Christ and our desire to follow His example that leads us to try and live upstanding lives of service to others.”*

- The A or B Dilemma

EXAMPLE: *“Are you interested in gaining new converts because they increase your political influence or because they give you greater financial return?”* Don't accept limited alternatives. Respond with something like: *“Neither. Our primary task is to preach the Christian gospel and improve the lives of people everywhere.”*

- The Hypothetical Question

EXAMPLE: *“Suppose your Church were to begin ordaining women to the priesthood. What effect do you think that would have on the Church?”* Watch out for “what if” questions. Bridge from these questions to something you want to talk about: *“Since that hasn't happened, I can't really speculate. What I can tell you is...”*

- The Absent-Party Question

EXAMPLE: *“Why do some people accuse you of not being Christian?”* Don't get pulled into saying negative things about others. You don't need to explain other people's misperceptions or feelings. You might say, *“You would have to ask them that question. I think that anyone who really knows a Latter-day Saint would readily acknowledge their belief in Jesus Christ...”*

- Inconsistency

EXAMPLE: *“Ten years ago you said that blacks would not hold the priesthood. Now they do. Why did you change your mind?”* Set the record straight, but don't apologize. You might say something like, *“A key element of Church doctrine is belief in modern revelation. Such revelation would be unnecessary if there were never changes in Church practice or in life's situations and conditions.”*

# Pitching a Story

**W**hen a DPA “pitches” a story, he or she is providing information that will interest a reporter enough to write or produce a news story about the Church. To successfully place a news item, DPAs have to do their homework, know their audience, continually foster relationships, and make a compelling pitch.

## Do Your Homework

Constantly search for ideas about Church-related stories that will have news value to your local media.

- Regularly check the Church’s Newsroom Web site for stories that can be localized for your area. For example, if you notice a national story on emergency preparedness, you could find an articulate member in your area who frequently uses food storage. However, be aware that some statements posted on Newsroom are not intended to be localized or used outside of Church headquarters.
- The media likes anniversaries and human interest stories. Is your meetinghouse 10 or 25 years old? Is there a stake or ward member with a unique story or talent?
- Personalizing stories makes them easy to relate to. For example, the Church contributes millions of service hours and dollars in its welfare and humanitarian efforts. The numbers are impressive, but more important is how those dollars were used, and why, and the response of those who receive the assistance.
- What is “business as usual” to you might be new to a reporter. For instance, don’t discount the importance of leadership changes in your area. A new stake president or mission president often generates feature stories, as do young men called on missions. Groundbreaking events, open houses, and dedications are also great opportunities to approach the media.
- Learn to recognize timely topics and seasonal opportunities. Are special Christmas or Easter programs being presented in your stake? Is the Relief Society holding an enrichment meeting on helping children prepare for a new school year?
- Enhance your story visually. Include high-resolution photos when possible or provide photographers with opportunities to visually tell your story. Many high-resolution stock photos are available on the Church Newsroom and in the Resources section of the Church’s Serving in the Church/Public Affairs Web site.

## Know Your Audience

No matter how great your news release is, it may not appeal to all segments of the media. Before you pitch any media outlet, study it. Read the publication. Watch the newscast. This will help you determine which media covers similar stories and would be more likely to be interested in your news release.

## It’s All about Relationships

Look through your database and see if you already have established relationships with reporters who might be interested in your story. Strong relationships with reporters mean they will listen to you when you have an important story to tell (see Building Relationships). If a reporter isn’t interested in a particular story, he can often refer you to a reporter who is.

## The Pitch

Making your first pitch can be intimidating. Remember, journalists have a job to do and they often need your help to do it. You are a great resource.

- When contacting a reporter, introduce yourself and ask if he is on a deadline. If so, find out the best time to call back. Journalists are busy people and often have time constraints. They will appreciate your understanding.
- If the reporter is available to talk, make your pitch in the first 30 seconds. This is often called an “elevator speech.” In other words, if a journalist were on an elevator with you, what would you say to pitch your story in the time it takes the elevator to reach the top floor? The idea is to have a prepared presentation that grabs attention and says a lot in a few words. Be prepared to turn your elevator story into an e-mailed pitch with your attached news release if this is the best way to contact the reporter.
- Know your story inside and out. If a reporter expresses interest in a story, you may have only one chance to answer important questions.
- Follow up. Send the story well in advance of the event to give time for you to connect with the reporter. If a journalist tells you to call back at another time, make sure you do. Be persistent. Leave a message if you are unable to reach the reporter the first time, but don’t leave multiple messages. E-mail is often the most efficient way of communicating.
- Follow through. Once a reporter has decided to cover your story, keep up your end of the bargain. Provide timely information, meet deadlines, and work with the reporter as a valuable resource. Document all contact with the journalist in your database, including a copy of the final story. Be sure to contact the reporter after the story is finished to give positive feedback.

It’s always important to take time after a story is completed to evaluate what worked, what didn’t, and how to improve in the future. Ask yourself these questions: What seemed to interest journalists the most? Was your interviewee properly prepared? How many key messages showed up in the final story?

# Style Guide – the Name of the Church

**T**he official name of the Church is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. This full name was given by revelation from God to Joseph Smith in 1838.

- While the term “Mormon Church” has long been publicly applied to the Church as a nickname, it is not an authorized title, and the Church discourages its use.
- When writing about the Church, please follow these guidelines: In the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- Please avoid the use of “Mormon Church,” “LDS Church” or “the Church of the Latter-day Saints.”
- When a shortened reference is needed, the terms “the Church” or “the Church of Jesus Christ” are encouraged.
- When referring to Church members, the term “Latter-day Saints” is preferred, though “Mormons” is acceptable.
- “Mormon” is correctly used in proper names such as the Book of Mormon, Mormon Tabernacle Choir or Mormon Trail, or when used as an adjective in such expressions as “Mormon pioneers.”
- The term “Mormonism” is acceptable in describing the combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- When referring to people or organizations that practice polygamy, the terms “Mormons,” “Mormon fundamentalist,” “Mormon dissidents,” etc. are incorrect. The Associated Press Stylebook notes: “The term *Mormon* is not properly applied to the other ... churches that resulted from the split after [Joseph] Smith’s death.”



# RESOURCES

## Brochures, Samples and Templates



### Basic Church Information Brochure

This tri-fold brochure gives basic information about the worldwide Church. Use the linked file to print limited quantities of the brochure in your local area. This brochure is also available (in English only) from Church Distribution Services.

When ordering use item number 08539-000. Printing Specifications for Basic Church Information Brochure – go to this link:

<http://publicaffairs.lds.org/Static%20Files/DPA/Resources/Brochures/Printing%20Specifications1.pdf>



### Basic Church Information Brochure (Interactive Edition)

This tri-fold brochure gives basic information about the Church and also allows local public affairs councils to modify the brochure before printing to meet local needs. Photos may be exchanged, and local Church background and contact information can be added. All changes must be approved with local priesthood leaders before the brochure is printed.

Printing Specifications for Basic Church Information Brochure (Interactive Edition) – go to this link:

<http://publicaffairs.lds.org/Static%20Files/DPA/Resources/Brochures/Printing%20Specifications2.pdf>

# Respecting and Protecting Copyrights

**A**s called representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, members of public affairs councils should always strive to project an image that is representative of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This image is communicated in many ways, such as in dress, in conversation, and in behavior. It is also projected in the quality of events and materials used to communicate the message of the Church.

Leaders of the Public Affairs Department are committed to following Church quality and legal standards in the production of items for public affairs use. Any item that officially represents the Church should be carefully prepared and be in compliance with Church correlation and copyright guidelines. This includes proper grammar and spelling, absolute accuracy in doctrinal and other factual statements, and compliance with copyright laws regarding any photographs, images, or quotations you might want to use. It is illegal to use copyrighted items without permission of the copyright holder.

Templates that adhere to the above standards are available on this site for many of the items you may wish to create. However, from time to time in the course of your public affairs service, you may find it necessary to create specialized materials such as a news release, flyer, poster, brochure, invitation, program, or other publication.

## Copyrights

U.S. copyright law states that the creator of an item (the author, artist, composer, or photographer) automatically owns the copyright on that item. In most cases, others' work cannot be used without their written permission [link to permission forms]. Just because an image has been used in a Church magazine, handbook, or other product does not mean it is cleared for any and all use. In many cases, a fee was paid and special arrangements were made to use that image in that particular product. A library of images that have been cleared for use in Church products has been provided on this site. Any other image that you have not taken yourself, or for which you have not obtained written permission from the copyright owner, must be cleared by the Church Intellectual Property Office (IPO) if it is to be used in a Church product.

## Photos You Take Yourself

You may find yourself taking documentary photographs of a public affairs activity. There will probably be people featured in the photos. In general, you are free to use these photos for up to one year in a news story directly related to the activity without any special permission. If, however, you wish to use a photograph in which people can readily be identified for other purposes (say, in a brochure), then you need to get written permission from each person who is recognizable in the photo [link to form].

Local laws generally provide that a person has legal rights to his or her own image. No one can take your picture and then use it for commercial purposes without your permission. While we view the Church as "noncommercial," others may consider Church products as advocating our religious point of view. In that sense they may be considered "commercial."

The Church Intellectual Property Office recommends obtaining written permission, even from members of the Church. The IPO has a form you can use called a "Release to Use Image (RUI)." An electronic copy is attached here, along with a longer document called "Guidelines for Use of Images."

Using others' work or others' images improperly is dishonest and could embarrass the Church and make it vulnerable to legal action. Please be responsible when you are creating new products for public affairs use.

## Use of the Church Logo

The official Church logo may be used in only three ways: (1) on missionary name badges, (2) on official Church stationery, and (3) on correlated items (projects approved at Church headquarters and issued an identifying item number by the Correlation Department). This means that, for the most part, you may not use the Church logo on items you create. Instead, please use the full name of the Church, spelled out in whatever typeface you are using for your product (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Or, in a graphic layout, you may use the Church's name in two lines, such as:

The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

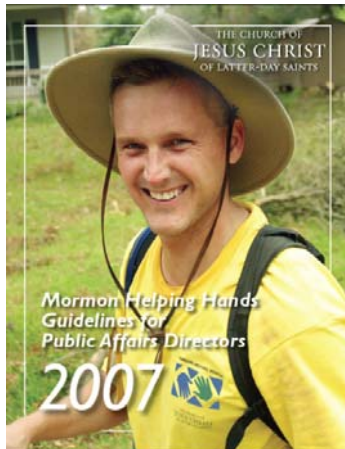
Please do not use all caps, typefaces that purposely mimic the Church's logo typeface, or the enlarged name of the Savior to attempt to simulate the standard Church logo.

## Pre-Approved Product Templates

Several approved templates of Church products have been created for stake and multi-stake public affairs use. These templates should address many standard public affairs needs and can be completed quickly and printed in your area with only local priesthood approval. Please consider using these templates before you decide to create a new product. If a particular template is not available and you think it may have broad applicability for the Church, please feel free to suggest it by going to this section of the *Serving in the Church/Public Affairs web* page.

# Mormon Helping Hands

**M**ormon Helping Hands is a priesthood-directed Church program for providing community service and disaster relief to those in need. This program which is operating successfully in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and the United States, can also assist priesthood leaders in establishing relationships with key opinion leaders.



**Guidelines:** Mormon Helping Hands Guidelines for Public Affairs Directors gives specific directions on how public affairs councils can utilize this important program and includes instructions for using the Mormon Helping Hands logo. Go to this link at the Church web site, <http://publicaffairs.lds.org/pa/eng/resources/mormon-helping-hands>, and then click on the link for your language.



**Logo:** The Mormon Helping Hands logo is currently available in the following languages. Other languages will be added later. Open the respective file needed and save it to your local computer for use in preparing Mormon Helping Hands vests or t-shirts. Go to this link at the Church web site, <http://publicaffairs.lds.org/pa/eng/resources/mormon-helping-hands>, and then click on the link for your language.

# Photo Library

The public affairs photo library can be found at this link: <http://publicaffairs.lds.org/pa/eng/resources/photo-library>. It is an excellent resource of photos that are royalty-free which can be used to enhance press releases, information for opinion leaders and other documentation.

Public Affairs
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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» Building Relationships

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- Relationship-Building Basics
- The Three-Step Process for Building Opinion
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## Photo Library




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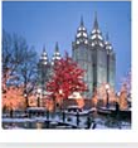
» » GOSPEL ART




» » MISSIONARY




» » PORTRAITS OF THE SAVIOR




» » TEMPLE SQUARE AND SALT LAKE CITY




» » TEMPLES




» » TEMPLES WITH PEOPLE



» » WELFARE AND HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

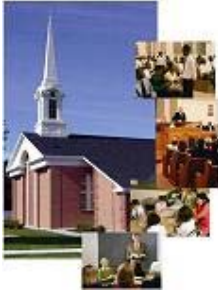


» » WOMEN OF THE CHURCH



» » YOUTH

# Public Affairs Programs



## Chapel Open Houses

Chapel open houses can be held for new or existing chapels and provide an excellent way to introduce opinion leaders and community members alike to our faith. Go to this link for more information: [Open House Guidelines.pdf](#)



## Dinners for Ten

Hosting opinion leaders for dinner can be an outstanding way to build bridges and discuss common interests. This program is also an excellent way to introduce priesthood leaders to key opinion leaders. Go to this link for more information: [Dinners for Ten.pdf](#)



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# Video Library


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**Public Affairs**  
Official Resources for Public Affairs Councils and Priesthood Advisers


THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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» » HOMEFRONT SPOTS




» » MISSIONARY




» » MORMON MESSAGES



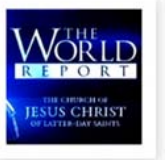
» » PUBLIC AFFAIRS VIDEOS



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» » WELFARE AND HUMANITARIAN SERVICES



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# AREA PRESIDENCY GOALS FOR 2010

## Save the rising generation

- Help them be virtuous
- Increase the number of young men/women serving missions
- Increase YSA attendance

## Save the one

- Every child, youth, and adult reactivates someone
- Increase the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders from 26,735 to 28,500
- Increase sacrament meeting attendance to 133,000

## Strengthen families

- Individual and family worship through daily prayer, scripture study, and weekly family home evening
- 1,200 additional families sealed in the temple
- Increase number of temple recommend holders from 42,421 to 45,000

## Share the gospel

- Every member invites someone to hear the gospel
- Make missionary work a stake, ward and family priority
- Increase number of convert baptisms from 8,020 to 8,500