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TO: Executive Addressed

FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR Chairman

TO: The News Interview: What Executives Worry About

Over the years I have included the thousands of executives I have trained in a survey regarding their anxieties about being interviewed. The resulting list of executive concerns is fascinating, shorter than you might think, and very pertinent to learning how to be a better interviewee:

1. What are the rules of engagement?
2. Can I control the interview?
3. How can I find out the reporter's real agenda?
4. How do I know when to respond?
5. How can I keep from just spilling my guts?
6. When will the reporter spring the trap on me?
7. What do I do when I'm caught off guard?
8. How can I feel less stupid?
9. Will the media tell our story accurately?
10. Will the media understand the technology of our business?
11. Is any reporter trustworthy?
12. How do I handle the hostile reporter?
13. How do I answer antagonistic questions?
14. Will the reporter take me out of context?
15. When should I go off-the-record?
16. Can I see the story before it appears?
17. Will I have a chance to edit the story?
18. How do I stop the story if I don't like it?
19. How do I get a retraction when the reporter makes a mistake?
20. How will I fix a mistake if the reporter makes an error?

Good media relations is serious business. The top executives of the future will be skilled interviewees and accomplished presenters. They will know how to be persuasive, credible spokespersons.

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The Lukaszewski Group Inc. ■ Ten Bank Street, Suite 530, White Plains, NY 10606-1952
Telephone 914.681.0000 ■ Facsimile: 914.681.0047 ■ tlg@e911.com ■ www.e911.com