

# Building Communications Plans for Success

JOHN GUILFOIL  
JGPR

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[HTTPS://JGPR.NET](https://JGPR.NET)

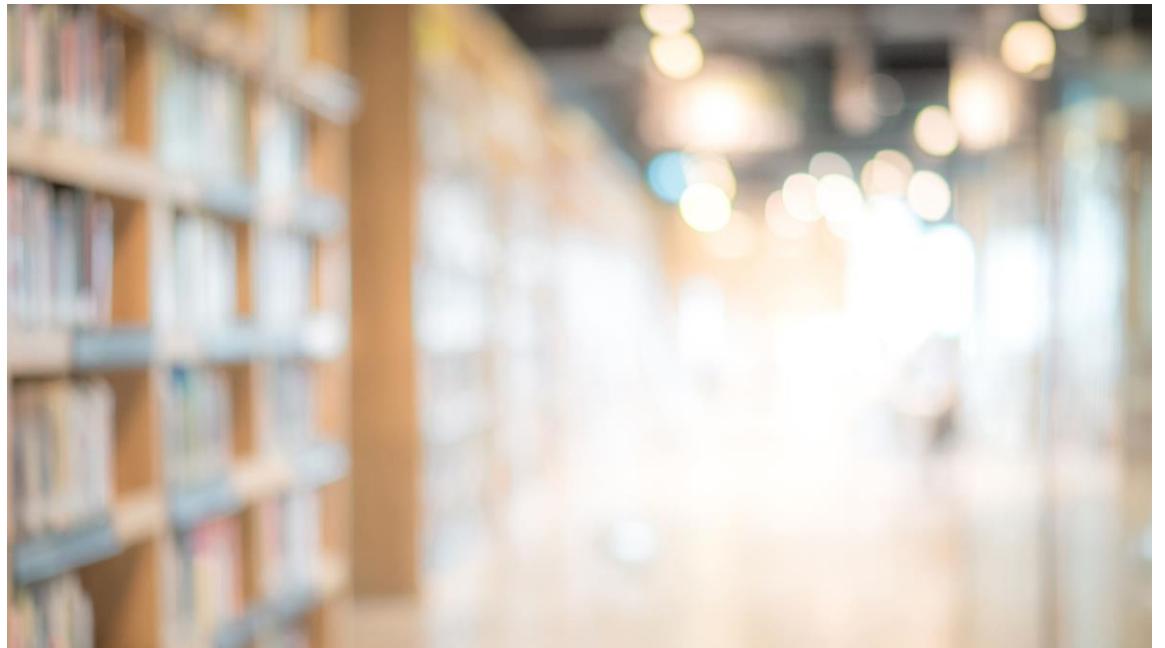
617-993-0003



# The presenter

## ► **John Guilfoil**

- Founder and Principal Owner of John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC
- Provides Public Relations Services, Crisis Communications, Websites, Social Media, and Consulting to more than 300 Police and Fire Departments, municipal agencies and public schools in seven states
- 5+ Years Boston Globe Police/Crime Reporter
- Former Deputy Press Secretary, Mayor Thomas M. Menino
- Master of Arts, Journalism, Emerson College



# Objectives (1 of 3)

## Explain

The basics of public relations and developing a communications plan.

## Distinguish

Between owned and earned media.

## Demonstrate

How to produce informational content and press releases.

I. Introduction .....	1
II. General Guidance to Protect Education Providers, Staff, and Students .....	2
1. Develop District Management and Communications and Response Plans.....	2
a. District Leadership Team and COVID-19 Coordinators .....	2
b. Community Communications Plan .....	3
c. Communication Response to Positive Cases of COVID-19.....	4
2. Follow Guidance From NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services (DPHS).....	5
a. Staff, Students, and Visitors Screening and Absenteeism.....	5
b. Social Distancing and Cohorting (Grouping) Students .....	7
c. Reporting and Investigating COVID-19 in the Educational Facility .....	9
3. Prepare the Physical School Environment.....	10
a. Cloth Face Covering Use and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) .....	10
i. Students .....	11
ii. Educators, Staff, and Visitors .....	12
iii. Additional PPE Provisions .....	13
b. Proper Hygiene Protocols.....	13
c. School Cleaning and Disinfection Practices.....	14
d. Additional Cleaning Protocols in the Event of Confirmed COVID-19 .....	16
e. School Building Use for Non-School Functions .....	16
f. Ventilation Systems .....	17
g. The Use of Common Areas .....	17
h. Classroom Configurations .....	18
4. Support Student, Family, and Educator Wellness .....	18
a. Social-Emotional Learning .....	19
b. Outreach Programs for At-Risk Students .....	19
c. Mental Health Resource Partners .....	20
d. Diverse Learners and Students With Special Needs.....	20
e. Career and Technical Education (CTE).....	21
5. Integrate Hybrid Capacity Learning Environments.....	21
a. Pre-Planning for In-Person, Hybrid, and Remote Instruction .....	22
i. In-Person Instruction Considerations .....	22
ii. Hybrid Instructional Considerations .....	22

First  
things  
first

COMMUNICATIONS IS THE  
FIRST CHAPTER OF THE STATE'S  
BACK-TO-SCHOOL  
GUIDANCE.

# Self-Check

- ▶ Prior to engaging in a new communications initiative, you should review the following basics:
- ▶ 1. Does your SAU have a media relations policy? When was it last updated?
- ▶ 2. Does your SAU have a social media policy? When was it last updated?
- ▶ 3. Does your SAU have control of its Facebook page?
- ▶ 4. Does your SAU use Twitter? Who has the passwords?
- ▶ 5. What reporters/news outlets cover your SAU? Are you sure? Are they on layoff or furlough?
- ▶ 6. Can your SAU update its website/news blog during the summer?
- ▶ 7. What does your SAU/communities use as an emergency communications tool?
  - ▶ Code red? Blackboard? Bulk text messaging?
- ▶ 8. Does your SAU have email newsletter software? Who has the password?

# Communications Plans

- ▶ The State asks:
  - ▶ “establish clear plans and protocols to ensure the safety of students and staff.”
  - ▶ “Accurate and timely information delivered to students, families and educators will allow a district to manage expectations, prepare students and families with return-to-school procedures and prevent the spread of inaccurate information.”
  - ▶ **“An effective communication plan prioritizes both the message and how the message is shared.”**

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 1. INVENTORY
  - ▶ What tools do we already use?
  - ▶ Considerations: Website, Email newsletters, social media channels, text messaging software, emergency alert software.
  - ▶ Who has the passwords? Are they working?

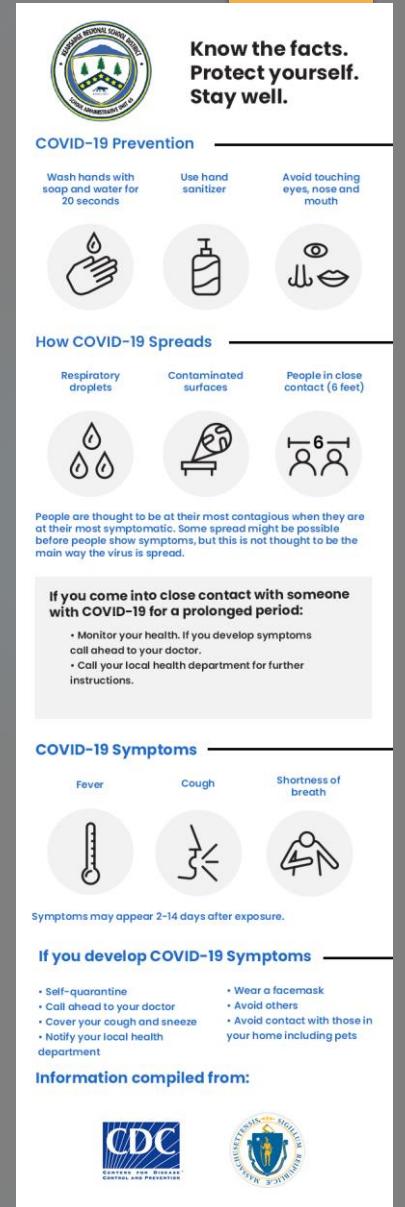


# “Our website is old”

- ▶ Create a news blog. The Wordpress software can be configured to automatically broadcast your news to email recipients and Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.
- ▶ See: <https://raymondschoolnews.com/>

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 2. Technical abilities
  - ▶ Who in the SAU can produce content?
    - ▶ Written content
    - ▶ Video content
    - ▶ Graphical content



**Know the facts. Protect yourself. Stay well.**

**COVID-19 Prevention**

Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds      Use hand sanitizer      Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

**How COVID-19 Spreads**

Respiratory droplets      Contaminated surfaces      People in close contact (6 feet)

People are thought to be at their most contagious when they are at their most symptomatic. Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus is spread.

**If you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 for a prolonged period:**

- Monitor your health. If you develop symptoms call ahead to your doctor.
- Call your local health department for further instructions.

**COVID-19 Symptoms**

Fever      Cough      Shortness of breath

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

**If you develop COVID-19 Symptoms**

- Self-quarantine
- Call ahead to your doctor
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Notify your local health department
- Wear a facemask
- Avoid others
- Avoid contact with those in your home including pets

**Information compiled from:**

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 3. Policies and procedures
  - ▶ What are the final decisions of our SAU?.
  - ▶ Boilerplate. Repeat those decisions/policies early and often.
  - ▶ Examples: Face coverings, cleaning procedures/disinfection, Hand hygiene, stay home if sick, self-reporting, contact tracing, etc.

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 4. Templates
  - ▶ To ensure consistency in communications, ensure that your SAU has digital letterhead and a press release template that can be used at a moment's notice.



# Checklist for Developing a Plan

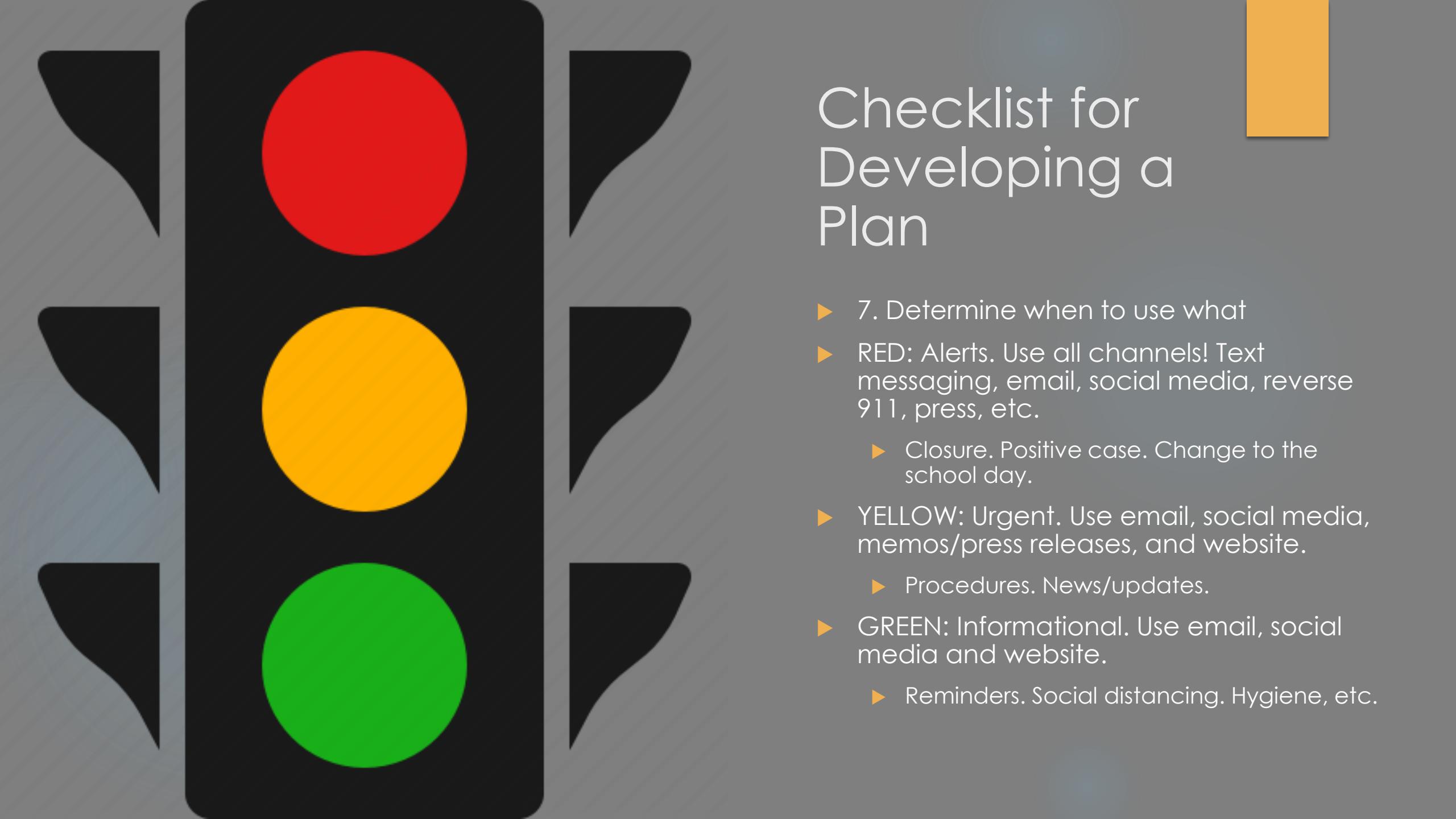
- ▶ 5. Determine who has final approval of any message that goes out.
  - ▶ Who needs to be included on any draft messages that are circulated?
  - ▶ Who needs to review a message before it goes out?
  - ▶ Who has final approval for any message that is released? What's the best way to reach that person & what if he/she is not available?

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

6. Designate a  
spokesperson.

Centralize communication.

Refer press inquiries to that  
person.



# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 7. Determine when to use what
  - ▶ RED: Alerts. Use all channels! Text messaging, email, social media, reverse 911, press, etc.
    - ▶ Closure. Positive case. Change to the school day.
  - ▶ YELLOW: Urgent. Use email, social media, memos/press releases, and website.
    - ▶ Procedures. News/updates.
  - ▶ GREEN: Informational. Use email, social media and website.
    - ▶ Reminders. Social distancing. Hygiene, etc.

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 8. Consistency in messaging.
- ▶ For every public communication issue:
  - ▶ A memo to families
  - ▶ A memo to faculty/staff
  - ▶ A press release
  - ▶ A website/news blog entry
  - ▶ A social media post
- ▶ Use the same messaging, slightly tweaked, for all four.
- ▶ Summarize major announcements with infographics and videos.

# ROCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

ENCOURAGES YOU TO STAY CONNECTED...



## HONEYWELL INSTANT ALERTS

Honeywell Instant Alerts provides parents and guardians with alerts during emergency situations and updates surrounding daily communication needs.



## INFINITE CAMPUS

Infinite Campus is Rochester's student information system that allows educators, parents and students to have access to personal information from anywhere, at any time.



## TWITTER

@RochNHSchool  
@RMS\_NH\_Rochester  
@SpauldingHS  
@ChmStSchool  
@maplemagnet  
@ERSchoolnh  
@GonicSchool  
@mclmightyMac  
@NLS\_Rochester  
@WAIlensSchool  
@SchoolStreetRSD



## ROCHESTER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BLOG

<https://rochesterschoolnews.com>

# Infographic Example

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 9. Address book.
  - ▶ Relevant people's email addresses and phone numbers (public numbers and cellphones for internal distribution only)
  - ▶ Superintendent, board, student services, principals, special education, admins., social media coordinators, etc.
  - ▶ Media List: local newspapers, radio stations, TV

# Checklist for Developing a Plan

- ▶ 10. Stay in your lane
  - ▶ Prior to issuing a statement:
    - ▶ Do we have to contact DHHS? Local board of health?
    - ▶ Police department? Fire department?
    - ▶ Municipal government?
  - ▶ This applies to any “news” release, not just COVID-19!
- ▶ State: “Communication about any person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 while at the school should be coordinated with NH DHHS, Division of Public Health Services.”

# Earned Media vs. Owned

- ▶ Earned: Newspaper, TV, radio, blogger
  - ▶ Valuable, wide reach, professional content producer
  - ▶ Drawback: Furloughed journalists can't cover your news
  - ▶ Drawback: Newspapers cutting back on local news
- ▶ Owned: Your content. Website, news blog, social media, YouTube
  - ▶ Control over your own message
  - ▶ Journalists may re-publish all or most of your content
  - ▶ Drawback: You have to DO it

# Public Relations Skillset



Patience, especially while multi-tasking



Dispassionate answers to questions



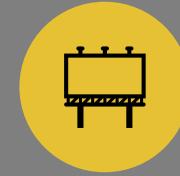
Strong written and verbal communications



Understanding of the science of public relations AND influence



Research, technical skills, web, social media, etc.



News consumer. What's that?

## QUICK TIPS TO SHOOT YOUR OWN VIDEO

Create Professional-Looking Video With Your  
Cell Phone

JOHN GUILFOIL PUBLIC RELATIONS  
JGPR.NET

### ROTATE YOUR CAMERA



You want to record your video horizontally, like it were a tv screen. Turn the phone before hitting record. Whether you rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise does not matter

### SHOOT IN HIGH RESOLUTION

Check your video settings to make sure you're shooting in the highest resolution possible. 1920 x 1080 is ideal. Cell phones have amazing cameras these days and will shoot video equal to professional cameras.



### DON'T PINCH ZOOM



Resist the temptation to pinch the screen to zoom in. If you need a closer shot, move the phone closer to what you want to see

### HOLD YOUR SHOT

Try to hold a shot for as long as possible. 5 seconds is ideal. The longer the video clip, the easier it is to edit. Several longer clips are very helpful



### DON'T COMPRESS TO SEND



So you shot your video in HD, but how do you send those large files? Avoid compressing the files to email size. Instead, upload them to a file sharing website like dropbox, wetransfer or google drive and email the link

Have Questions? We're Here to Help  
(617) 993-0003



# SHOOTING QUICK AND USEFUL VIDEOS ON YOUR PHONE

# Press Releases

- ▶ Specifically-formatted documents, addressed to the news media
- ▶ Written in “inverted pyramid” style
- ▶ With contact information for spokesperson
- ▶ Requires good contact list (email) for local/state news outlets

## 1. Wakefield Police Department

Rick Smith, Chief of Police

1 Union St.  
Wakefield, MA 01880



## 2.

# Elements of a Release

## 3. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4. Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2014

Contact: John Guilfoil  
Phone: [617-993-0003](tel:617-993-0003)  
Email: [john@jgpr.net](mailto:john@jgpr.net)

## Wakefield Police Department Recognized for Community Policing by the International Association of Chiefs of Police

WAKEFIELD – Police Chief Rick Smith is proud to announce that the Wakefield Police Department has been named a finalist in the 2014 International Association of Chiefs (IACP) and Cisco Systems of Police annual Community Policing Award.

In a tremendous affirmation of the department's work in its community, the Wakefield Police Department is **one of only 10 police departments in the world** to receive this recognition.

"I am incredibly proud of each member of the Wakefield Police Department for their unparalleled commitment to community policing," Chief Smith said. "This is an amazing honor for our department."

The award, in its 17th year, recognizes outstanding community policing initiatives by law enforcement agencies worldwide. Five agencies were selected as winners, four agencies were selected as finalists, and one agency was given special recognition for efforts involving homeland security.

Five police departments were named "winners." Wakefield was named one of four "finalists." The 10th department received special recognition for its commitment to homeland security.

- ▶ 1. Client's metadata
- ▶ 2. Logo/photo
- ▶ 3. The words "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE"
- ▶ 4. The date of the release

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Rick Smith, Chief of Police

1 Union St.  
Wakefield, MA 01880



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## 2.

# Elements of a Release

- ▶ 5. PR person contact info
- ▶ 6. Headline and Subheads if necessary
- ▶ 7. Dateline/body
- ▶ 8. Quote from your client

Police departments and other law enforcement agencies were eligible to be nominated in five categories, grouped by the population of their community. The awards recognize agencies as best examples of community policing practice, and they are meant to demonstrate that meaningful change can occur when police and their communities work together, using all available resources, to prevent crime and improve the quality of life.

"Citizens need to trust the police and feel that they are partners in addressing community issues. Everyone needs a voice. This happens by implementing the community policing philosophy of working together to make our communities safer, whether it be from crime or from terrorism," said Todd A. Miller, chair of the IACP Community Policing Committee. "The agencies selected this year demonstrate the importance of the community oriented policing philosophy in solving problems and enhancing service."

**Winners:**

Highland Village, Texas, Police Department (Population fewer than 20,000 residents)  
Leesburg, Virginia, Police Department (Co-Winner, Population of 20,001 to 50,000 residents)  
Madison City, Alabama, Police Department (Co-Winner, Population of 20,001 to 50,000 residents)  
Boise, Idaho, Police Department (Population of 100,001 to 250,000 residents)  
Nassau County, New York, Police Department (Population of 250,000+ residents)

**Finalists:**

DeWitt, Iowa, Police Department (Population fewer than 20,000)  
Wakefield, Massachusetts, Police Department (Population of 20,001 to 50,000)  
Aurora, Illinois, Police Department (Population of 100,001 to 250,000 residents)  
Community Police Department, Ministry of Interior, UAE (Population of 250,000+ residents)

**Special Recognition:**

Visakhapatnam Rural Police, Andhra Pradesh, India

The Wakefield Police Department, along with the nine other departments will be honored at IACP's 121st Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. at a special awards reception on Sunday, October 26, 2014. For more information, visit IACP Community Policing Committee website at [www.iacpcommunitypolicing.org](http://www.iacpcommunitypolicing.org).

## 9.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police is a dynamic organization that serves as the professional voice of law enforcement. Building on our past success, the IACP addresses cutting edge issues confronting law enforcement through advocacy, programs and research, as well as training and other professional services. IACP is a comprehensive professional organization that supports the law enforcement leaders of today and develops the leaders of tomorrow.

## 10.

###

# Elements contd.

- ▶ 9. Boilerplate
- ▶ 10. End marks

# Inverted Pyramid Style



**News Releases**

**Inverted Pyramid**

- Organize the facts. Open with a strong lead. Answer Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How questions.
- Most important facts
- Supporting facts
- Less important facts
- Background information
- Social media add-ons

Avoid jargon and acronyms which can be real barriers to communicating with the public.

Reporters also use “Associated Press Style” in their writing, and you should too!

# The “lede”

- ▶ Your first paragraph (or two) should answer WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN
- ▶ Example:
- ▶ ACTON — **Town Manager John Mangiaratti and Community Resources Coordinator Laura Ducharme** would like to share information on a **new rental assistance program** available **for Acton residents**.
- ▶ The **Emergency Rental Assistance Program** will provide **temporary rental assistance** in the form of a grant and will be administered through a collaboration with the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO). The application window for the program will open on **Monday, June 1**.
- ▶ <https://jgpr.net/2020/05/29/town-of-acton-provides-information-on-emergency-rental-assistance-program/>



# Questions?

JGPR CAN BE REACHED 24/7/365 AT 617-993-0003 OR [INFO@JGPR.NET](mailto:INFO@JGPR.NET)