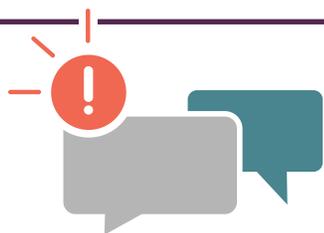


# COMMUNICATING COMPLEX RESEARCH TO THE MEDIA



**Studies have shown that an audience retains one or two key messages from a speech or presentation. Taking this into consideration and recognizing the inherent time limitations on all presentations, you must maximize the time you have to present your information. To better manage this task, develop a single overriding communications objective (SOCO).**

- SOCOs are the reason you do a presentation or interview. If all roads lead back to your core communications objective, there will be no doubt in the audience's mind about what you stand for and how you want them to think and behave.
- The SOCO is the "umbrella" that shields extraneous messages that could distract from your interview or presentation.
- Do not let interviewers lead you away from your SOCO. If you drift too far away from your SOCO, use transitions to get back to your main point.
- Keep it short and simple. People are flooded with information, both audio and visual; they often discard what they do not immediately understand. People retain only a small percentage of what they hear, so make sure what you say is brief and crystal clear.

## QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DEVELOP A SOCO

1. Who are you? What is your name, title or position, and area of expertise?
2. How does your work make you an expert on this topic? What personal story can you share that will help the audience understand your expertise, point of view, or perspective on the issue?
3. What other facts, figures, or important information will help you "prove" your point and frame your statements so the audience understands your point?
4. How do you want the audience to think, feel, or respond as a result of viewing, hearing, or reading your interview or presentation? What is the one thing you want them to remember?
5. Based on your responses to the previous questions, what are three messages you can share in your interview or presentation?

## GETTING MEDIA ATTENTION FOR YOUR WORK

Communicating the value and impact of research to a nonscientific audience can be challenging, and not every subject area is compatible with what mainstream media want to cover. If you have a strong opinion in your area of expertise, or your research presents an unusual or thought-provoking conclusion, try pitching editors on your opinions or commentaries.

### A COUPLE OF OUTLETS THAT ARE RECEPTIVE TO COMMENTARIES FROM ACADEMICS ARE:

*The Conversation* (<https://theconversation.com/us>) and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* (<https://diverseeducation.com/>).

**You could also try contributing to niche blogs in your area of expertise that draw a wide readership.**