The King-Lawton 7-Point Media Playbook

Your Essential Guide to Handling Press, Interviews, and Crisis Communication

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In the modern landscape of high-stakes sports and reputation driven hospitality, your public voice is your most valuable asset. One wrong soundbite can erase a season's worth of effort or damage years of brand building.

This playbook is your guide to ensuring every conveersation, whether it's a quick sideline interview or a major crisis statement, is a strategic win. Stop simply reacting to the media and start making bold moves that define your legacy.

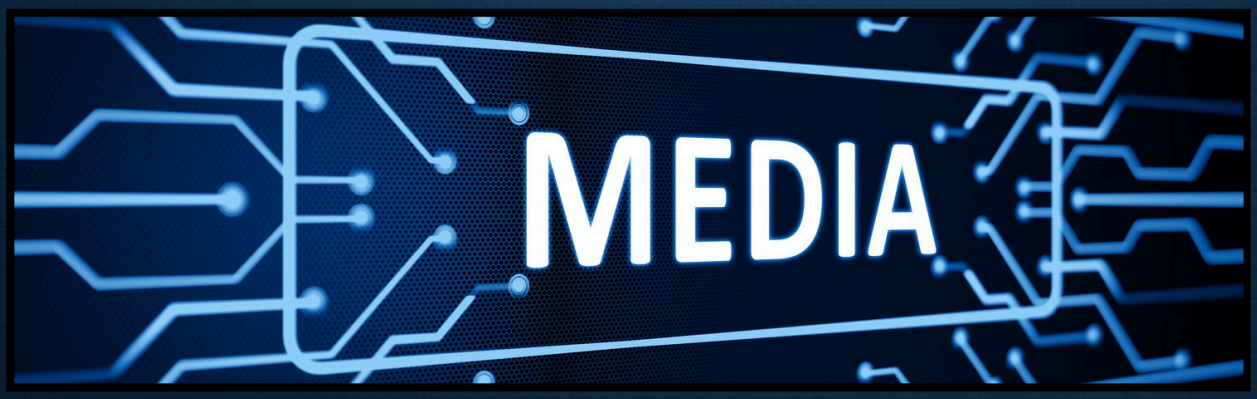
Who needs this playbook?

- Professional Athletes and their Agents
- Sports Executives (GMs, Coaches)
- Hospitality CEOs and Marketing Directors
- Individuals preparing for post-college careers in sports

Inside you will master the tactics to:

- Lock down your core 2-3 messages before any camera rolls
- Master the "Bridging Technique" to control adversarial Q&A sessions
- Execute the immediate "Golden Rule" steps when crisis hits

1 The Message Lock: Your Foundation



Before any interview, on or off camera, you must define your core messaging. This is your foundation for staying on brand and on track, regardless of the interviewer's focus.

- **Define 2-3 Key Messages:** These are the most important, single-sentence takeaways you want the audience to remember. They should support your personal or organizational goals (e.g., “Our team is committed to community service and winning championships,” or “The guest experience is built on anticipating every need.”)
- **Create Your "Anchor" Statement:** A concise, positive opening statement that you can return to if the conversation drifts into negative or unhelpful territory.
- **Rule of Three Repetition:** Plan to weave each Key Message into the conversation at least once. Repetition ensures retention.

TIP: If you find yourself in an unplanned interview, immediately take 10 seconds to mentally repeat your 2-3 Key Messages before speaking.

2 The Adversarial Drill: Mastering the Q&A

Interviews are not passive conversations; they are opportunities to deliver your message. Mastering deflection and bridging techniques keeps you in control.

- **Bridging Technique:** This is the elegant way to transition from a tough question back to your Key Messages.
  - **Phase 1 (Acknowledge/Validate)**: “That’s an important point about the recent contract negotiations...”
  - **Phase 2 (Bridge Phrase):** “...but what is most important right now is...” or “...and that’s exactly why we are focusing on...”
  - **Phase 3 (Deliver Message):** “...ensuring we bring home a championship for the fans.”

- **The Power of the Pause:** Don't rush to fill silence. A brief pause shows you are thoughtful and measured, not defensive. Use it to compose your response and recall your Key Messages.

- **"No Comment" is not an Option:** Saying "No comment" implies guilt. A professional alternative is: “I’m not able to share details on that specific matter, but what I can confirm is...” (Then bridge to your approved message).

3 Non-Verbal Command: Your Silent Communication

Up to 93% of communication is non-verbal. Your presence is as critical as your words, especially on camera.

- **Posture and Poise:** Sit or stand tall with shoulders back. Avoid slumping, fidgeting, or crossing your arms defensively. Convey stability and confidence.
- **Eye Contact:** Maintain consistent eye contact with the interviewer (or the camera lens, if instructed). This builds trust and sincerity.
- **Tone and Cadence:** Speak clearly, slowly, and deliberately. Modulate your tone to convey authority and passion, avoiding a monotone delivery or rapid, nervous speech.
- **Smile and Warmth:** Especially in hospitality, even when discussing serious topics, inject genuine warmth to show you are relatable and accessible.

4 Crisis Golden Rule: The Immediate First Steps

When an unexpected crisis hits, the first 60 minutes are critical. Your response must be unified, rapid, and empathetic .

- **Acknowledge:** Do not hide from the event. Issue a brief, factual statement confirming you are aware of the situation.
  - Prevents speculation and shows leadership.
- **Express Empathy:** Immediately state concern for all affected parties (staff, guests, teammates, etc.).
  - Establishes the human element and prevents your organization from appearing cold or corporate.
- **State Commitment:** State what you are actively doing next (e.g., "We are launching a full internal review," or "We are cooperating fully with authorities.").
  - Shifts the narrative from the problem to your decisive action.
- **Centralize:** Designate one official spokesperson and route all inquiries through them.
- **Activate External Support:** Immediately brief your PR counsel to leverage their expertise in drafting holding statements and managing media flow.

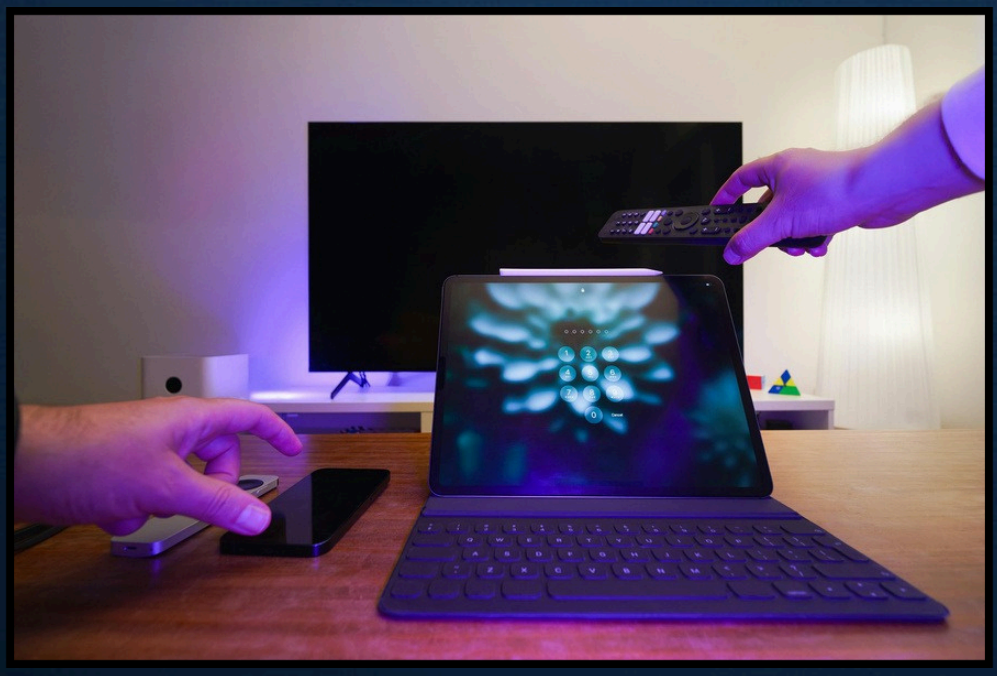
5 Appearance Audit: Ready for the Lens

Your visual presentation sets the stage for your message. Don't let your clothing be a distraction.

- **Solid Colors Rule:** Dark suits (navy, charcoal) and light shirts (white, light blue) are safe for on-camera interviews. Avoid busy patterns, stripes, and distracting jewelry.
- **Fit is Everything:** Clothes should be tailored and neat. Wrinkles and ill-fitting garments convey a lack of attention to detail.
- **Hospitality Detail:** If representing a hotel or venue, ensure your attire or backdrop subtly reinforces the brand's image (e.g., logo placement, brand colors).

Athlete Note: If wearing team gear, ensure it is clean, pressed, and officially approved.

6 Platform & Audience: Tailor the Delivery



An interview on a major financial network requires a different tone than a segment on a team podcast.

- **Financial/Professional Media (LinkedIn):** Focus on data, strategy, and business outcomes. Use formal, executive language. This is where you would emphasize the high return on investment of your business moves.
- **Fan/Consumer Media (Instagram/Reels):** Be energetic, conversational, and use more emotion. Keep answers short and visual.
- **Print/Quote Media:** Be precise. Everything you say can (and often will) be quoted directly. Avoid jargon or slang.

7 The Post-Interview Debrief: Cementing the Relationship

Your job is not done when the camera stops rolling. A professional follow-up is an extension of your brand's hospitality.

- **Internal Review:** Immediately review the interview internally. Did the Key Messages land? Did you bridge effectively? Note areas for improvement for the next time.
- **Media Outreach (The Hospitality Touch):** Send a personalized thank-you note or email to the journalist/producer. This builds goodwill and makes them more likely to seek you out for future positive stories.
- **Offer More Data:** Follow up with any promised statistics, images, or documentation promptly. This proves reliability.

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Ready to Define Your Legacy?

The King-Lawton 7-Point Media Playbook gives you the tactical execution. The next step is defining the substance behind your execution.

That's where the King-Lawton Legacy Blueprint™ comes in. Our service creates the comprehensive brand, messaging, and communications strategy, your unshakeable foundation, that makes every interview a success.

Contact us for your private consultation:
kinglawton.com/contact