

## Guidelines for Speaking with the Media

- **Don't comment on financial performance.**

- "How's the quarter going?"
- "How's business?"
- "How are shipments looking?"
- "Do you think things will be picking up anytime soon?"

**Simply respond:** "That's a question that would best be addressed by Corporate Communications. It would be best to follow up with \_\_\_\_\_ by calling \_\_\_\_\_?"

**If in a quiet period:** "We are currently in our quiet period prior to announcing quarterly earnings, so according to SEC guidelines, we're unable to comment at this time."

- **Don't comment on areas outside core expertise.**

- "So, is it true that your CEO is resigning at the end of the year?"
- "What are the current EPS estimates for the year?"
- "How are your supply chain initiatives shaping up?"
- "How's the pending litigation coming?"

**Simply respond:** "That's not quite my area of expertise, so I'd hate to speculate and give you misleading information. If you'd like to follow up after the meeting, I'm happy to direct you to the right contact." (Provide them with a Corporate Communications contact.)

- **Don't be forced to directly answer poorly worded or leading questions.**

- "So, is it true that you're buying out Competitor X?"
  - **Bad response:** "We're not buying out Competitor X."
  - **Better response:** "As a matter of policy, we don't comment on industry rumors."
- "When are you going bankrupt?"
  - **Bad response:** "We're not going bankrupt."
  - **Better response:** "I'm not aware of any such plans. Let me direct you to someone who could better research that issue for you." (Provide them with a PR contact; the company might be going bankrupt and you don't even know it.)
- "Are your products just as shoddy as last year?"
  - **Bad response:** "No, they're not as bad anymore."
  - **Better response:** "We've always focused on developing high-quality products. Thanks to our new supply chain management efforts, year-over-year quality scores are now off the chart." (Don't be forced into responding to a negative question. Instead, make your own positive statement that addresses the question asked.)

- **If you don't know the answer to a question, don't be forced to guess or speculate.**

- "What was your market share in 2000?"
- "How many outside sales reps do you have?"
- "Are you going to start marketing products in Canada?"

**Simply respond:** "I don't know, I'll have to check and follow up with you." (You can always provide more information later, but it's hard to purge an inaccurate statement.)

- **Don't be forced to release confidential or yet-to-be-announced information.**

- "What are your fixed costs looking like nowadays?"
- "When will you enter the international market?"
- "Are you planning to ship your new product by the end of the year?"

**Simply respond:** "We aren't able to divulge that information for competitive reasons" or "We haven't made an announcement concerning that yet." (You should control the flow of information according to your communication plans and schedule. Don't let media hijack it.)

