



Linda T. Farr, RDN, CSOWM, LD, FAND  
president@eatright.org

## Develop Your Mass Media Presence

**If we want to create greater value and visibility in the public, we need to build our mass media engagement. It's essential for expanding your market reach and interconnectivity with potential clients while attracting greater awareness of you and your brand.**

In November, I discussed how *you are your own brand*. I encouraged you to act on the power you have to persuade and influence others and the importance of self-promotion and branding. This month, I'm taking this further by emphasizing social marketing and media presence.

Media presence positions our profession as reliable and relatable experts, and the preferred resource for educating the public about science and evidence-based food-, nutrition-, and health-related topics. It also showcases your individual nutrition expertise and disseminates the undeniable value that we all create for our clients and decision-makers.

*RDNs are the message. We are credible, competent, and engaging. We work with the media to share accurate and honest nutrition-related information that inspires people to live healthier lives.*

Jerlyn Jones, MS, MPA, RDN, LD, Academy Spokesperson

Media skills develop with experience over time, so I encourage you to take the first step and seek continuing education. Observe our many media-savvy members in videos, on TV, in print, and on podcasts to learn by example. Reach out to the Academy's Strategic Communications Team for guidance at [media@eatright.org](mailto:media@eatright.org). Consider joining media communications teams within your affiliate, dietetic practice groups, or member interest groups.

This is how I create my traditional media messaging for broadcast interviews:

- Get to know the characteristics of your audience. Speak to them in their own words.

Create 1 big overarching theme that inspires your audience to take action.

- Prepare the opening key message in 1 or 2 sentences. This may be what the interviewer uses to introduce your segment.
- Develop 3 key messages or talking points that illustrate your message and help solve the audience's problems.
- Write 2 or 3 suggested questions that the interviewer could ask at the end, time permitting. Pre-planning these questions can add depth to your talking points, address common questions that you couldn't fit into your time allotment, and help the interviewer come up with appropriate questions, which is usually appreciated.
- Select visual representations of your talking points, to add spontaneity and help the audience and interviewer engage with their senses and remember your points.
- Close with a summary of your points and how the audience can connect with you. I send them to my Pinterest page for recipes and my website. I also make sure that the banner that shows below my name includes my website and a social media handle, if there is space.
- I always make it a point to reach out to the interviewer or producer before I leave the set, to pitch other hot topics we could discuss next time.

Traditional media such as television, print, and radio are valuable, but they tend to only be one-way communication. The advantages of social media are many. It is a very low-cost way to build two-way engagement, boost your brand, and demonstrate visible endorsement or social proof from satisfied customers. You can integrate your messages across multiple platforms so that you can reach a variety of consumers where they hang out and prefer to engage. Social media outlets also have ways of tracking interactions between you and your followers, such as likes, shares, comments, re-Tweets, and subscriptions, so you can track return on investment.

Creating Web-based media buzz amplifies our messages in an overcrowded media environment and illuminates us as trusted and credible authorities, who are essential in food and nutrition decisions and person-centered health care delivery. Media exposure may be that missing piece in helping you grab the brass ring of increased value and visibility.

Many Academy members are extremely savvy about media messaging, such as our current and past Spokespersons. We also have members who are doing incredible work that is, unfortunately, flying under the media's radar, and members who believe that social media is only for those in private practice. Social marketing and media skills are important for all of us to develop and could be a great addition to your professional portfolio learning needs.

I have always strived to be perceived as a credible and engaging registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) who captures audiences with compelling and impactful evidence-based messages. Whether I communicate before an audience, to my clients, or through social media outlets, I have found that positive media exposure promotes my brand and value and pushes my professional content and stories out in front of potential clients and decision-makers.

Media exposure helped build my private practice clientele and opened doors to many opportunities.

*When we stand out as credible and accessible nutrition authorities on social media, RDNs and NDTRs make a collective impact. This influence extends beyond just strengthening our professional reputations. Correcting harmful misinformation on the spot helps consumers well before we ever visit their hospital room or assess them in our offices.*  
Julie Stefanski, MEd, RDN, CSSD, LDN, CDCES, FAND, Academy Spokesperson

My first media training took place during the time the Texas affiliate was working to get its Licensed Dietitian Act through the state legislature. Media skills helped us craft impactful messages and stories that were used during our testimony before state senate and house committees and individual legislator visits. I want to thank the Texas Beef Council and the National Dairy Council for elevating the importance of the dietitian's voice in nutrition communications and for being trailblazers in media training for RDNs and nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTRs).

There is a marketing “rule of 7” that states that it takes an average of 7 interactions with you and your brand before a potential customer decides to purchase your services. With social media today, it is possible to reach your target market 7 times or more in just 1 day or 1 hour, and that still may not be enough to make you stand out from the media noise. That is why regular social networking and building relationships with your target audience can help you establish value and recognition. Social media is where we all need to be now. Traditional media messaging can be repurposed for social media messaging.

- Video content is king. It quickly captures attention, creates an emotional connection, and increases traffic to your site.
- Your website (or blog) is your virtual home. Write up your presentation in a story format and post with recipes and photos of you presenting.
- Post a picture of you and your props on Instagram. Add a shorter version of your messaging. Link to your blog or website.
- Post 1 of your 3 talking points every day or two on Twitter. Add hashtags to categorize your messages.
- Facebook is the most popular social media platform. Post pictures often, and engage with your friends to build a following. Link to your website.
- Pinterest is where I post my favorite recipes. I refer to my Pinterest page when audiences and clients want to know where to access the recipes.
- LinkedIn is for professional networking. Its benefit is based on building contacts. First you offer free information and assistance for others, building a relationship. Then you can ask for and receive advice and potential opportunities. You could announce your media interview here and post pictures of yourself in action.

My media exposure blossomed when I was appointed to the San Antonio Mayor's Fitness Council. The public relations director of the YMCA asked me to present on the local CBS affiliate morning show *Great Day SA*. She had

*Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide* Learn the art of creating and communicating compelling messages that are audience-centered, are evidence-based, and inspire optimal nutrition and health. A new Academy book written and reviewed by experienced nutrition communicators and educators, *Communicating Nutrition* provides the knowledge and skills you need to develop and deliver all types of communication in a variety of settings.

<https://www.eatrightstore.org/product-type/books/communicating-nutrition-the-authoritative-guide>

already secured the date, topic, and props. All I needed to do was develop talking points and do the interview. That experience led to an enjoyable 10-year volunteer role with

the station. I watched how props were displayed and what camera angles and lighting were best. I watched other interviewees and asked questions of the producers and personalities. I developed my own media persona, with engaging food demonstration skills and an ease when in front of the camera. It almost felt like speaking to my clients, but in a 65-degree studio with bright lights. The connections I made through working with the TV station led to other opportunities and media outlet interviews on a variety of TV stations, drive-time and talk radio shows, and podcasts.

I strongly encourage every member to develop a media presence. Whether your goal is to expand your services, fight media misinformation, have a seat at the table, compete for an opportunity, or increase your client base, we all need positive media exposure that promotes our value, demonstrates that we are reliable and relatable experts, and gets our science- and evidence-based professional content and stories in front of consumers and decision-makers.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2020.12.023>