



PR with Principles

Welcome to the SPIN Project's e-newsletter, our monthly compendium of news, notes, and ideas.

In this issue:

- Applications Now Open for the 2005 SPIN Academy!
- Announcing the All New www.spinproject.org!
- A Report from FreePress' National Conference on Media Reform

Applications Now Open for the 2005 SPIN Academy!

Applications for the Seventh Annual SPIN Academy, taking place August 17 - 21 in Petaluma, CA, are now being accepted. Our signature training conference, this residential retreat offers progressive leaders accessible, comprehensive communications training and support, in order to help organizations dedicated to social change become more media-savvy. The SPIN Academy provides training and development in:

- Specific communication tactics & skills
- Strategic communications planning
- Organizational capacity building through more effective communications
- Communications leadership growth and networking

The SPIN Academy is ideal for activists who work regularly with the media, who are in a position to share their media skills to help develop leadership skills in colleagues and allies, and who will use strategic communications to help build a stronger progressive movement.

Participants benefit from more than 15 interactive workshops led by experienced

trainers on topics like Strategic Communications Planning, Coalition Communications, Fundraising For Communications, Developing Relationships With Reporters, and Reaching Your Target Audience. Participants also meet one-on-one with expert consultants, build individual media strategies, and receive valuable resources and materials to support their ongoing media work, including the Train the Trainers Kit to help participants lead media trainings of their own.

Participants also develop cross-movement relationships with other activists faced with the challenge of earning media attention for progressive issues, and deepen their understanding of the connection between strategic communications and the success of the progressive movement.

Thanks to the generosity of our funders, we're able to offer this training for only \$200-300 per person, depending on your organization's budget. This registration fee includes the cost of all training and materials, plus room and board for the five days of the conference.

Participation in the SPIN Academy is based on a competitive application process; the deadline to apply for this year's event is July 7. Full information on the event and the application form are available at:

<http://www.spinproject.org/academy2005>, or call the SPIN Project at 415-284-1420, extension 330.

Don't miss this unique opportunity – apply now!

Please circulate widely...

Announcing the All New www.spinproject.org!

After months of hard work and planning, it's finally here... The SPIN Project is proud to announce that we have a brand new website up at <http://www.spinproject.org>. Completely re-designed and filled with new content, among the many new features are:

- A Strategic Communications Plan Generator. Just answer some simple questions and in no time you'll have a communications plan built from the ground up to help you get your message out to the public and start changing people's minds. And the best part is: when you fill out a plan, a copy is sent to the SPIN Project, where one of our Strategists will review it and get back to you to offer feedback!
- Three new downloadable tutorials covering Strategic Communications Planning, Developing Relationships with Reporters, and News Releases. We'll be adding new tutorials often, so make sure to check back in the months to come.
- In-depth case studies of the SPIN Project in action and a complete overview of the services we offer. Find out what the SPIN Project can do for you.

So what are you waiting for? Head to <http://www.spinproject.org> and check it out. We promise you won't be disappointed.

A Report from FreePress' National Conference on Media Reform

SPIN Strategist Josh Seidenfeld recently returned from FreePress' National Conference on Media Reform, a three-day extravaganza of media activists of all stripes. He distilled all those plenaries, panels, and prognostications into a couple of paragraphs:

First media activists start with an advantage: Americans have negative opinion of the media. From that friendly ground, here are a few message ideas that have been tested to work:

0. Ideas/Language to stress:
 - Preventing media concentration
 - Defending individual rights and freedom
 - Fostering diversity and openness in news and entertainment options.
 - Checks and balances that restrict corporate power
 - Better programming, particularly for children
 - Ideas/Language to avoid:
 - "Limiting" Media – Americans never want to be limited
 - Most people do not think about media the way "we" (read: obsessive media activists) do
 - People care about high costs of media services like cable TV and high-speed

internet

- Cable companies are a classic villain
- Community Internet appears to be an effective introductory issue for media reform

And some final tips about communicating for media reform:

- Media love to tattle on each other for blunders, but rarely want to address systemic problems like ownership. But this “blackout” is lifting.
- Terms such as “Media Reform” make journalists defensive. Work to make journalists know they are not your target. Reassure them that you don’t think they’re “corporate hacks” and that you’re working to improve their work environment and job quality.
- Seize the opportunity to frame emerging debates, such as community broadband access.
- Anchor your communications in values in order to speak to people’s hearts. Some relevant values include: diversity, local control, choice/ freedom/ democracy, education and caring for children.
- Partner with organizations of all stripes. Media reform is everyone’s issue and all organizations should be able to make it their second issue.
- When framing, know your opponents’ frame (see pp. 14-19 in *The Future of Media*, McChesney ed.)
- George Lakoff suggests the frame “New [read: enlightened] media is overtaking old media.” What campaign target will ever claim to be part of ‘old media’?

Thanks to Lake, Snell, Perry, Mermin & Associates and Center for American Progress for focus group data, and to FreePress’ Craig Aaron for his thoughts.

That’s it for this issue of the SPIN Project e-newsletter. Please feel free to forward any of this information to anyone you think might be interested—we’d greatly appreciate it.

Thanks,

The SPIN Project Staff

To unsubscribe from this e-newsletter, please send a reply to this message with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.