

FIRST TAKE COMMUNICATIONS

Get It Right on the First Take

Our world is becoming smaller, faster, and more competitive by the day. In an era of twenty-four hour news cycles, satellite uplinks, and instant messaging, today's leaders have virtually no room for error if they are to prevail in the marketplace of ideas, goods, and services. Whether seeking to increase market share, launch a new product line, win a campaign for public office, or react decisively to a corporate crisis, today's leaders have fewer and fewer second chances to effectively convey their message. They must do it right on the "first take".



First Take Communications is the choice of private and public leaders seeking to prevail and succeed in today's rapid-fire communications world. The firm has a proven list of clients who can attest to First Take's ability to help them navigate the potentially treacherous waters of news interviews, major speeches, product positioning, sales training, and conferences.

First Take Communications' team is led by Nancy Mathis, a unique teacher who has worked on both sides of a camera and who knows the worlds of news, politics, and corporate communications from the inside. She has more than two decades' experience as an Emmy-award winning television reporter and anchor, a professional emcee and moderator, and the communications director to a nationally recognized political leader. She has helped countless clients master the communications challenges faced by today's corporate and political leaders.

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OUR SERVICES

Media Training

“The cautious seldom err.” - Confucius 551-479 B.C.

Nancy Mathis, President of First Take Communications, believes that to be successful in today's rough and tumble media environment, you must rely on techniques and tactics that have been battle-field tested. Because she has been both a television reporter and a communications director, Nancy speaks with a credibility and authority that few others can claim. She has firsthand knowledge of how news is made, and what reporters need and want.

Nancy has developed a two-pronged strategy for media training. First, she works extensively with her clients to develop cogent, consistent messages around their specific issues that are appropriate for media interviews. Second, her clients are taught how to effectively deliver those messages in television, radio and print interviews. Videotaped interview sessions give clients the opportunity to practice delivering their messages in every media environment, including “live” television. First Take Communications' clients also learn about proper posture, dress, and cosmetics.



First Take clients leave Nancy's media training sessions well prepared for any kind of interview, even the toughest encounters with “ambush journalism”.



Presentation Training

“Speech finely framed delighteth the ears.” - 15:39 The Second Book of Maccabees

Few of us approach the prospect of public speaking without some trepidation. In fact, a study done a few years ago found that top business executives list public speaking as one of their greatest fears - right behind dying and having their businesses fail.

Nancy Mathis knows from first-hand experience that good public speaking skills can be learned. She and her associates at First Take Communications give clients the tools needed to both craft a good speech and utilize the “tricks of the trade” needed to deliver it well.

A professional emcee and moderator, Nancy examines with clients the basics of how to structure and write an effective speech. Clients are then given extensive instruction in proper delivery techniques. Nancy and her associates address pacing, pitch, proper hand gestures, and techniques for overcoming anxiety and nerves that can adversely affect performance.

Extensive videotaped practice sessions further help clients learn to calm their fears and communicate effectively with an audience of any size.

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Message Development

“Obviously, a man’s judgment cannot be better than the information on which he has based it.” - Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Publisher “New York Times”

As an Emmy award-winning journalist, Nancy Mathis is adept at taking complex issues and distilling them into a form that is accurate and readily understood by any audience. First Take Communications’ clients find that the messages that they develop with Nancy and her associates have a wide range of applications which include media interviews, speeches, congressional testimony, analysts presentations, and sales campaigns.

Whether working to advocate a policy or issue, or promote a product or company, clients can depend on First Take Communications to help them structure messages and create soundbites that will accomplish their communication goals.



Moderator Services

“To stir men’s blood: I only speak right on.” - William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar

First Take Communications President, Nancy Mathis, is a professional moderator and emcee who provides authority and polished sophistication to press conferences, teleconferences, webcasts, debates and important meetings.

An Emmy-award winning television anchor and reporter, Nancy has more than 20 years of experience in front of a camera and on stage. Clients appreciate her ability to master their subject matter, direct the discussion around a specific topic, keep their event entertaining and on schedule, and most of all, handle the inevitable snafus associated with “live” events. Television viewers may recognize Nancy as the long-time host of The Learning Channel’s Satellite Town Meeting - a live television show on education issues that features the U.S. Secretary of Education, a panel of experts, a studio audience, and call-in questions from viewers across America.

Nancy hosts teleconferences on a wide variety of issues and is frequently contracted to emcee important press conferences and large events featuring President George W. Bush, former Vice President Gore, several members of President Clinton’s Cabinet including Attorney General Janet Reno, Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala as well as leaders in the private sector such as the Bill Ford, CEO of Ford Motor Company.

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Sales Training

“Everyone lives by selling something.” - Robert Louis Stevenson

You know that you have a great product or service. But how do you break through to those customers and clients who are too busy, too distracted, or too confused by the competition to hear what your sales force is saying?

First Take Communications works with your company to develop messages that can cut through the roadblocks set by hard-to-reach clients and tough competitors. We then train your sales force to effectively deliver those messages at every sales opportunity — from brief phone conversations to extensive sales presentations. We also teach strategies for dealing with clients who have had issues with your company or who are not inclined initially to buy your product or service.



Congressional Testimony

“The slightest remark in either House of Congress is known all over the world the following day.” - Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Testifying before Congress can be one of the most daunting challenges facing an individual, a company, and an organization. The stakes are extraordinarily high; reputations can be won or lost in a matter of minutes. It is imperative, therefore, that witnesses fully prepare for any and every scenario. Testimony must be clear, concise and compelling. Witnesses must prepare to both effectively deliver the remarks and field questions from Members of Congress and the media.

First Take Communications helps clients understand what to expect on Capitol Hill, how to successfully communicate their messages in a unique environment, and how to effectively manage media inquiries made in connection with an appearance before Congress.

As Communications Director for a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee, Nancy Mathis knows from direct experience what it takes to succeed in a congressional hearing. She has assisted dozens of witnesses in preparing for hearings. She has also briefed Members of Congress as they developed questions for witnesses. Additionally, as a seasoned journalist, Nancy is well-versed in the rules of engagement with the media after a witness has concluded his or her testimony.

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ABOUT US

Nancy Mathis, President

As the founder, President, and CEO of First Take Communications, Nancy Mathis offers her clients outstanding service based on her unparalleled experience. For two decades, she was an Emmy-award winning television journalist, television anchor, and radio reporter. She knows what it takes to succeed on the other side of the camera and microphone, as well, having served as a Communications Director on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch of government. Additionally, Nancy is highly sought after for her abilities to moderate debates and emcee important conferences. Her wealth of experience and knowledge has honed her ability to help clients develop and deliver their messages, prepare for media and other public appearances, and succeed in the most competitive media, corporate, and political environments.



Nancy began her career as a journalist in Charlotte, North Carolina at WBT Radio, a 50 thousand watt station that is considered one of the pioneer stations in American radio. Within a year, she was asked to join the staff of WBTV Television and remained there for three years as a general assignment reporter with a particular interest in business news.

Her reporting in Charlotte caught the attention of executives at WTVF-TV in Nashville, Tennessee. In Nashville, Nancy was quickly promoted to anchor while still maintaining her position as a top reporter covering medical news, politics and business. From Nashville, Nancy moved to one of the top television stations in the country, WUSA-TV in Washington, DC where she both reported and anchored.

Nancy's reporting in the Nation's Capitol continued to garner her honors, including several coveted Emmy awards. Known as a top-notch political and business reporter, Nancy left television news to join the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Banking Subcommittee on Consumer Credit and Insurance, where she served as Communications Director for both the Subcommittee and for its Chairman, former Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-MA).

The Clinton Administration asked Nancy to become Communications Director to its National School-to-Work Office, which put her in charge of a \$6 million dollar budget and a 50-state communications effort. In that capacity, Nancy worked extensively on both education and workforce development issues.

Nancy continued to moderate debates and emcee conferences during her years in the public sector and hosted a live television talk show on the Learning Channel for six consecutive years.

Convinced that she could be of service to clients in need of expert consultation in media and presentation training and message development, Nancy founded First Take Communications in 1999. As President and CEO of the firm, Nancy has trained a wide spectrum of clients — including Members of Congress, political candidates, business leaders, and scientists. Clients appreciate her ability to quickly grasp complex subject matter and distill the information into effective messages. Her clients then learn how to strategically deliver those messages to the media, voters, customers, and clients. Nancy lives in Washington, DC with her husband and young son.

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ABOUT US

Meredith Resnick, Associate

Meredith is an award-winning broadcast news professional, with more than a decade of experience in the Washington press corps. A veteran of one of the top news operations in the Nation's capitol, she has keen insight into what clients must know to be successful newsmakers.

As an investigative television producer at Washington's CBS affiliate, WUSA, Meredith has conducted literally hundreds of interviews involving top government officials, leaders in the private sector, and nationally known celebrities. She has extensive experience in covering stories as diverse as city politics, controversies surrounding national policies, high-profile court cases, Supreme Court rulings, crime, and "breaking" news such as plane crashes and violent weather.



Meredith's in-depth reporting is also highly regarded in Washington's extremely competitive news market. For example, her multi-part series on preventive medicine received recognition for excellence by the American Heart Association. And her production experience is international in scope. Meredith's travels to Haiti, for instance, resulted in an acclaimed series of in-depth feature reports on that country's policies and people.

After developing a solid reputation for excellence at WUSA, Meredith's writing skills and ability to shape a story attracted the attention of NBC's owned and operated station in Washington, WRC-TV. There she wrote scripts for news broadcasts, and prepared anchors for live interviews. She also continued to produce reports, earning kudos for both feature stories and her coverage of breaking news.

After ten years in news, Meredith decided to share her skills and knowledge of the media with clients such as The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, The National SAFEKIDS Campaign, The National Highway Traffic Safety Commission and Education Week Magazine. Subsequently, her work producing video news releases for clients has been nationally recognized, including receipt of a Questar Award.

Meredith's clients appreciate her straightforward approach in helping them to analyze their issues and develop clear, concise and newsworthy messages. She is adept at working with even the most camera-shy client to become comfortable in front of the camera and avoid the common pitfalls likely to occur in media interviews.

Meredith keeps her news skills and contacts current by remaining an active member of Washington media where she continues to be in great demand as a story producer. Most recently, her work has aired nationally on PBS.

Meredith lives in Maryland with her husband and three young daughters.

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Kelly Burke, Associate

Kelly Burke is a communications specialist with more than 30 years experience in several media: television, radio, journalism, speech and theater.

Kelly worked as a major market TV news reporter at WEWS TV, Scripps Howard Broadcasting in Cleveland, WXYZ TV, ABC, in Detroit, and WRC TV, NBC, in Washington, DC during a broadcast career that spanned more than twenty years.



For the past decade, he has served as a popular media coach and video producer. On his own and contracting with other communications companies, Kelly has conducted media and presentation skills training as well as specialized crisis communications training for such corporations as American Express, AOL/Netscape, AK Steel, Borland, Web Methods, Level Three, Elan, Capitol One, Clark Realt, Citadel, Chase Bank, JP Morgan, Proctor & Gamble, Fortis, Exxon, Weyerhaeuser, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, Duke Energy, Con Edison, Constellation Energy, El Paso Gas, MCI, OTG the U.S. Enrichment Corporation, Intergen, Sante Fe Railway and Geon.

With a special interest in health and safety, Kelly has also worked closely with the CDC, NIH, the AMA, the AAP, Robert Wood Johnson, the Casey Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, and numerous pharmaceutical companies. Other clients have included the AARP, Red Cross, National Geographic Society, the National Aquarium, the Carnegie Foundation, the University of Vermont, and America's Promise.

In between consulting assignments, Kelly writes, directs, produces and serves as talent for various video projects. Clients have included PBS, NIH, American Academy of Pediatrics, NHTSA, the National Safe Kids Coalition, the Indian Health Service, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the March of Dimes, IBM, Martin Marietta, MCI, Next Inc., the American Plastics Council, and many others. He has won more than 30 local and national awards, including 11 Emmys, for his TV work.

In 1997, Kelly served as Special Consultant to ATV, the Aruba Broadcasting Company, on the Island of Aruba in the Dutch Antilles. He helped establish a TV newsroom training all newsroom personnel and served as Station Manager. He also anchored and produced morning newscasts and specials for the Caribbean TV station.

For nine years, Kelly worked as an Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Program for Broadcast Journalism at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. He also developed and taught seminars for student reporters in Medill's Washington, DC program where he designed a one of a kind weekly seminar, coordinated with CNN, which trained the students in "Reporting Live."

Finally, Kelly also serves as Founder and Executive Director of Reconcile, Inc., a non-profit communications company. Reconcile develops media projects specifically aimed at raising awareness of social problems and finding solutions. Reconcile has produced public service announcements and videos for the Rwandan Relief effort, HIV and AIDS prevention and various alcohol awareness and driver safety programs.

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Corinne Russell, Associate

Corinne Russell has served as an award-winning television news reporter, the chief public affairs executive for a national trade association, a senior media strategist at a nationally recognized public relations firm, and a congressional press secretary. She is an experienced public relations and public affairs professional with a proven track-record in communication strategy, media training, media placement, alliance building, consumer education, and project management.



With extensive experience in both public relations and television journalism, Corinne is an expert at helping individuals and organizations both fine-tune their messages and get their messages out to the media in an effective manner. Her efforts have resulted in improved image and media coverage for a variety of organizations and causes in environment, health care, education, and other issue areas. Recent clients include the American Humane Association and the National Capital Business Ethics Awards.

Before launching her work as an independent consultant, Corinne was Vice President and Director of Public Affairs at the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), where she rebuilt and reinvigorated an outdated media relations and advocacy program. Prior to joining CHPA, Corinne was a Vice President at The Widmeyer-Baker Group, (now Widmeyer Communications) a public relations firm based in Washington, DC. At Widmeyer, she was one of the firm's senior media relations strategists and lead media trainer. Corinne went to Widmeyer directly from Capitol Hill, where she had worked as press secretary to Congressman Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.).

Throughout her career, Russell has continued to work extensively in television news. She was an on-air reporter and anchor at WTVF-TV in Nashville, Tennessee and has also worked for television stations in Florida, Indiana and Washington, D.C. Currently, Corinne does freelance reporting assignments for WRC-TV/NBC 4 in Washington.

Additionally, she is the recipient of several distinct honors, including Emmy Awards for investigative series, non-spot news and spot news from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Nashville Chapter, and a William Benton Fellowship in Broadcast Journalism, University of Chicago. Corinne has a Bachelor's degree in Telecommunications (Broadcast Journalism) and Business from Indiana University and has done graduate study at the University of Chicago.

A member of the American Society of Association Executives and the Public Relations Society of America, Corinne has also volunteered as a mentor and tutor of inner city students in Washington, DC.

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Kate Ennis, Associate

Kate Ennis is a public relations professional with nearly 20 years experience in media relations, marketing communications, public affairs and journalism. She has held senior level positions in financial services communications in Washington, DC, and New York.

Kate was most recently Director of Communications at the Financial Services Roundtable, a CEO-driven trade association representing the largest 100 integrated financial services companies. Before joining the Roundtable, Kate headed the media relations practice in the Washington office of Magnet Communications, a New York-based public relations agency. She managed the office's financial services accounts, including the Treasury Department's initiative to market electronic savings bonds.



Kate was also Director of Public Information at the Investment Company Institute (ICI), where she was a spokesperson for the mutual fund industry. She managed the ICI's news media events and other external communications programs, such as the ICI Foundation/American University Journalism Awards for Excellence in Personal Finance Reporting.

Kate came to the ICI from the cable financial news channel, CNBC, where she was a News Manager coordinating daily news coverage as well as planning editor for future news coverage. While at CNBC, Kate covered news stories including the merger of Travelers Group and Citicorp, the acquisition of ABC/Capital Cities by Walt Disney Company, and the Master Settlement Agreement with the tobacco industry.

Before joining CNBC, Kate was Communications Manager at Standard & Poor's Ratings Group, the New York-based bond rating agency, where she managed day-to-day media relations for S&P. Her professional association experience includes the American Institute of Architects, where she was Director of Public Information.

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CLIENTS

First Take Communications has trained individuals from the following organizations and companies:

Financial Services - The Investment Company Institute; Office of the Comptroller of the Currency; Financial Services Roundtable; Sandy Spring Bank; PNC Bank; Wells Fargo Bank; American Express; Freddie Mac; Rydex Global Investors; McGinn Investment Management; the Janus Funds; the Strong Funds; The Calvert Group; Erie Insurance Group; America's Community Bankers.

Healthcare - Bristol-Myers Squibb, Inc.; the American Cancer Society; the National Association of Community Health Centers; the Healthy Schools Summit; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Proctor & Gamble; Memorial Sloan Kettering; the Pfizer Foundation; the Association of State Public Health Labs.

Education - The U.S. Department of Education; the American Federation of Teachers; the American Association of School Administrators; the Alliance for Excellent Education; the Public Education Network; the University of Vermont; the National Education Association; the Maryland State Teachers Association.

Media - National Public Radio; Washingtonpost.com; U.S. News and World Report; Gourmet magazine; the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association; Boston Herald.



Food - McDonald's; Boar's Head Brand Foods; the National Dairy Council; Pew Charitable Trusts Biotechnology Initiative.

Technology - Genentec; Intelsat; Teleglobe.

Manufacturing - Ford Motor Company; the Rubber Manufacturers Association; Waterworks.

Non-profit - Goodwill Industries International; Miss America 2002, Katie Harmon, Miss America 2003, Erika Harold and Miss America 2004, Ericka Dunlap; the Archdiocese of Baltimore; the Morino Institute; the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law; Amnesty International; Choice USA; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Kellogg Foundation; the Alliance for Justice; Insurance Institute for Highway Safety; the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Political and public sector - Members of and candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives; the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; the Democratic Leadership Council; EMILY's List; the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; the governments of Jamaica, Turkey, and the Mohegan Tribal Nation; Poarch Band Creek Indians, Menominee Tribe.

* List includes training sessions done in association with other firms.

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What our clients say about us...

"Media training shouldn't be, but all too often is, a one-size-fits-all proposition. From network television to cable news networks, from local to national, the media world today is saturated with opportunities and perils alike. Nancy Mathis understands that world. She knows how to develop a message, how to prepare clients for the unpredictable, and how to inspire confidence. Stepping in front of the public—whether on stage or in front of a camera—is always intimidating, so it's all the more important that you have the right coach."

Rich Folkers, Director of Media Relations - US News & World Report

"Developing the message is key. Nancy clearly did her homework regarding what type of company we were before she performed the training. That helped us head in the right direction in building our message. Nancy did more for us in one day than any training sessions or seminar has done in the past."

**Chrystina Giorgio, Senior Vice President, Marketing
Sandy Spring Bank**

"Nancy Mathis has played an integral role in our company's overall sales strategy. Not only did she develop the messages for Waterworks that have come to brand our company, she has trained our sales staff to use those messages effectively in presentations and during every sales opportunity. We can see clear results of her work in our bottom line."

**Peter Sallick, CEO
Waterworks**

"The training Nancy Mathis and Meredith Resnick provided CPSC really helped even our experienced media specialists hone their on-camera skills. They helped our team develop clear and concise messages that we've used again and again during our media interviews. Since the training with First Take, our spokespeople are much more comfortable doing interviews."

**Ken Giles
Media Specialist, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**

"Nancy Mathis has incredible energy and a marked ability to quickly understand the issues and to craft messages. Her engaging nature and good humor easily draws executives in, making them comfortable in sometimes uncomfortable situations. I met Nancy during my work at one job and hired her again when I changed jobs. Her practical techniques have served many staff and executives at my organization well. We have used her skills not only to help us successfully deliver messages, but to identify communication opportunities, both internally and externally."

**Celeste James
NPR's Vice President for Communications**

"Nancy is absolutely delightful to work with! Our firm brought her in to train a diverse group of spokespeople - from executives to portfolio managers - with varying levels of experience with the media. With her enthusiastic and energetic style, Nancy was adept at having the trainees respond well to her direction and feedback. A gifted communicator, Nancy was able to quickly distill key messages for spokespeople to use in all media interviews. Thanks to all of her on-camera experience, her advice and coaching is invaluable. Although I've worked with various media trainers before, our session with Nancy was the most informative and educational."

**Anna Haglund
Public Relations/Communications Manager - Rydex Funds**

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