

When Gov. Chris Christie appeared at the Conservative Political Action Conference last week, he offered up some sound advice:

“We can’t be the party of no. We have to stand for something and talk about what we stand for.”

“We don’t get to govern if we don’t win.”

“Our ideas are better than their ideas and that’s what we’ve got to stand up for.”

There were some boiler plate comments as well — attacking President Obama for a failure of leadership, reiterating his anti-abortion credentials and flaying public employee unions, for instance — were guaranteed applause lines.

Unfortunately, he also offered some not-so-good advice: “We’ve got to stop letting the media define who we are and what we stand for. The fact is that we have to take these guys on directly. What we need to start saying is that we’re not going to put up any longer with them defining us.”

Now, media-bashing is nothing new.

Both sides engage in it, usually when they’re caught up in something embarrassing and wish to change the subject.

But the comments were a little odd coming from Christie, who owes his public career to the media defining him.

Standing on the steps of a federal courthouse after winning a conviction or wringing guilty pleas from public officials, Christie was admiringly portrayed in the media as a no-nonsense corruption-busting U. S. Attorney, hell bent on cleaning the Augean stables New Jersey politics had become.

The media polished his reputation on a regular basis as he sent one miscreant after another — more than 130 in all — off to the federal lockup for breaking trust with the people they were elected to serve.

The media definition, in large measure, paved the way for his run for governor in 2009 and continued into his first term as he battled, baited and belittled teachers, public employee unions, overpaid school superintendents, greedy administrators of independent authorities, members of the Legislature, and, yes, even reporters.

It is not a stretch to say Christie’s emergence as a national political force was fueled by the media definition of him as refreshingly outspoken and unafraid of breaking the china in pursuit of his agenda.

