



Working with the Media

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Introduction

What is media training? Why do you need it? How does talking to the press benefit me and my organisation anyway?

These are all good questions and this Guide to Working With the Media will give you the answers to them. But we would also like to take a few minutes to dispel some myths and set in motion some important ideas.

Media training (as practised by Bluewood) is about understanding the needs and drivers of the media industry and making sure your communications needs are met at the same time. This guide, and the training sessions you undertake, will ensure that both sides of the process get what they want from an engagement, be it an hour-long profile interview or a 10-second TV soundbite.

There is no shortcut to ensuring consistent, dependable outcomes from press interviews. Adequate preparation, the right ideas expressed with conviction and evidential support, and the ability to control the direction of an engagement while still sounding like you are having a conversation is a tricky set of plates to keep spinning.

However we have helped hundreds and hundreds of CEOs, senior executives, country managers, team leaders, expert commentators, and even front-line customer relations people to handle interviews effectively.

Media training is not about wriggling out of answers like badly briefed politicians. It's about being able to deliver good, complete, worthwhile and engaging stories that help you, your business, and your organisation.

The Bluewood Training Team

Guide to Working with the Media:

Organisation

The guide is split into three areas, which correspond to the learning and interview practice modules of the course. Following your course, use these modules to help remind you of the learnings and to help prepare for your press interviews.

I. Understanding the Media

You need to understand the constraints, obstacles and processes that your story must pass through in order to end up on the page, the screen or radio. When you do, you can align your strategy accordingly.

II. Preparing your approach

Learn a simple acronym which will take you from the 'big idea' to preparing you for the questions you don't want anyone to ask.

III. Successful interviews

Now you know how the media works, and you know what you need to do to succeed, this section focuses on delivering. Controlling the agenda, reminding yourself who is 'in charge', getting your physical delivery right - if all the building blocks are in place, you stand the best chance of a successful outcome.

I: Understanding the media



Does a journalist have an
agenda? Yes: Write the
biggest story they can



Who are you dealing with?

Press

1. National dailies and Sundays

'Broadsheet' is now more an indication (in theory) of quality than paper size. The pinnacle of the career ladder for most journalists. Mid-market tabloids are highly influential but take very subjective views, and tabloids ('red tops') can also be influential.

2. Regional papers

Range in quality enormously but are extremely important when targeting a local audience, for example communicating business change or opportunity in a defined area.

3. Trade press

Again vary enormously, from 'rags' full of free content and adverts to peer-reviewed high-cost journals. Also the source of stories for newspaper reporters - nothing is 'ring fenced' in the digital age.

4. Periodicals

Ironically becoming increasingly important as more hard news is instantly delivered online and readers seek analysis and perspective.

Broadcast

5. National networks

Shorter snippets of information mean a massive need for commentators and experts, and more potential exposure for negative stories.

6. Regional stations

As with regional press, incredibly important for area-specific communication and while they might be an easier 'sell' for a positive story, they will also focus hard on organisations with local issues.

Online, awards, conferences...

Almost all the above outlets have online versions with extra content. Journalists also have to blog, occasionally vlog (video blog), Tweet: more work, less resource. They may have to judge, or host, awards and help with conferences and panels.

How does the press operate?

Think of journalists as reporters. They are there to report back to their bosses - the editors. And the main problem they have is that they will need to sell your story in the face of stiff competition from other journalists.

Key Players

The **editor** allocates space (on a publication) or time (in broadcast). Both space and time in these respects are finite; only a certain number of stories can fit in. So he or she only takes the best.

Section editors and **news editors** cut the mass of stories presented to them down to size - these people are the first hurdle for your story.

When the story is approved and the reporter finishes his story, it may go back to his section or news editor before going to the **subeditors**. These people check for factual mistakes and typos, they fit copy to the page which has been drawn up by **designers**, they write headlines and the 'furniture' on the page like picture captions.

The **commercial department** can throw spanners into the works with late adverts, which might require a re-design. And late-breaking stories might mean even more chopping and changing.

KEY POINT: Reporters have little control over the process. You have even less. Your best hope is to strongly influence the outcome with a good, engaging, complete story

How does broadcast operate?

Whereas the main constraint with the print media is the available space, with broadcast it's time. Running a 20-minute news show with the various pre-recorded packages, live cuts to correspondents through outside broadcast units or radio cars, guests in the studio or coming in via phone lines or remote cameras, late breaking news... Into this chaos you have to fit somewhere.

Key Players

The **editor** has decided on the amount of time each section or story will get.

Producers manage sections of the program (or a program producer will manage the whole output) and is responsible for making sure the various elements - the guest, the associated film or audio, are also in place.

The **presenter** or **anchor** holds the whole thing together. They are adept at making sure the output looks polished and flows well. They are generalists, used to interviewing a minister of defence one minute and a cancer victim the next.

Correspondents or **reporters** are generally more specialised and may also be given the title of 'editor'. That doesn't mean much more than they are the most senior person in that sector and might have input to the channel's coverage in a broader sense.

Floor managers make sure everything runs smoothly in an operational sense - they will bring you into and out of the Green Room/studio.

Camera and **sound technicians** have fairly self-explanatory roles. Their job is to make sure you sound and look acceptable (or, as the editor or producer wants you to sound and look, which may or may not be the same).

Broadcast - the challenges

Different requirements for television and radio mean different challenges for you as you take part.

You may be asked on a **panel** of experts on live or recorded TV. The challenge here is to know what the topics are, to have prepared thoroughly, and then to make sure you get your share of the limelight. It's down to the facilitator to make sure this happens, but saying interesting things in accessible language is a great start. You talk to the other members of the panel, or the audience.

You may be recorded **live in the studio** or on location. Sending an **outside broadcast** (OB) unit is an expensive business so the studio option is preferred. Live TV will generally never take more than three minutes from you. If a pop star can focus on their song for three minutes, you can focus in this interview. Talk to the interviewer if they are there - or to the camera if not (see **down the line** below).

Recorded or **recorded as live** might feel less stressful but these clips can be edited so require total concentration to not say anything that could be used out of context.

Down the line is a commonly used TV technique - you go to a remote camera location (e.g. the Stock Exchange, or the Westminster studio for Sky) and talk live, via an audio link earpiece, to the studio. In this instance AND THIS ONE ONLY you talk straight into the camera and do not waver in your focus. **Radio cars** are similar but obviously there is no need to worry about eyeline. Again, this will only ever last a few moments.

Studio guests asked in to discuss a new idea or business may be asked to 'hang around' and interact with other guests. Synthetic though this is, it's a 'filmed conversation' and you should try and sound like you are having conversations but at the same time get across valuable messages for you and your enterprise.

The media's 'agenda'

Many people we train talk about the journalist 'agenda'. While there may be preconceptions and prejudices journalists bring into a room, their 'agenda' is actually simple: Write the biggest story they can.

Journalists do not sit down and run this grid to see if it's a good story - we formulated it to help delegates understand what matters. Pretty much every story in every publication will have three, four, or five of the elements contained in the acronym TRUTH.

T is for Trouble.

It sells. That simple.

R is for Relevant

Will the readers care? If it's a trade title, it has to affect that industry. If it's a regional, then anything in that area is germane. National titles and broadcasters make decisions based on their perceived audience.

U is for Unusual

News should be a surprise. Even features, to some extent. But large numbers, firsts and lasts, biggest and smallest are all good.

T is for Topical

Journalists can easily sell stories linked to existing big stories or events: if there is no link, it's a harder sell.

H is for Human

We are all fascinated by one another and the human element is critical for engagement with readers - from tabloids to trade papers, which of course run numerous 'people' stories and profiles in every issue.

KEY POINT: The journalist's obligation is to write big stories and get more money and a better job. If you leave a steak and a dog alone in the same room, the outcome is obvious

II: Preparing your approach



Offer a fixed menu of ideas
– but make it good



Your agenda

Reporters have their 'TRUTH'. But when they say they want the truth, your response needs to be: let me tell you what I MEAN by the truth. This is also sometimes expressed as the AMEN acronym.

I is for Issue or the big Idea

This might be as simple as 'my company is doing well in the recession' or 'how the merger will affect customers'

M is for Messages

What three or four (max five) subjects do you need to cover?

E is for Evidence

A combination of Teflon coating and bullet-proofing for the Messages

A is for Audience

Do you know how to address them, and what they want to hear?

N is for Negatives

Prepare for the questions you might need to answer, but don't want to

KEY POINT: If your agenda does not include enough of a worthwhile story, the pressure is on the journalist to find one. That may be to your detriment

Your agenda

An essential element of Bluewood media training is that delegates are encouraged to feel entitled to say the things they came to say.

Here are four situations that must be avoided:

- Coming out of a press interview with an uncertain view of what the journalist will write
- Feeling that the journalist did not ask the 'right' questions
- Feeling like it was a game of tennis, and the reporter got to serve every game
- Answering questions that were irrelevant or peripheral to the agreed topic

All of these suggest that the interviewee was unable to assert their agenda. Instead, it's essential that you do these things:

- Feel entitled to communicate what you came to communicate; you are the 'brains' in the room and the reporter needs you
- Stay on topic - if you have effectively prepared using I MEAN, your ideas and evidence will fulfil the reporter's TRUTH agenda
- Use humour to defuse standoffs - 'come on, I'm just a foot soldier, you know I can't comment on group policy'
- Own the subject territory from the start: 'Look, would it be useful if I gave a quick overview of where we are and what our current thinking is?'
- And own it at the end: 'Just to kind of wrap things up, we've given a lot of thought to this and the central issue is...' so the reporter leaves with the main message in his mind

There is more on controlling the agenda in **Getting your points heard** on page 27.

KEY POINT: Your role is to make worthwhile, appropriate responses to questions - not just answer them directly

What is your outcome?

It is critical to understand your desired outcomes for press engagements - this is the 'Issue' of I MEAN.

The outcome is NOT what the reporter goes away and writes, or what the interviewer records on TV or what the producer edits down to a soundbite for radio.

The outcome is what the target audience takes away from their consumption of that piece of media. Most often, that will be one sentence: 'I didn't know Acme were so active in plastics', or 'I understand why they had to shut the plant,' or 'he's right about the market, he should advise me'.

KEY POINT: Your planning starts at the end. Think about these outcomes and then think about what ideas and messages and proof you need to assemble to make sure the result of the media interview is as predictable as it can be

Messages and content limits

One of the biggest problems that people within an organisation have is that they know too much about it. Sometimes they make the mistake of thinking that everyone else needs to know as much about it as they do. Most often, they do not.

The audience needs to be reasonably informed - not fully informed, and they have different needs according to their stake in the organisation. We cover this more fully in the Audience section on page 19.

It is critical that you decide three, four or five key themes ('messages' is a difficult word for journalists and reminds them of political spin-doctoring - best avoided during interviews) for the interview.

These will get your outcome done. If you add more you will dilute the core ideas and open the door to the core ideas being hijacked by something the journalist finds more interesting.

KEY POINT: Don't invite a journalist in and offer them a buffet of ideas. You may not like what they take and wonder why some items were left untouched. Offer a fixed menu - but make it good

Messages: Good and bad examples

Very few organisations build effective messages. Even when they do, spokespeople frequently fail to deliver them.

These are not messages:

- We have 26% market share in the UK
- We pride ourselves on excellent worker engagement
- Every little helps

The first example above is a piece of evidence, not a message. The message might be 'we are a significant and growing force throughout Europe', of which the statement above might be one fact backing that up.

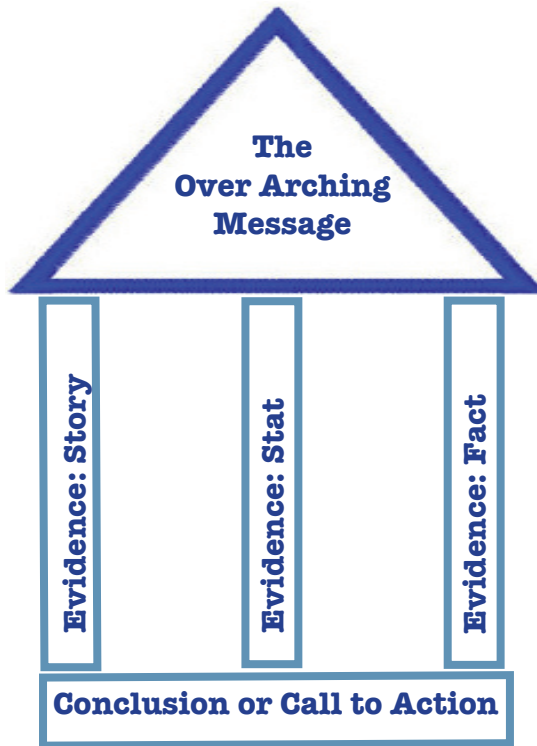
The second is the reverse problem: it's only a piece of a message, in this case the overarching idea, or proposition. It now needs support - 'engagement scores measured for us by Acme Consultants have risen by between 3 and 5 percentage points each year for four years...' and so on.

The third is a corporate catchphrase or strap line. It may embody a set of values, in which case spell them out. 'We have 'Every little helps' as a corporate mantra but let me explain what we mean by that and how customers see a difference...'

Messages need:

- **Proposition:** We are...
- **Support:** Facts and stats are good: anecdotes, reported third party comments, awards are even better. Use at least two per message
- **Conclusion:** You've outlined attributes - now tell us benefits, make a call to action, or conclusion that leads you to another message

The Message ‘House’



The roof of the house is the overarching message, such as ‘we are customer focused’. This cannot stand on its own. It needs the support of the ‘pillars’ - the evidence that can come in the form of a statistic (94% of customers are repeat) or a fact (our customers are our marketing - recommendations are our biggest source of business growth) and a ‘story’ (last week a customer phoned me and she asked a favour...). The final piece is the ‘basement’ - the conclusion that you can make. ‘Our business success is down to making sure our customers know they are the *cause* of our success.”

Proving your points

You must provide proof that what you are asserting, or trying to encourage the journalist to buy into, is true. When journalists write articles, they use facts and stats and quotes and studies to back up what they say.

They make readers more willing to believe what journalists are writing; it follows then that you need to convince the journalist with your evidence, so that they can convince their readers.

- **Data:** Facts, statistics and qualitative studies like surveys and polls are good. But they can be challenged by alternative facts, stats and surveys. An example is red wine's health benefits: medical 'opinion' has become a total blur because of contrasting studies
- **Stories:** Narratives based on anecdotes or observations are arguably stronger. If you tell a journalist: 'Last week a client I've known for years called me out to his factory in Malaysia, lovely location near the beach. He showed me two components, mine and and a competing one from China, and told me although my cost was 50% more than the Chinese one, he would be doubling his business with my firm'
- **Parallels:** Another strong evidence technique is comparison and metaphor. These often provide snappy sound bites that media love. When a junior EU minister called the financial situation 'like the Ebola virus' he generated massive coverage and put an image into the world's consciousness that was hard to shake

Know your audience

Very little in the modern media world is ring-fenced. A comment about rationalisation to the FT may drive the share price up as that audience digests the impact on corporate health, while a tabloid reporter trawling for stories sees something the unions would not like and calls them for comment.

Despite there being appropriate outlets for differing stories, or versions of a story, you must remember that you will probably have to address multiple audiences:

- Employees: current, future, and past (pension fund members)
- Clients and would-be clients
- Suppliers
- Regulators, unions, HMRC, other government bodies
- Competitors and peers
- Regional or sector stakeholders

But shaping content to each audience target and media outlet is only part of the story: you must shape your language too.

We encourage training delegates to ditch all or most of industry jargon. Google some random three-letter acronyms like ERA or PSC and see that they mean completely different things to different groups.

If you use jargon, develop the instinct to explain it. 'Our PSC - or production sharing contract, which is how we divvy up the oil and gas from the well with the government - is excellent...'

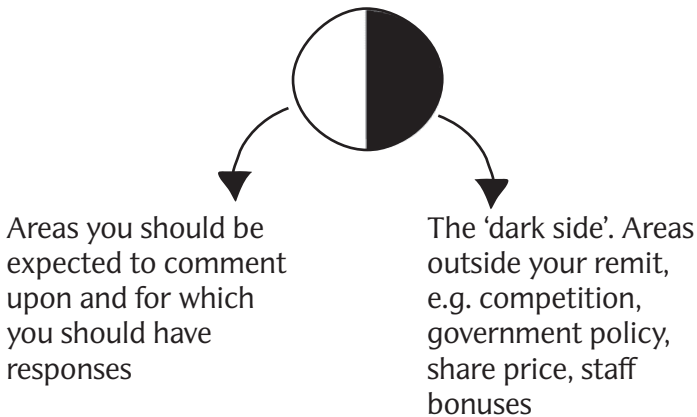
You can talk free cash flow and discount rates with the FT and Bloomberg, but will need to explain a little more with a regional or non-finance trade magazine.

Try and eradicate hackneyed business-speak like the 'professional services **space**' or the 'customer services **platform**'. It makes you sound like all your (untrained) competitors. The people you work with are people, or colleagues, not **talent** or **headcount** or **human capital**.

Dealing with the negatives

This is the last part of your 'I MEAN' agenda and the one that causes delegates most concern.

The first thing to say is that when a negative question or accusation is raised, you need to quickly decide if it's your area, or someone else's.



Journalists have a professional obligation to ask you questions about negative or difficult issues. They do not really care whether you are the 'right' person to talk about share price collapses or your boss's seven-figure pension - or they may have been told to ask anyway.

On a day when there is significant news about your organisation, you should be ready to rebut questions. See the section on **Responses not answers**

KEY POINT: Their job is to ask. Your job is to respond appropriately

Preparation reminders

DO:

- Define your outcome - what you want your audience to think
- Prepare a small amount of ideas
- Back them up with solid support
- Stick to these ideas
- Feel entitled to express them

DON'T:

- Introduce other big ideas - they will cloud the issue
- Cover areas that are not in your remit
- Assume your expertise means you don't need to prepare
- Feel the journalist has all the power
- Get bogged down in unimportant detail

III: Successful interviews



It's a conversation in which
the content is controlled.

By you.



Matching agendas

The media has its **TRUTH** agenda. You have your **I MEAN** agenda to prepare you for the interview. These agendas can be, and should be, complementary to each other.

Your big **ISSUE** or **IDEA** will have already appealed enough to the reporter to get you into a room together or talking over the phone - it has achieved buy-in and s/he has used it to sell your idea up the chain.

Your **MESSAGES** will probably address various elements in the **TRUTH** acronym, or possibly all of them. If they don't, then they may need re-thinking.

Your **EVIDENCE** will specifically address elements of **UNUSUAL** - the big numbers, the first/last, the biggest/smallest. Anecdotes you use will bring in the **HUMAN** element, because you will talk about what clients are saying or how work with colleagues has solved a problem.

Your **EVIDENCE** will - or should - address the **TOPICAL** element too because it will use broader market or world issues to set your ideas in context.

Making sure you know your **AUDIENCE** means that the journalist does not have to worry about whether it's **RELEVANT** for them.

Which leaves **NEGATIVES**. If **TROUBLE** is brought by market or other issues that are not of your making, then you can provide solutions in your **MESSAGES**. If the **TROUBLE** is about you, then you need to deal with it in preparing your responses.

KEY POINT: If you do your part well, and focus on great MESSAGES backed up with strong EVIDENCE, it should be all that the journalist needs.

Influencing the outcome

We have talked about feeling entitled to make the points you have prepared, and on the previous page explained why journalists should be receptive to them.

Now we focus on how to make sure that happens in an interview.

Right-sized answers

Express your idea fully, then stop. If asked for a number, don't just hand it over: use it to elaborate. 'Well we made \$7.9m of sales this quarter, a 23% increase on last year, and the main reason was...'

Structure your responses

Prepare the interviewer for a full response. 'Well if I can just take two minutes to...' or 'OK that's a good question, and the answer is a bit involved...' or 'I'll come to that in just a moment but first let me explain the background...'

Engage

Being approachable and personable is important. Smile, if it's appropriate. A couple of enquiries like 'is your office far from here' or 'are you enjoying the work at X' and offering coffee or water (do it yourself) help. Listen actively to their questions. At the end of the interview, offer to update the journalist at a future date.

It's a conversation

Most importantly, perhaps, make it sound like a conversation with the variation of tone and volume in your voice that you have in normal interactions with friends.

The re-boot

You might find yourself, or the journalist, has wandered down a dark alley that is either dangerous or simply of no value. A good 're-boot' is to lean across a little, extend your hand, and say: 'Look, (name), we're a bit off the track here, but one area that I think is really interesting is...'

Have a referee

Conducting an interview with your external PR agency representative, or in-house press officer, present will enable them to head off any really impertinent or irrelevant questions. Also the journalist will be more rigorous in accurate quotes if they feel someone else was witnessing the exchange.

Quote checking

Journalists who are experienced, or who work at prestigious titles, hate sending quotes to be checked. Trade journals are generally less precious. If you set it as a prerequisite for the interview to take place, ONLY correct factual errors. Do not 'airbrush' them.

Article checking

The same applies, but in a very complex technical article it may be necessary and perhaps even welcomed by the journalist. Again, correct errors (tracking changes on an MS Word document), don't re-write.

When things go wrong

Contrary to popular belief, journalists hate making mistakes. But a correction in a publication is unlikely to be seen. And there's no point complaining to an editor - it's one of the few times they will back their journalist. Refer to your press team for guidance, and a good general rule is to invite them for a fuller briefing so they understand their error.

KEY POINT: A reporter has to be confident that you have the elements of a worthwhile story. If you can manage this, they will be more willing to write that story as opposed to one outside your control or influence.

Responses, not answers

When asked a question in an interview, your task is to make an appropriate response which will be based on one of the core messages/ideas you have prepared.

KEY POINT: We are all polite people and, as we have been urged since kindergarten, we tend to answer the questions we are asked. No longer, please, when in an interview.

It might sound like the advice politicians take when they refuse to answer questions. But their failure is that they do not include anything plausible in their answers. Good interviewees provide worthwhile content in response to questions - content which (as described in Matching Agendas) is a good story for you, and a good story for the media.

KEY POINT: Most journalists will swap Story A (their idea) for Story B (your idea) as long as they are of equal value.

The two key points above are vital mindset shifts for anyone who wants to succeed in media engagement. A good response will outweigh a good question, and shift the agenda to that response. But a poor response will mean the question still hangs over the interview and the interviewer will almost certainly pose it again.

Getting your points heard

These pages deal with getting from a question which is not directly useful, to a response which is. You need to make transitions, or adaptations, to enable you to deliver plausible and worthwhile responses.

These transitions require you to think about what sounds natural and plausible for you, which will make them sound more natural to the journalist: the suggested phrases here won't work if you repeat them parrot fashion.

1. Bridging

This is the classic '**ABC** technique' where you Acknowledge the question (e.g. 'That's really only half the question...') Bridge ('but...', or 'what we should be concerned about is...') then Communicate one of your prepared ideas ('the broader impact, and how companies deal with it. Our response has been...').

This technique has to be delivered with considerable skill to work because it has been so mis-used by politicians that most journalists (and the public) see it coming.

2. Flagging

This is the conscious use of a conversational technique that draws a line under what has just been said, and 'flags' what is about to be said, as far more important. It's a kind of verbal highlighter.

The question comes in, and the response starts with a phrase like:

- I think what's really fascinating...
- At the moment all our clients are asking us...
- More broadly, this is about...
- I think the key point is that... (overused)
- The critical issue here is...

Psychologically, it positions the response as better (more fascinating,

Getting your points heard (cntd.)

what clients care about, the bigger picture, the key or critical thing) than the question and prompts the interviewer to take the same view. Remember, you are the expert here, and they are in the interview to get your knowledge.

3. Cap and run

The most difficult questions are both aggressive and accurate. It is very important in these instances to stand up to the question, and be honest and open if you can.

‘You’ve just sacked 500 workers?’

Cap the question off: a very short, honest answer or a quick rebuttal if it’s factually incorrect. Here, it’s easy because it’s a matter of record. ‘Regrettably, yes, we did.’ That candour buys you the opportunity to then Run - i.e., expand into positive territory, talking about the better matching of market opportunity, reallocating resource to growth areas, winding down loss-making plants, etc.

4. Rebuttal

It’s essential that you refute any comment or suggestion that the reporter makes which is wrong. If you let it pass, they will likely assume your tacit agreement. Ditto with figures; even a number you don’t recognise should be met with ‘those don’t seem right to me’ or similar. This is in fact a version of Cap & Run: quickly closing a line of enquiry down BUT it is essential to make a point of your own.

KEY POINT: All these techniques EXCHANGE one idea for another. They will only work if you exchange for an idea of greater value than that posed by the question

Getting your points heard: Delivery

This section is concerned with your physical performance.

There are three elements:

Body

Give your body a fighting chance of helping you. Sit upright in a chair, leaning in a little to engage your correspondent. Unless in a very informal environment, don't lean back - if put under stress you will make a very significant shift in your position to ready yourself. Put your feet in contact with the ground, and don't cross them at the ankle under the desk in front or chair under you. Both will lead to you feeling unbalanced. Don't lean on the desk with forearms crossed (especially men) - it will severely limit your ability to breathe and talk.

KEY POINT: BBC means 'behind in the back of the chair'. With your feet planted, it puts you in the right physical position to be engaged and responsive in an interview

Hands

Hands are incredibly important for most people when they are expressing themselves. They help get thoughts and speech in sync. Some people can express themselves clearly at a good pace with their hands still on their lap; catch yourself in free-flowing conversation to see if you are one of them. They also help us make critical points, 'illustrate' size by moving them apart or together, show 'levels' by indicating height, and so on. Watch good communicators and what they do with their hands.

KEY POINT: Let the hands do what they want, because locking them down might seriously affect your ability to get your points across

Getting your points heard: Delivery (cntd.)

Voice

Modulating your voice with variation in pitch, speed and volume helps engage the person we are speaking to. Exciting words need to be delivered in appropriate ways, and downbeat comments need to sound downbeat. Your voice can be a significant influencer - it can signal when you have something else to say (rising, quicker diction), and when you are winding a response down (slower, spaces between words, with a falling pitch).

KEY POINT: As with other elements of good delivery, assess your natural style in conversation and use this as a version of your interview voice

Negotiating the traps

Journalists set traps both knowingly and unknowingly. Some are common - the same as those used by bullying lawyers.

- 'Is it yes or no?'
- 'Is it A or B? It's quite simple, A or B?'

The media loves black and white, hero and villain, victim and blame. Going back to the 'entitlement' theme, there is no compulsion to frame your response in the same way that a reporter has framed the question.

Another is the invitation to use a reporter's negative language.

- 'This is a catastrophe, and it's your company's fault.'

A natural response is 'I wouldn't say it's a catastrophe...' - but you just did, and the journalist can quote you. Suddenly, you appear to have raised the issue of 'catastrophe'.

The final example is the 'guarantee'.

- 'Can you guarantee me no more lives will be lost in this way?'

Obviously, neither 'no', nor 'yes', is an option.

What's the answer? Just as you did with the **Getting your points heard** section earlier, you EXCHANGE the situation you've been put in for another.

- No, it's not that simple - look...
- Well, what I CAN guarantee is... and then talk about the controls and safeguards that have been put in place

KEY POINT: The questions are not as important as your responses

Getting through TV and radio

Content

Having the extra pressure of the cameras rolling, the mikes on, lights in your face and possibly monitors everywhere showing pictures of you can be daunting. Then an interviewer asks if you're worth your salary, given the terrible performance of your company/fund/charity in the last year.

Broadcast requires a cast-iron resolve and single minded determination to stick to the content you have worked on. It is CRITICAL that you remember that your responses, if they have been crafted properly, can be relied upon. And that if they are valuable enough, then they will defuse a question.

In addition, if the interviewer asks about your company, the response is likely to also involve your company - there is not a disjoint of apples vs. pears, or as politicians tend to try, apples vs. bathtubs. So don't worry about the plausibility gap.

Here, more than ever, you need to feel the entitlement to say what you came to say. Broadcast tries to make all conflicts and problems and even good news simple - and indeed it often is. But if there are shades of grey as well as black and white, you must express that nuance.

Using partial and full re-boots like 'Well, it's not quite like that, it's more a case of...' and even 'Look' or 'Listen' will help you get into your point. If an interviewer says 'You've made 500 people redundant' then you have to say 'yes' - but as in the Cap & Run section earlier, you then have the floor to talk about some mitigation or positives.

KEY POINT: You've been invited to take part in a broadcast for your input. Feel the entitlement to do just that.

Getting through TV and radio

Delivery

There's an advert for a multivitamin tonic where the tag line is: "You. But on a really good day." In the normal run of broadcast interviews, your demeanour needs to be you, but on a really good day.

Presenters will stress words harder, talk with more expression, use variance in tone and pace and volume, in order to engage and, let's face it, entertain the audience. Watch a few moments of Sky News, the BBC's Robert Peston or Andrew Marr, or CNBC Squawk Box to see what we mean. You need to match this; sound confident, express yourself with clear and obvious stress on the key words, use simple language, and employ non-verbal signs too - smile if appropriate, use hand gestures to underline points, and engaging body language.

In body language terms, position is important. Remember the advice in the **Delivery** section before: plant your feet. Knees and hips at 90 degrees. BBC = Behind in the Back of the Chair. Feel the lumbar support in the chair, and lean forward slightly. Rest your hands together loosely, but don't lock them; make sure you can use them.

DOs:

- Listen to the instructions of the producer or floor manager or camera technician
- Take make-up: you'll look pale otherwise
- Let them put on and take off the mike
- Remember you're on film or tape ALL THE TIME

DON'Ts:

- Wear anything that will distract: statement jewellery, ties, clothing
- Stand up and walk off until given the 'all clear'
- Drink anything other than water before an interview, especially not alcoholic, sugary or fizzy drinks

What next?

The course you have completed, along with this course pack, a DVD if you were filmed in your training, and the personalised feedback provide a resource that you can return to whenever you need to refresh your skills or prepare for an interview.

Gather your content

We have outlined what you need to bring into an interview - good ideas and solid evidential support. Think of it as a critical resource.

Allocate time and capacity

Successful media relationships take some work, and planning and thought, to establish and maintain.

Practice

Each new milestone, advance or crisis in your organisation will require a media engagement, and either you or a colleague will have to get used to delivering what this course teaches you.

Measure and assess

In conjunction with your press team or agency work out what has been worthwhile and what has been less so - and why.

KEY POINT: This is the starting point in effective media relationships that will have a measurable beneficial impact on your organisation

About Bluewood

We are a London-based training company with a team of over 20 expert trainers.

Since the day we began, we can proudly say that no two of our courses have ever been the same. That's because our sessions are tailored to be a perfect fit for each of our clients.

We have built our experience working with a range of different of organisations meeting their specific training needs, to help them achieve their different communications goals.

We hope that you've enjoyed your Bluewood course. More importantly, we trust that it has delivered all you expected and needed.

We've included details of other training products on the next couple of pages so, if there are courses in any other practice areas you'd like to attend then please do get in touch. We hope to see you again in another session very soon.

Best wishes,

The Bluewood Team

Our Courses

Media Skills

Our media courses are designed to show delegates how to navigate the world of the print, broadcast and online media, giving them an understanding of how journalists think, how they work and what they want from you. Run by current and former journalists, they are full of easy-to-use tips and techniques that can be put into immediate practice.

- **How to Communicate Your Story to the National Press**
- **Understanding and Speaking to the Broadcast Media (including radio)**
- **Delivering Messages and Building Relationships with the Trade and Regional Press**
- **How to Handle the Media During a Crisis**
- **Using Social Media to Reach Your Audience**

Presentation Skills

Whether it's a speech to 100 people, an investor conference or a sales pitch you're giving, we have worked with a wide range of organisations helping delegates to become the best communicators they can be.

- **How to Give a Confident Presentation That Will Get You Remembered**
- **Presenting to Win Over Your Shareholders and the City**
- **How to Deliver Your Messages Effectively to Large Audiences**
- **Learn How to Present Effectively on a Panel**



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