

## Media Handling and Public Presentations

### Introduction

The proliferation of radio services and the development of not only national but regional TV in the UK has given companies an excellent platform on which to be key players in the promotion of their products and services, away from the most obvious area of direct advertising.

It is therefore; extremely important that key staff feel they have the confidence to carry off a newspaper, radio or TV interview with a comfortable level of competency.

### Workshop Format

The sessions will be a mixture of practical hints and hands-on experience,

- The 5 questions that interviewers always ask - HOW, WHAT, WHY, WHERE and WHEN.
- Key elements of the process of preparation after the initial call from the radio or TV Company to the moment when they are ready to record.
- How to prepare yourself.
- How to take command of the interview situation without appearing too over confident.
- How to marshal your thoughts and ideas.
- How to deliver on-screen or on microphone.

The day opens with an overview of the types of interview most commonly encountered.

**HARD** – For news programmes and likely to be clipped for bulletins.

**SOFT** – More for current affairs/phone-ins and informational programming.

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Delegates are required to bring along a Press Release based on an area of their expertise about which an interview will be conducted.

Video and audio feedback will be used during each of the interview situations.

The radio and TV interviews will be conducted separately – one A.M. and one P.M. because the discipline of both differs quite widely. Immediate feedback will be given to each individual, both from the group and from the trainer(s).

Delegates will also be asked to prepare an interview based on a story from that day's newspapers. They are then required to become a spokesperson for that story. The rationale behind this is that they have to be able to extract the salient facts from a story, marshal their thoughts and, most crucially before the interview begins, brief the interviewer.

This is the 15-second rule, which needs to be applied to every story presented to the media. If it takes more than 15 seconds to explain what it is about, it is probably too complicated and needs rethinking or restructuring.

Particular attention will be given in the afternoon session on how to handle the bad news story. Many interview requests are often generated by a call to a media organisation complaining about poor service. Sadly this is often the first and potentially most damaging situation with which delegates may find themselves confronted. This will be illustrated, as will many of the other areas in Day Two, by the audio and video feedback.

The bad news interview is often the trickiest as the interviewer may be more aggressive than in other situations. By the afternoon of Day Two the delegates should be able to give a good account of themselves.

There will be a tutorial session focusing on the large formal public presentation situation on day one or two depending on time available. Instructions for preparing a short speech are in the appendices.

The day will conclude with a group review with reflections and each delegate will be given the audio and video material from their sessions.

Each delegate will be provided after the event with a written assessment of their individual performance. This will be in a suitable format to be shared with the peer group if desired.

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## **Workshop Outcomes**

Delegates will have experienced and will now be aware of some of the pitfalls and "dirty" tricks that can be played on unsuspecting interviewees.

Practical exercises will lead to a more professional and polished approach to media situations.

Some experience will have been gained in the area of the larger and more formal "Public Speaking" arena on either day one or day two.

Each delegate will be provided with a comprehensive set of handouts to accompany the workshop and for future reference.

## Appendix 1 - Briefing Sheet for TV Interview

### *Preparation required*

Please arrive at the workshop with a company press release that you can speak about with confidence. The press release should preferably be about an aspect of the company that you are familiar with.

The press release should be about one page of A4 paper and be double-spaced. Use Ariel or similar font (this is Tahoma 12 point) set to 12 point.

The press release should have a headline in bold capitals at the top and your contact details at the foot.

This will form the basis of the TV interview, the scenario being that the TV Company have contacted you to comment on certain aspects of the story. To prepare yourself for the interview, imagine that the reporter will ask five questions.

These will take the form of:

- How
- What
- Why
- Where
- When

This is a TV interview so you need to be aware that words are not the primary form of communication. Try and think of ways that the story can be explained in picture form with your words filling out the details.

The interview will be approximately 3 minutes long and will be filmed. Feedback to individual delegates will take place immediately after the exercise.

## Appendix 2 - Briefing Sheet for Radio Interview

### *Preparation required*

Please obtain a copy of your local (usually free and weekly) newspaper. Identify a suitable story on which you can adopt either a positive or negative attitude. A good example would be a planned local by pass or similar.

You will have the task of briefing the radio interviewer, prior to your interview, in no more than 15 seconds. This might sound as if it is a very short period of time, but if you cannot state your case briefly and with interest the story is probably not a story! The briefing is not part of the recorded session.

This is a Radio interview so you need to be aware that words are the primary form of communication, however, try and think of ways that the story can be explained by painting pictures with words. An example might be:

Poor answer: "This bypass is going to be a real nuisance."

Better answer: "This bypass is going to be savaging a part of our English countryside that hasn't changed since it was recorded in the Domesday Book."

The interview will be approximately 3 minutes long and will be recorded. Feedback to individual delegates will take place immediately after the exercise and you will receive a copy of your tape a few days after the event.