

MEDIA TRAINING

Overview

All courses begin by addressing the fears of the participants, whatever their level of experience. Some will have no experience of journalists, some may have had difficult experiences. They will ALL arrive with a certain amount of trepidation, it is a normal human reaction.

The courses give them 'permission' to be nervous. We address any fears or concerns, why they have them, and what strategies can be adopted to manage them.

Bespoke Training

These are not 'off the shelf' courses, they are tailored to deal with the individual worries and level of experience of each participant.

During group courses it is important for participants to feel they are 'all in this together', as this creates a supportive group dynamic and provides an empowering environment to learn the skills and strategies for dealing with the media.

One-to-one sessions are tailored to the needs of the participant, to their skill level and the scenarios and interviewers they will face.

Format

'On-camera' interview sessions are either soft or hostile, depending on the skill level of the individual and the outcome required.

All review sessions are done in a non-confrontational and encouraging manner. Performing on camera feels deeply personal, and it is crucial that all feedback is given in a safe and encouraging space.

Participants are encouraged to be grateful for the mistakes they will make, as making mistakes is an integral part of learning. In a group learning session, each participant learns from the mistakes of

other students as well as their own. The group dynamic is used to encourage each individual, so that the group collectively absorbs the skills and strategies needed.

Courses

Media Training – Beginners and Refreshers

Training Aim

This course deals with the practical skills of message development and interview skills.

Many inexperienced media performers confuse information with message and fail to get their message across because they are not really clear about what the message is.

They also often fail because they are not clear about how the message should be transmitted for any given media. For instance, does the journalist require a sound-bite for a 30 second clip, or a long interview?

Exercises

In a group session, the participants are guided to 'own' their message. A feeling of ownership of the information makes it more likely they will deliver it effectively. Strategies for delivering that message to various media are then discussed.

'On-camera' interviews are conducted and group feedback sessions are used to discuss whether the strategies have worked or not, and how they can be improved. The interviews are repeated until the participants can successfully employ the strategies learned.

Several sessions using different stories/scenarios are recommended so that participants become comfortable with the general skills necessary, and not just the single story being used for any given day's training.

Media Training – Advanced

Training Aim

A successful interview is one where the participant appears authentic, genuine, honest and reasonable.

Many media training courses focus on the principles of avoiding the question by using it as a segway to what they wish to say. This technique is known as ABC – Acknowledge, Bridge, Comment. Whilst this is an effective technique for shorter live interviews where the participant can keep talking and run out the clock, it does not work in long-form interviews. Audiences are becoming more sophisticated, and any attempt to avoid a question repeatedly will leave the participant looking untrustworthy.

An audience does not remember what a person says, they remember the impression that person leaves. The participant has to be seen to be addressing the question and to be believable.

Exercises

This course aims to empower the participants to deal with difficult interviews, whatever the type of difficulty.

Participants can be tripped up by a variety of scenarios.

- Hostile interviews with a well-prepared and skilled interviewer.
- Left-field questions from an interviewer trying to talk around the subject.
- Off-the-point questions from a badly prepared interviewer.
- Scenarios where the participant must defend a politically difficult or contentious position.
- 1 + 2 interviews, where the participant is being interviewed alongside a guest with an opposing view.

Story scenarios are used to create realistic interviews. 'On Camera' interviews show the traps and tricks participants will face.

A skilled interviewer can make even the most seasoned media performer lose focus and forget their message. The course will enable them to retain that focus and better control the interview.

No-one can predict exactly which way any interview will go, but this course will enable participants to feel more secure and in control, to anticipate any traps they may encounter, and to stay 'on message' without sounding as if they are repeating prepared information.

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