

The Media Minefield

The media can make or break careers.

Knowing how to get a good press can be a powerful weapon in your working life, helping to promote your message and further your cause.

But get it wrong and you can be mocked mercilessly around the world, and frighteningly fast.

Former BBC News Correspondent Simon Hall gives you insights, tips and tricks for dealing with the media minefield, whether television, radio, online, newspapers, magazines or social media.

Aim

To provide participants with a clear understanding of:

1. How modern media operates.
2. How journalists see stories, what they need to make them work, and how to use that to your advantage.
3. Tricks for writing a press release that makes your story stand out from the crowd.
4. How to anticipate likely questions in an interview, whether recorded or live.
5. How to present yourself on television, radio, online and in the press.
6. Techniques for handling a press conference.
7. What to say, and what not to say, in an interview.
8. The importance of rapid reaction in the social media age.

Methodology

The specific needs of the participants, taken from pre training questionnaires, will shape the course.

- Various interactive scenarios, based on the working lives of the group, will be used to illustrate and explore the points being made.
- The sharing of participants' experiences, and group discussion and interaction will be encouraged.
- A mock newsroom will be created, along with a press conference, for a realistic insight into the work of journalists.
- Participants will be asked to compose soundbites and face TV and radio interviews, based on scenarios relevant to their work, with their performance recorded and subsequently analysed.
- A small group size maximises interactions and allows time to address any individual requirements. It will also create an open learning environment where participants can share their experiences freely.

The training package comes with an aftercare service, with emergency contact details provided for when urgent advice or assistance on dealing with the media is needed.

Workshop methods and tools

The day will be highly interactive, with the simulation of a range of real life media encounters, to maximise the benefit for participants.

- **Presentations** will outline each subject area, and case studies examined, with questions and exercises to explore and investigate in more depth.
- **Discussions** will form a regular part of the course, with particular focus on participants' experiences.
- **Recorded interviews** will be carried out to examine participants' performance in challenging radio and TV news scenarios.

Sample Programme

Agenda

- 10.00 – 11.15** **Session one; Welcome and introductions.**
- What makes a story and how journalists see news items. Featuring an interactive newsroom exercise demonstrating how stories are selected and prioritised.
 - The simple golden thread of a news story, whether in broadcasting, newspapers and web sites, magazines or social media.
 - What a reporter wants from you and how to provide it.
 - How to write a press release that demands attention.
- 11.15 – 11.30** Coffee break
- 11.30 – 13.00** **Session two**
- How journalists operate in a fast moving, multi-media world, and how to use that to your advantage.
 - The different demands of media encounters, live and recorded interviews, and press conferences.
 - The secrets of interview structure, anticipating the likely questions and honing your responses.
 - Being ready with a clear and resonant message, including well-prepared soundbites and quotes.
- 13.00 – 13.30** Lunch

13.30 – 15.00

Session three

- The journalist as devil's advocate and how to be confident in dealing with tough questions.
- Keeping it short and simple, avoiding the trap of silence, and how to reset an interview if you start to wander off message.
- Body language, tone of message and voice, what to wear and how to present yourself.
- The advantages of building a relationship with journalists in promoting your message.

15.00 – 15.15

Tea break

15.15 – 16.30

Session four

- Social media, how to adapt a soundbite for the online world, and the use of pictures and video to give your posts the maximum impact.
- How to handle hostile questioning in realistic scenarios, including recording and analysis of interviewees' performance.

16.30 – 1700

Roundup, discussion and questions