

Replacing fear with confidence

HOW MEDIA TRAINING PUTS YOU IN CONTROL



Bladonmore
COMMUNICATING KNOWLEDGE ●●●

The good, the bad and the **BIG** opportunity

Richard Branson and Lakshmi Mittal are global business icons: even their arch-critics applaud their ability to boost business interests through their handling of the media. Two names that do not feature in the pages of the international media are David Shepherd and Gerald Ratner.

Shepherd, a marketer at UK retailer Topman, labelled his customers “hooligans” in a magazine interview. Ratner did even more damage: in front of a big media audience, he admitted selling “total crap” in his high-street jewellery chain. They

each made the fatal error of underestimating the dangers of dealing with journalists.

CONFIDENCE

Such high-profile gaffes are infrequent, but the potential for an interview to make or break your business and reputation is huge. The fear of getting it wrong can be enough to scare off many people from taking on that responsibility.

But the media represents a great opportunity for your business. Interviews are an incredibly powerful platform for executives to communicate their knowledge



and leave a lasting impression. It's marketing you can't buy. With the right training, talking to the media can become a crucial tactic in your business strategy.

COMMUNICATION

Understanding a journalist's objectives is key. Many people distrust and dislike reporters, but it would be wrong to view them as the enemy. Few journalists, particularly in the business and financial press, are trying to catch anyone out. Their goal is simply to tell the best story.

Journalists are often direct and pushy. Rather than seeing this as bad manners, remember that they are driven by tight deadlines. So if you can help them quickly and effectively, they will probably recall you favourably.

By knowing how to deliver the right stories to the right journalist at the right time, you can develop a relationship that works for you and for them. Building a good relationship can reap benefits that go way beyond just seeing your name in print – including opening the door to new clients, investors, employees and contacts.

CLARITY

Be clear about your own objectives. Your goal is to ensure your firm's key messages appear in the final story. In return for insight, honesty and interesting quotes, there is a good chance that journalists will let you promote your strategy, product or service.

Your messages need to be clear and succinct, and your aim should be to convey them in an engaging and entertaining way.

CONTROL

The real skill is in controlling a conversation led by someone else so that your key messages are communicated and reported.

The more interviews you give, the better you will become at them. If you lack knowledge and experience, training is a vital first step.



Ten tips for a compelling interview

BEFORE:

1. Prepare fully for an interview by ensuring the interview fits into your communication strategy.
2. Find out why the interview is taking place and what the journalist wants.
3. Prioritise your target audience.
4. Create a key message, with supporting examples.
5. Anticipate the negatives and rehearse potential responses.

DURING:

1. Show passion and enthusiasm.
2. Bridge to give the answer you want.
3. Flag to control attention.
4. Resist predictions or speculation.
5. Learn how to keep control of the interview.



Six ideas for the next six months

1. UNDERSTAND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE

Whether your audiences are international, national or regional, brainstorm the likely agendas of the broadcasters, editors and journalists. Get to know the thought processes and workings of a newsroom before engaging in media interviews.

2. DEVELOP A COACHING PROGRAMME FOR YOUR COUNTRY AND PRODUCT MANAGERS – YOUR AMBASSADORS

Only those who have been trained should talk to the media – and learn to work with it rather than against it. With an expert coaching programme, carefully tailored to your business, you can be confident that your messages are being communicated well. This can include one-to-one coaching, feedback and video sessions.

3. INJECT SOME FIZZ INTO YOUR NEXT OFF-SITE

Next time the sales team or senior execs come together for their quarterly or half-yearly off-site, build some communications training into the agenda. How will the EMEA head handle a knock on the door at 6am and a camera thrust into his face? Or will the CFO emerge as a talented addition to the team of spokespeople?

4. SIMULATE A CRISIS AND PREPARE

A good healthcheck for any business is to simulate a major crisis and see how the management team responds. Whether it is a letter bomb going off or a sexual harassment case coming out 24 hours before the results announcement, the act of simulation will enable your management team to train effectively. So when it happens for real ...

5. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE

The best media encounters have been carefully rehearsed. The time spent running through each media encounter, ideally with an expert journalist coach, is a smart investment. Whether it is over the phone, in person or in a TV studio, only through careful rehearsal can you stress test your messages and be ready for the unexpected.

6. LEARN FROM YOUR OWN BODY LANGUAGE AND START TO READ OTHERS MORE EFFECTIVELY

The act of watching yourself on camera being interviewed presents many learning points. Perhaps the most enlightening is to see how your body reacts to difficult questions. You will be fascinated by what you learn and it can become a valuable tool for your future conversations at work and even at home ...

Refining your strategic communication objectives

Creating the right training programme is the critical first step to mastering media interviews and events. Here's how you can make that first move

Planning for your media communications training programme starts with a thorough understanding of your broader strategic communications plan and how this supports your business objectives. The right media communications partner will help you gain this understanding. Using this knowledge, they will then develop a programme that equips your spokespeople with the necessary skills and confidence to communicate effectively with the media.

Bladonmore's approach involves working closely with your executive management and corporate communications teams, often alongside external PR and financial PR, to develop and execute tailored programmes.

FOCUSING ON THE SPECIFICS

Alternatively, you may want to plan for a specific media event, such as a major interview, a potential crisis or a profile-building programme. Again, get expert advice to help you prepare for any one of these situations.



The best media coaches understand the requirements of companies in the financial and investment markets: what they need to say and how they need to say it (see the case study on the next page on ArcelorMittal's integration programme to drive high-performance culture after the \$38bn merger of Arcelor and Mittal Steel).

REASSURANCE FROM THE EXPERTS

Bladonmore has been coaching senior managers for many years. Our advisers are all seasoned business journalists

and broadcasters who have up-to-date qualifications and current broadcast, print and online media experience.

CONFIDENCE TO CAPITALISE ON ANY MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Tried and tested advisory and coaching techniques will arm you with the right skills and give you enduring results. One such example, given overleaf, is the programme developed with Georges Pauget, CEO of Crédit Agricole, which demonstrates how companies can achieve sustained progress in communicating strategy to stakeholders.

WHATEVER THE SITUATION, WE WILL HELP YOU DEVELOP THE SKILLS TO:

- Feel confident about facing the press
- Get the most from each media opportunity
- Create messages that are appealing to journalists
- Communicate critical messages effectively
- Control interviews without being deflected by tough questions

Whether you need a fully tailored improvement programme for large groups or a few hours of expert advice for individuals in preparation for an interview, Bladonmore can help you communicate powerfully.

Crédit Agricole

Sustained progress delivered through regular refresher sessions

Crédit Agricole's approach demonstrates how skills and techniques developed in handling the media can be hugely effective for leaders seeking to boost their overall communications expertise



Georges Pauget was appointed chief executive of Crédit Agricole in September 2005. Since then, he has led a strategy of consolidating the bank's strength in its domestic market while simultaneously expanding its footprint internationally. This has required effective

communication skills to connect with all stakeholders – both internally and outside the business – and Mr Pauget has worked closely with Bladonmore to refine key messages and articulate them to local and international audiences.

BLADONMORE SOLUTION:

Working together with the executive management and corporate communications team, Bladonmore has developed a Leadership Communications programme for Mr Pauget. Recently this led to Bladonmore helping him prepare for his debut at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The success of Leadership Communications has resulted in several other board members undertaking the programme.

RESULTS:

The programme has raised the confidence levels and the effectiveness of Mr Pauget in communicating with the media and stakeholders. Bladonmore has subsequently been invited to work with other members of the board and with leaders from within the subsidiary business units to improve their leadership communications skills.

ArcelorMittal

A global communications programme to achieve high performance

Media advice should be part of your strategic communications programme. ArcelorMittal developed a new approach for country managers

Following the merger of Arcelor and Mittal Steel in 2006, which created the largest steel company in the world, ArcelorMittal faced a major post-merger integration process, and marketing communications was placed at the forefront of that challenge.

Having previously trained Mr Lakshmi Mittal and a number of other senior leaders at Mittal Steel, Bladonmore was then asked to provide strategic advice and training to help manage ArcelorMittal's global communications from the company's various locations.

BLADONMORE SOLUTION:

Working closely with ArcelorMittal's executive management and corporate communications team, Bladonmore developed the Country Manager Communication programme to deliver the global message in many local contexts. Bladonmore also produced a bespoke company guide to dealing with the media and a series of films featuring key messages from Mr Mittal and others as well as ideas and advice from leading international journalists.

RESULTS:

The programme has helped ArcelorMittal create a high-performing culture where confidence in country managers has grown, reputational risk now has a significant control mechanism, and local spokespeople are able to best represent the interests of the business as well as its stakeholders.



The company we keep



APPLE

Contingency planning with the European management team



BNP PARIBAS

Preparing the senior team and country managers for media events



ARCELORMITTAL

Preparing board members and the executive team to face the media ahead of a major acquisition



CABLE & WIRELESS

Coaching senior executives for regional and international media



ATOS ORIGIN

Media training for the Olympic delivery team



CENTRICA

Media coaching for the CEO and CFO before results



CRÉDIT AGRICOLE

Developing a leadership communications programme for the chief executive



MICROSOFT

Preparing more than 20 country managers to deal with international business media



DOUGHTY HANSON
Working with senior financiers to prepare them for private equity media interviews



GALA CORAL GROUP
Supporting the senior leadership team respond to a changing market



GRANT THORNTON
Preparing spokespeople throughout the company to talk to the press



NORTHERN TRUST
Quarterly coaching sessions for senior executives



HENDERSON GLOBAL INVESTORS
Coaching fund managers ahead of new fund launches



PHILIPS
Media training for the C-level team and other corporate spokespeople



MENCAP
Building media handling skills of the senior management team



VIRGIN MEDIA
Preparing the board to face the financial media ahead of key acquisition

About us

Bladonmore provides strategic communications advice and implementation services to organisations, their leaders and executives. Driven by our desire to address our clients' challenges and opportunities, Bladonmore brings a unique combination of expertise and services in print, online, screen and spoken communications.

Bladonmore
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