

- Who are the media and why it's worth talking to them
- Essential ingredients for a media interview
 - The ABC of communicating
- Key message bingo
 - Let's practise

Communications Workshop



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Who are the media and why should we talk to them?

- Not (necessarily) 'the enemy'
- They have an agenda – to stay in business
- They are persuadable
- Think of them as less informed, less passionate but ultimately persuadable ordinary members of the public.
- It's easy to think of the media as 'the enemy'
- Although there may be agendas, the thing to remember is that their over-riding agenda is to appeal to their core audience and hence sell more copies/ advertising/ meet their audience targets.
- To do this, they tend to channel their core audience's zeitgeist.
- Their job is to present news in the way that will most appeal to their audience
- That may well end up looking like an 'anti' agenda but actually – they probably have no real personal opinion
- So we should treat them a bit like we would treat anyone a bit less informed than us, who cares a bit less than us, but who can be persuaded with the right arguments.

Essential ingredients for a media interview



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Key message

Be clear on what you want to say. Repeat it – with variation if you can

Supporting facts

One or two good facts or technical details help make you sound authoritative. Not too many though!

Personal insight

‘I don’t know about you, but cycling to work really sets me up for the day and gives me energy’

Stories

‘We promised our neighbour’s eight-year-old son a safe route to school’

Rapid rebuttal

‘There’s no actual evidence that helmet wearing reduces injuries and it can in fact be a barrier to people taking up cycling. What’s really needed are safe, protected cyclepaths.’

Answer – bridge – communicate

Do not dismiss questions; deal with them; bridge back to what you wanted to say. Stay focussed on your key message.

Our key messages

We can rescue Exeter from gridlock by switching short journeys to cycling

Let's choose living streets where children can play and cycle safely

Our NHS is struggling to cope, cycling helps us stay healthy.

We need to make it safe for our children to walk and cycle to school

People will cycle if they feel safe - that needs protected cycle paths alongside our busy roads.

Cycling is good for business

Safe, convenient and connected cycle paths

A dense network of cycle paths across the city

Cycling for all ages and abilities

We can build a better city with cycling at its heart

Good protected cycle paths help children cycle to school, mobility scooter users and all of us swap to cycling - freeing up space on the road for essential car journeys



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Key messages – supporting facts 1

- We can rescue Exeter from gridlock by switching short journeys to cycling
- We need to make it safe for our children to walk and cycle to school
- Our NHS is struggling to cope; cycling helps us stay healthy
- 41% of car journeys are less than 2 miles.
- Over 80% (that's four out of five!) people regularly speed (in 20mph zones)
- In Exeter there are 42 premature deaths a year from pollution (most of it transport-generated). In Devon it's over 700 people a year.
- One in six deaths are directly attributable to inactivity



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Key messages – supporting facts 2

- People will cycle if they feel safe - that needs protected cycle paths alongside our busy roads.
- Let's choose living streets where children can play and cycle safely
- Research shows that segregated bike lanes encourage more people to ride bikes. Last year [Transport for London reported](#) a 50% increase in the number of cyclists using some roads where a protected cycle superhighway had been built.



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Key messages – supporting facts 3

- We can build a better city with cycling at its heart
- Cycling for all ages and abilities
- Safe, convenient and connected cycle paths
- Improving facilities for cycling makes a better environment for everyone.
- The survey showed people want more investment in safe, dedicated space for cycling in a network that gets them from door to door on everyday trips such as for work, education or shopping



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Our roads are too
narrow



It's too hilly here



Shopkeepers rely on
people driving



Shops won't get
deliveries

- A few good facts to rebut commonly held beliefs are well worth having
- It's worth spending a few moments looking at cyclingfallacies.com/en

Rapid rebuttal



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The ABC of communicating

Once you know this, you will spot politicians doing it all the time. It's about how we use media interview to our own advantage, and don't let them dominate the discussion.

- **A**nswer: acknowledge the question, that the issue exists. Do not dismiss it.
- **B**ridge: you briefly deal with the question/issue
- **C**ommunicate: you get back to your key message.

Good bridges



- **Briefly answer the question, but quickly move to a message you'd like to give:**
 - *Yes, but...*
 - OR
 - *You know, I'm not sure about that. However, what I can tell you is...*
- **2. Pose a new question and answer it yourself:**
 - *The real question here is "what are we doing about the problem?"*
 - OR
 - *The heart of the matter really is "what we are doing about the problem?"*
- **3. Redirect the conversation to what you want to talk about:**
 - *Let's talk about something I am more familiar with...*

Good bridges



- That's very good question
 - Address the audience
 - Make it personal
- If you're small business you'll be glad to know that cyclists actually shop more than car drivers or "If you're concerned about the state of our NHS then cycling to work is a really positive step..."
 - When I talk to other cyclists - and I'm meeting them almost every day - they tell me that..." or "Let me tell you why I joined this campaign..."

Remember this



- Probably the most important aspect of the bridging technique and the thing that you must take care of before you try any of these phrases is answering or addressing the question in the first place. If you can't answer it, then tell us clearly and simply *why* you can't. Otherwise you must answer or at least acknowledge the question.

Let's practise

