

MandBmedia



Media Skills Training

Turning an ordeal into an opportunity

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The Trainers

Neil Mudie and Colin Adams began a partnership as media skills trainers almost ten years ago when they came together, almost by accident, to deliver courses at the Scottish Police College. From diverse professional backgrounds they developed what is now recognised as the most effective programme at the College. They have built on those beginnings to offer their experience and knowledge to a growing number of companies and organisations in the private and public sector.

Neil Mudie has had a long career in journalism, beginning in print, before moving into broadcasting. Until nine years ago, when he left to set up his own production and training company, based in Dundee, Neil was a staff journalist with BBC Scotland television. He continues to work for the BBC on a freelance basis in both television and radio, and has produced and directed programmes for a number of other, commercial television companies. He is also a prolific producer of corporate videos. In his media training work Neil concentrates on television, but is equally at home in radio.

Colin Adams set up his own media and public relations company in 2000, after a lifetime in print and broadcast journalism. He was, for 13 years, Head of News and Current Affairs at Radio Clyde, perhaps the most successful commercial radio station in the UK, and during his radio career won numerous national and international awards for programme making.

Colin has also been a lecturer in broadcast journalism at the University of Glasgow, the University of Strathclyde's journalism school, Glasgow Caledonian University, Bell College of Technology, Glasgow Metropolitan College and James Watt College. He is a radio specialist.

As part of a consortium of highly experienced media trainers, all based in Scotland, we have ready access to "reserves", so no matter the circumstances, clients will never be let down by late cancellations.

The Training



Media training should be about practical exercise and expert advice and feedback. Unlike other trainers, we will not try to sell our clients anything, except our knowledge and experience. Unlike other trainers, we will never subject clients to embarrassment or humiliation. "Knock 'em down and build 'em up" does not work. Our courses are:

- Professional - all of our trainers are highly experience journalists and broadcasters and our objective is to provide clients with a safe environment in which to practise and hone their communication skills.
- Intensive – our sessions are strictly hands-on and practical, with a minimum of "lecturing" to clients. Participants will undergo a minimum of six realistic interviews over the day and each will be followed by analysis and feedback, either privately or in a group setting.
- Realistic – all of our interviews are based firmly on material relevant to the clients, provided by them or

through carefully researched scenarios. Every effort is made to recreate the genuine atmosphere of a variety of broadcast media interviews. We use broadcast standard equipment and technicians. We cover: set piece and positive studio interviews; "crisis" interviews (Where possible from a remote studio); and "door-step" interviews, usually in a public situation. When requested, we can simulate news conferences.

- **Demystifying** – we always take time to explain what the broadcast media is seeking from an interview and the tactics they might use to achieve their objectives.
- **Encouraging** – we seek to convince participants that, with proper preparation, no interview should be an ordeal, but should be viewed as an opportunity.
- **Confidence building** – sessions are structured to allow participants to deal with familiar issues and constant feedback provides the opportunity to build on strengths and eliminate weaknesses. By the end of a day of training we fully expect all participants to show marked improvement in their "on-air" performance.
- **Revealing** – our training session regularly uncover "star" performers who have a natural ability to cope with even the toughest interviews, and also pinpoint issues where an organisation needs to work on internal communications, so that responses are consistent.

The Detail



It is important to us that all participants take away of whole series of lessons from our training sessions, beyond the basic experience of being interviewed. We explore the reasons why the media might be interested

in an interview, encourage our clients to grasp the opportunity and explain how to make the best of it. A number of key messages are at the heart of our training:

- Think about it – what to do and what to address when asked for an interview/ how to gain "thinking time"/how to lay the ground rules.
- Preparation is vital – the interviewer will have done homework, so must you. Think "out of the box" and try to anticipate the kind of questions you might be asked. Have an answer for the question you least want to be asked.
- Have a core message or messages – being clear on the points you want to get across, whatever you are asked. Be determined to accentuate the positive.
- Watch your language – how to connect with specific audiences, how to avoid jargon and how to keep telltale body language in check.
- It is done for a reason – the tactics used by interviewers, why they use them and what to do about them.
- There is no such thing as "off the record" – why journalists cannot unlearn something you have said.
- Give as good as you get – how to prepare for negative or hostile questioning and how to counter it.
- Achieve balance – when things go wrong, is it not better to have a story which is 50% positive, than one which is 95% negative?
- You are seldom alone – how to access professional support and guidance from your organisation's communications department or advisors.



Aims for the Individual

- To increase confidence
- To develop an understanding of the media
 - To improve performance
 - To build on strengths
- To identify and correct weaknesses
- To turn a potential ordeal into an opportunity

Aims for the Organisation

- Improve the skill level of individuals
- Ensure competent, confident representation
 - Raise the profile

- Promote products, services or policies
- Deal with effectively with criticism
- Connect with a wider audience

The Options

Half-day courses - Full day courses - Series of courses - Radio/print only - Television, radio and print -
Individuals/groups up to ten.

Sample Course (Full day)

- 0900: Welcome and introductions
- 0905: Presentation: What motivates the Media
- 0915: Practical sessions in two groups:
 - A. What to expect of the radio interview
 - B. What to expect of the TV interview
- 0930: Positive interviews (Based on material which is supplied by delegates or their Communications Team). Private interviews and feedback.
- 1015: BREAK
- 1030: Hostile interviews (Based on a realistic but negative scenario). Private interviews and feedback.
- 1115: Door-stepping: An opportunity to revisit the original positive interview, but on this occasion conducted "in public".
- 1145: Group feedback, questions and analysis
- 1230: LUNCH
- 1330: Practical session in two groups:
 - B. What to expect of the radio interview
 - A. What to expect of the TV interview
- 1345: Positive interviews (Based on material
supplied by delegates/Communications Team). Private interviews and feedback.

- 1430: Hostile interviews (Based on a realistic but negative scenario). Private interviews and feedback.
- 1515: BREAK
- 1530: Door-stepping: An opportunity to revisit the original positive interview, but on this occasion conducted "in public".
- 1615: Group feedback, questions and analysis
- 1630: Summing up: The two groups come together with both trainers to review the learning points from the day.
- 1700: CLOSE

Some Clients

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service

Thorntons W.S.

Talisman Oil

FreeClaim IDC

Fire Brigades Union

Association of Headteachers

The Scottish Police College

Educational Institute of Scotland

Midlothian Council

South Lanarkshire Council

Biomar Ltd

Help the Aged

Dundee City Council

Lexmark Ltd

Quarriers

VisitScotland.com

The Eaga Partnership

Univar Ltd

Glasgow Solicitors' Property Centre

Client endorsements

"A very good one day introduction to being interviewed by the media... I can use the skills learned in other communication situations at work"

Chris Power - British Museum

"The format and content was excellent, a real confidence builder"

Sandra Sinfield - IKEA Asia Pacific

"An excellent course, well structured and delivered... fantastic facilities"

Serena Yeo - SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies

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