

Guide to conducting media interviews

Part 1. Background

1. What is the media?

The term covers the main means of mass communication: print, broadcasting (radio and television) and the internet.



Print

- **National newspapers** (broadsheet and tabloid – also published online)
- **Regional and local newspapers** (including free papers and magazines)
- **Monthly and weekly consumer magazines** aimed at specific audiences (e.g. men, women, health, sports etc.)
- **Trade publications** (e.g. magazines and newsletters for doctors, nurses, pharmacists etc.)



Internet

- **Online news** (newspapers, radio, TV) and **Online magazines**
- **Blogs**
- **YouTube**
- **Stories spread by social media** (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)



Broadcast

- **Radio** (national, regional, local)
- **Television** (international e.g. BBC World Service, CNN etc. national, regional, local)



Newswires

There are also **Newswires**, e.g. Reuters, providing rolling news feeds for journalists.

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Which is the right media for your story?

The media trades in stories: words, pictures and sound. Each publication, programme or online platform will have a **target audience**.

- **Monitor the various media** to get to know their character, interests and the type of material they publish / broadcast
 - Who are their readers, listeners, watchers, followers?
 - What type of stories do they publish / broadcast?
 - Which journalists write on which topics?
 - Do they need images?
- **Create a media list**, including the names of specific journalists / broadcast programmes / social media platforms with an interest in health and social matters that match the concerns of your organisation



Timing

News will be current and have short deadlines. Feature articles / programmes will have much longer lead times. Know:

- What are the lead times and deadlines for information to be received before the publication / broadcast is '*put to bed*', i.e. finalised before publication or broadcast. For example, weekly publications can be put to bed from one week to a month and monthlies from three to six months ahead of publication or broadcast
- What are your journalists key timings e.g.:
 - When do they decide what they are going to write about / broadcast?
 - When do they submit their stories?



What to remember about journalists and broadcasters

- They are very busy: deadlines are real and they get nervous, too
- They want a good story and are looking for facts
- They are under pressure
- They hate no call backs, no comment and stalling
- They are not out to get you, but they may ask unexpected questions



What do journalists want?

- A unique angle – relevant to their audience
- Something new
- Something exclusive
- Something seasonal/unusual
 - Tie-in to something topical
 - Some sort of visual image/usable graphic
 - Good timing
 - To get their by-line published
- Comments from experts