

NEON

**SPOKESPERSON
HANDBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

Broadcast media is a critical tool for spreading progressive messages that support social and environmental justice to a wide audience. But appearing on television and radio can be an unfamiliar process or a daunting prospect - especially for people whose ideas aren't considered mainstream or whose communities are traditionally underrepresented in the media. This handbook has been written to give you some tips and help you with the skills and information you need to do powerful and persuasive broadcast media interviews. We want to help you take your message to new audiences, and claim some space in the media landscape.

For the last four years, NEON has been training and running a network of progressive spokespeople. In that time, we've had over 2,000 appearances on TV and radio, on every type of show from local radio to BBC Question Time. Through these bookings we've built contacts in the broadcast media world, and honed our broadcast skills too.

We started this work because we kept seeing a handful of free market think-tanks saturate the media landscape with confident and articulate spokespeople. They made themselves readily available to the media to speak on a wide variety of issues, using consistent, compelling lines to push reactionary dogma.

In contrast, progressives often weren't invited onto the media. When they were, it was often felt that they didn't have the skills needed to win the argument. We spoke to many journalists and producers who said that they were not always aware of how to find progressive voices. The handful of progressive voices that found their way onto broadcast media tended to be White, middle class men.

The Spokesperson Network was created as a form of communications infrastructure for progressives. We are working to create more space for our viewpoints and arguments in news programmes, while at the same time challenging the domination of White, male, middle class voices on the airwaves.

This handbook is based on our experiences of training and pitching spokespeople over the course of the project's life span. We encourage people

to take what's useful and adapt it according to what works for them, rather than treat this as an authoritative take. We've learnt a lot in the past few years, not least from the many spokespeople who we've worked with, but we still have a lot to learn.

This handbook has been developed alongside the NEON spokesperson training programme as a guide for those who come on the training. It is also intended for spokespeople who are working independently, or within other organisations not on the network.

WHAT IS THE SPOKESPERSON NETWORK?

The NEON Spokesperson Network is a programme run to substantially boost the number of progressive, diverse voices in the mainstream media. It has been designed to overcome the lack of coverage of key issues in the media. It provides training, coaching and PR booking support for people working on a range of issues, from migration rights to climate change, inequality to public health. When we are referring to spokespeople in this context, we are talking about people who are taking up opportunities in the broadcast media (primarily TV and radio news) in order to promote a particular campaign, cause or perspective.

WHAT IS A SPOKESPERSON?

Spokespeople can come in different forms: you could be a campaigner, organiser, freelance journalist, writer, academic, policy expert; the list goes on. The common thread is that a spokesperson has expertise or lived experience in their field or sector and is being pitched to the media to speak about their work and respond to news.

Currently most people you see on the media are White, middle class and cisgender men. This skewed representation creates a power imbalance in the media where some people feel entitled to be 'the' voices on certain issues. This also applies to the newsroom where the demographic is often middle class, White and public school educated, and this replicates the culture codes of those groups. This could feel alienating and sometimes hostile to working class spokespeople, people of colour, disabled people and LGBTQ+ folks. People from marginalised backgrounds can therefore find it hard to be comfortable doing media work, often feeling like they aren't the best person

for the job.

WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE!

You have the knowledge and the experience to speak on the issues you are working on. All you need is the confidence and the know-how to navigate the industry. That's where this guide comes in handy.

WHY DO BROADCAST MEDIA?

According to Ofcom in 2019, 75% of adults in the UK use TV as their main source of news. It is also perceived to be the most truthful source along with radio.* There are several shows on radio and TV that bring back the same loyal viewers daily or weekly - people who trust the presenter and rely heavily on these channels for their news.

Broadcast media is one of the most watched and listened to media platforms, especially by people who could be on the fence or persuadable. So progressives cannot shy away from broadcast media.

Using broadcast media to reach new audiences is an effective plank of any campaign strategy that looks to find new recruits, influence government policy or change people's minds.

As messaging guru Anat Shenker-Osario says, communicators should use their platforms to *activate the base, persuade the middle and show the opposition for the outliers they are*. So, although it might feel like your ideas are always the minority in an interview, the media is a vehicle for you to speak to the public - who may well be more sympathetic, persuadable, or 'on side' than those established voices in the newsroom assume them to be.

*https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/157913/uk-news-consumption-2019-overview.pdf

PITCHING FOR AN INTERVIEW

If you are reading this and you are part of the NEON Spokesperson Network, then a lot of this section might not be relevant to you, as the press officers at NEON largely take care of this on your behalf. We still wanted to include this section so as to make the handbook as a whole more useful to people outside of that network.

FINDING A STORY TO SPEAK ON

The vast majority of bookings for spokespeople take the form of people with a particular identity or authority responding to the major rolling news stories of the day. **Example: Someone from a climate change campaign organisation responding to a major news story about an extreme weather event.** You don't have to passively wait for bookers and producers to come to you - you can put yourself out there to try and actively pursue the interview slots.

It's worth getting into the habit of looking at the main headlines of the day with a view to seeing if you might have something to respond to them with as a spokesperson. Not all the news stories of the day cut through to broadcast media though - only a handful of them do. If a story is tucked away on page 43 of the Guardian, then it's unlikely that it will be being discussed in TV or radio news, no matter how important you think it is.

A good rule of thumb is to look at the front page of the Sky News website, the BBC News website, search the hashtag #TomorrowsPapersToday on Twitter and the front pages of the newspapers to get a good sense of the major news stories of the day. Have a think if your 'speciality' or authority is relevant to that subject and if you have something you could say about it. It doesn't have to be a 100% fit and you don't need to be an authoritative, dedicated expert on that particular subject to be able to speak to it. Think creatively about how you can bring your knowledge to bear to the subject. Also bear in mind that celebrity stories make up big chunks of the news media - and don't be sniffy about them, they are often a route to talking about the issues you care about.

It's also quite common to pitch a spokesperson with expertise on someone else's research, report or activity if they have relevant expertise or authority on it. If it is an 'opposition' party/think tank/campaign that is releasing the report - you are creating an opportunity to try and undermine it. If it is a 'friendly party' that is doing something - you are providing a supportive third party voice to support and endorse what they are doing.

FORWARD PLANNING

One of the most effective ways to be booked on broadcast media is to have a good sense of what news stories are coming up. Some of these are obvious - yearly government budgets, quarterly NHS statistics, monthly migration numbers etc. Others will be pre-planned days or weeks such as 'Fat Cat Friday' in January, when CEOs of big firms have earned the same amount in a few weeks as average workers will in a year. And there are other key events such as EU Council Meetings, major votes in parliament and set-piece speeches by politicians, which you can guess will be talked about in broadcast media. You can pitch in advance for events and news stories that you know are coming up. We recommend keeping a diary or spreadsheet (sometimes called a grid) to help with forward planning.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BROADCAST MEDIA?

Before you pitch, it is good to have an idea of the show you are pitching to and the format of the interview. Below is a short guide to different types of interviews.

RADIO	TELEVISION
<p>The most common form of broadcast interview is on the radio. This could be anything from the Today Programme on BBC Radio 4 to your local community radio show.</p>	<p>Television interviews are high impact and make for excellent material for social media. There are two 'news channels' which run interviews all day - the BBC News Channel and Sky News. There are also additional news and current affairs shows across the BBC, Sky, Al Jazeera, Channel 4, Channel 5, STV (in Scotland) and ITV. Every region in the UK has at least two regional news shows.</p>

LIVE

Live broadcast - whether on TV or radio - requires you to pre-plan your remarks then think on your feet. You are in control of what goes out, because there is no editing process.

Tip: Remember that the microphone is always listening. Don't say anything with it on that you wouldn't want to say live on TV.

**PRE-RECORD
(OFTEN CALLED PRE-REC)**

Pre-recorded interviews tend to be used when broadcasters want to use your views as part of a package of different voices. They can use any part of what you said, and edit it.

Tip: Think very carefully about a 15 second 'soundbite' from what you've said that you would like the broadcaster to use. Make it interesting using images and metaphors.

DEBATE

Debates are particularly common on live television and radio. They pit your views against someone else's with a presenter acting as an intermediary.

Tip: Don't shout over the other interviewer, and don't let their arguments derail you from delivering your key messages.

STUDIO

Most higher profile broadcasters will want you to go into the studio for an interview. This tends to look best for the viewer and give you the best chance of interjecting in debates. For radio interviews, you may prefer to be on the phone or down the line so you can read notes without a presenter noticing.

Tip: If you're in the studio, make use of hair and makeup, if you feel comfortable or if it's appropriate to do so. They will help you look your best for broadcast. However, there have been lots of stories from various studios of make up artists sometimes not having a range of darker shades that would suit a wider variety of skin tones. If you are concerned about this possibly being an issue, you might want to

consider doing your own before you go in - or bringing your own foundation, for instance. Men sometimes feel less comfortable with makeup - but it's really worth considering a bit of a going over with the powder brush to eliminate the shiny skin that often comes with studio lights. This is standard practise for all genders.

DOWN THE LINE (DTL)

Down the line interviews are when broadcasters send you to a studio which isn't where the presenter/ host is. They are commonly used if you can't get to the main studio and/or are outside of London.

For television DTL interviews you usually *look directly into the camera*. For both TV and radio you will hear questions through headphones or an earpiece.

Tip: If you are confused by a question or need time to think, you can always say 'sorry I didn't quite hear that, can you repeat it?' to buy yourself some valuable seconds (but use this sparingly).

PHONE

Many radio shows, particularly local and commercial stations, are willing to do interviews on the phone. This is more convenient but technical difficulties do happen and it's harder to cut in on presenters.

Tips: It's much better to do this on a landline. If you have strong Wifi, Facetime audio or Skype give better sound quality. Sometimes radio stations will ask you to pre-record short audio clips and send them over using Whatsapp or another service.

When you're on the phone it can be harder to make your point. Be ready to say 'can I just come in there'.

SKYPE

Increasing numbers of TV stations are willing to do interviews via Skype. This can allow you to get on air quickly, and from the comfort of your own home.

Tip: Check what's behind you! People watching won't just look at your face, they'll see the bad art on your walls or your embarrassing book collection.

PAPER REVIEW

Many TV and radio channels have regular paper reviews. These slots allow you to comment on the day's news and have a more lighthearted discussion about the state of the world.

Tip: Don't just think about the stories you want to discuss, think about the difficult ones that the other guests might bring up.

PHONE-IN

Phone-ins are when listeners can call into radio shows. They are common on LBC and other stations, and you might be invited on to listen to and respond to calls.

Tip: Don't be afraid to disagree with people who call in, but do it respectfully. Don't talk over callers.

HOW LONG IS AN INTERVIEW?

Broadcast media interviews can vary greatly in length, according to a number of factors. In general we would say that you should expect to be on air for a minimum of four minutes and a maximum of around ten minutes for a standard interview or debate. Occasionally talkRADIO keep people on air for longer, and some formats of shows (described above) could see you going on air for up to an hour.

MAKING YOUR PITCH

So you've chosen your story, now you need to make a pitch to signal your availability to bookers and producers that you are willing and able to speak about the story. An emailed pitch is like a really short press release with a particular format that is used to secure broadcast bookings. **A phone pitch** is just ringing up news rooms to say that you are available to be booked.

As previously stated, if you are not on the NEON Spokesperson Network, there may be a press officer in your organisation, or some sort of publicist that can pitch on your behalf. But if there isn't, it's not the end of the world if you just pitch yourself.

Pitching a spokesperson means:

- * Developing a relationship with a producer/editor
- * Calling or emailing at the right time
- * Keeping in touch via email or text
- * Being patient

EXAMPLE OF A PHONE PITCH

'Hi I'm X from Y organisation — are you covering Z story today? ('Yes...') I'm calling because we've got an expert in this area who's a fantastic talker, and who's got an unusual angle on the story'

- * Tell them why they're a good fit, what their views are
- * Follow up with a clear email

EXAMPLE OF AN EMAIL PITCH

New Message
✎ ✕

To
Cc Bcc

Subject **No-deal Brexit would push UK debt to 50-year high - economist available for bookings**

Hi [Name of producer],

[Name of spokesperson], the head of economics at [name of organisation] is available today in response to new findings that show that a No-deal Brexit would push UK debt to a 50-year high.

Their top lines are:

- The Government is gearing up for an election with spending increases and hints of tax cuts. But in doing so they are breaking their own fiscal rules, and potentially damaging the Conservatives' reputation for economic competence.
- With uncertainty around Brexit so high it would be irresponsible to implement long term tax cuts now, and after a ten year squeeze we need sustainable tax revenues more than ever.
- A recession is looking ever more likely and the government will need to be prepared - that should include spending and investing where the economy desperately needs it, not slashing taxes for the rich.

[Name of spokesperson] is free after 1pm and can get to London studios.

Get in touch to arrange a booking.

Send
🗑️ ⋮

Things to remember:

- * Clearly indicate in the subject heading what the story is.
- * Explain straight away who the person is and the news story to which they are responding.
- * Put in a link to the identity of the spokesperson and to the news story.
- * Say where they are based and if they can get to the studio.
- * Keep it short and punchy. The bookers and producers have to wade through hundreds of these pitches.
- * Make sure your contact details are prominent, and that you're ready to take the call or email when it comes.

WHAT IS A TOP LINE?

The top lines are an important part of the pitch. They are giving the bookers and producers an idea of what the potential guest is like and what their angle is.

EXAMPLE OF TOP LINES

In response to a heat wave, these got a really good response when we sent them out as a pitch.

“ The media needs to stop using images of *people in fountains and on deck chairs to report heat waves* - we should be using images of pensioners on stretchers and dead frogs in dry ponds.

“ Outside temperatures have started to reach levels that are lethal to humans in many parts of the world.

“ Record-breaking high temperatures are a sign that climate breakdown is accelerating. *They're not something to celebrate, they're a wake up call* to start treating climate breakdown like the emergency that scientists have been telling us it is.

WHAT MAKES TOP LINES EFFECTIVE?

- * They don't sound like a policy paper or NGO-speak. Bookers and producers want you on as a lively and engaged individual - not as an embodied NGO voice. We try to never put out lines that say things like "we welcome the proposal to x, y and z".
- * It's the kind of thing you can imagine a spokesperson saying in an interview and clipping it and then that clip going viral.
- * The first line is very vivid and paints a picture which grabs the viewer on an emotional level.
- * They are really clear and accessible.
- * They are fairly short and to the point.

NB: All shows are different. If you are pitching to a particular show, then maybe you want to tailor your top lines according to the specific flavour of that show. For example, some shows might be more into popular culture and light-hearted in tone; some might be more political and in-depth.

Top lines and key messages are similar, and sometimes get confused but they can be very different - we will cover what a key message is later. Top lines are what you use to advertise what the spokesperson will say to bookers and producers, and key messages (which we will go into in the next chapter) are what spokespeople use to prepare for the interview and what they actually plan to say. Sometimes they are the same, but not always.

WHEN TO PITCH

Obviously the news cycle is ongoing throughout the day, but generally, go with the principle that the early bird catches the worm. If you have identified your news story at the start of the day, then get your pitch out as soon as possible. Producers will see the email, and go into morning editorial meetings in which they will be deciding which stories to run on that day, and will have you in mind as the guest to have on.

Sometimes you might be pitching for a particular show, in which case be sensitive to the production schedule of that show. Here is a very rough guide to how they might work.

- * **Breakfast and mid-morning shows:** send your pitch during the afternoon and evening the day before.
- * **Afternoon and drivetime shows:** send your pitch early in the morning.
- * **Evening shows:** send your pitch between the late morning and early afternoon.

Sometimes a big story might break during the course of a day, in which case you might want to just get a pitch out as soon as possible in anticipation of bookers and producers shifting their agenda about at the last minute in order to accommodate the breaking story.

TOP TIP

Try to avoid ringing bookers or producers while the show is on air. Chances are they will be very busy and a bit stressed and will get annoyed at you calling them then.

WHO SHOULD YOU PITCH TO?

You might have a good list of lots of broadcast journalists, bookers and producers from across different stations and channels, and you can put your pitch out to all these people using mail merge software e.g. YAMM, making it look like a personal email to each of them.

If you don't have an existing list like this, then you need to build one from scratch. This is a bit of a long and daunting prospect, but is absolutely essential if you want to be in it for the long haul. Start a spreadsheet with the contact's name, number (if you have it), email, the show they work on, and when is a good time to pitch to them (if you know) and any comments about pre-existing bookings, relationships etc.

SOME TIPS ON BUILDING UP A LIST:

- * Always keep a record of anyone who has come to you with a request.
- * Identify some of the shows that you would most like to go on or think you could get on, and focus on developing some contacts specifically on those.
- * You can find a certain number of contacts on Twitter by searching for particular terms, and journalists or producers for certain outlets will often follow one another.
- * Remember that if you have the name of the journalist, and you know where they work, you can formulate their email address very easily. Eg Hugh Janus at the BBC is usually hugh.janus@bbc.co.uk
- * If you have access to media databases such as Roxhill or Gorkana, then you can build up some contacts by searching for their details or creating lists on those databases.
- * Ask friendly people in other organisations or networks if they can share some of their contacts.
- * Most shows or newsrooms have a generic email address and it's always worth having these on your list and often worth copying them into emails in case your contact is out of the office.

If you don't have a list and/or you don't want to make a pitch to a wide variety of different channels and shows, you might just target bookers or producers at particular shows. This is also fine, but maybe a bit more time consuming. If it's a really big show that you are particularly keen on, then it might be worthwhile subtly demonstrating that this is a targeted approach. For example, "I know that the Today Programme has covered x before so you might be particularly interested in having y on to talk about z."

TOP TIP: BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER THE PHONE

One of the best ways to gain a reputation as a good spokesperson is to make yourself as available as possible, as much as possible. This means making sure that you or your press officer answer incoming phone calls and emails ASAP. It's not uncommon for calls for morning shows (the Today programme, Good Morning Britain, Nick Ferrari) to come in fairly late at night - it's worth answering that 'private number' if you're comfortable doing so.

PITCHING A STORY RATHER THAN REACTING TO THE NEWS

All of the above has largely been focused on reacting to rolling news stories.

If you want to pitch a broadcast news story - an activity you are doing or a report you are releasing for instance - there are some similarities with pitching to print media. You might want to pitch it to one show exclusively, or you might want to flag it with several different shows. It's possible to negotiate a print exclusive alongside a broadcast exclusive, but you need to make sure that all the parties concerned are happy with the arrangement.

You might want to tailor an email pitch so that it succinctly summarises the story that you are pitching *and* the relevant person you have who could be interviewed on it. It's quite common for a journalist to run the story, but not necessarily take you up on the person that you are putting up for interview.

For more details on pitching news stories and reports check out NEON's Press Officer Handbook.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Now that you've put out your pitch, the next stage is being booked for an interview. Booking requests can come in via text, WhatsApp, email or phone, and they might come straight to you or via someone else in your organisation or campaign who does press.

Whichever way the booking request comes in, it's crucial that you get all of the details you need to feel like you know exactly what kind of interview you'll be doing.

As the time of the broadcast approaches, these are some of the details below that you might want to check with the producer, particularly if the slot was set up a day or two in advance. It's common for guests or the format of the slot to change at the last minute. Before inquiring, make sure you've done your research on the show so that you don't end up asking about obvious things, like whether it will be a panel interview on BBC Politics Live (it always is).

- Is it live or pre-recorded?
- Is it in the studio or down the line?
- Who is the presenter?
- Are there other guests? If so, who?
- Will it be a 1-2-1 interview, a panel, or a debate?
- What topics are set to be discussed?
- What is the broad line of questioning expected?
- (If other guests) what position are other guests expected to take?
- (If radio) will there be questions from callers?
- Where does the spokesperson need to be, and at what time?
- How long will the on-air slot be?
- When will the spokesperson be out the door (i.e. how long will the whole process take)?
- (For studio) Can you arrange transport?
- (For TV in studio) Is there makeup?
- Who is the best contact on the day?
- Is it a paid slot? Can they arrange travel there and back?

THE 'BACK OF THE ENVELOPE' TECHNIQUE

Now that the booking is confirmed, it's time to think about what you are going to say during the interview. You might have days to prepare for your interview, or you might have twenty minutes. Luckily we have developed a method of preparation that will work no matter how long you have.

One of the common misconceptions about doing broadcast media is that you need to memorise masses of information in order to feel equipped and prepared to do the job. This is not only really off-putting to lots of people, it can be really stressful and time consuming. **And nine times out of ten it's just not necessary.** This preparation technique is designed to streamline the amount of preparation you need to do, and format it in a way that's easy to digest and will make you feel confident going in to the interview. Remember - even before you prepare, you will likely be much more familiar with your subject area than the presenter.

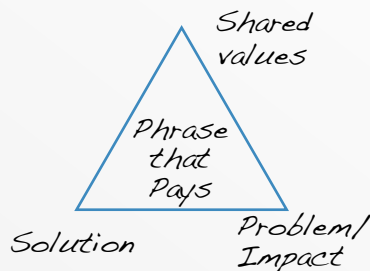
The idea is simple. We believe that you can prepare for the vast majority of interviews using just a pen and a piece of paper the size of an A5 envelope. In this chapter we will run you through each component of the 'back of the envelope' preparation technique. Our recommendation is that you prepare an envelope for every interview you do.

THE 'BACK OF THE ENVELOPE' TECHNIQUE



Name of host and other guests

Personal Mantra and Name of Marge



Stats and numbers

a story

ABCs

THE ENVELOPE BROKEN DOWN

SMILEY FACE

It might sound a bit weird but smiling is one of the most important things you can do, even for a radio interview. We're not saying you should sit there with a huge grin on your face when you're discussing sensitive or sad issues, but we do recommend that you smile when introduced onto the show. It not only looks welcoming, but it helps you relax and makes you sound calm too. People are more likely to be receptive to what you are saying if you are at least initially presenting as friendly.

NAME OF HOST AND OTHER GUESTS

In the heat of an on-air interview it's easy to forget the names of the host and other guests. Make a note of them at the top of your envelope. We recommend that you greet and thank the host for having you on the show using their name. It's also a subtle way of asserting power and control in the interview situation.

E.g. Good morning/ afternoon Emma, thanks for having me on the show.

NAME OF YOUR 'MARGE'

Every campaign is different and appeals to different audiences. But one thing that they all have in common is that they are trying to connect with people who aren't currently part of their movement. In interviews it's crucial that you keep these people in mind. Remember when you are on TV or radio you are not speaking to the media, you are speaking *through* the media, to your audience at home.

One of the most common mistakes we see when people are doing interviews is to talk about their issues as if they were speaking to their colleagues or fellow campaigners. It's tempting to use jargon, acronyms and make assumptions about the level of knowledge or understanding of the issue. This is a sure fire way of making people switch off from what you are saying. And it happens all the time!

To help you keep your focus on communicating clearly to your audience we suggest 'thinking of your Marge'. The concept is quite simple: we all have someone in our lives who we can refer to



as our 'Marge Simpson'. This is someone who is caring and compassionate but who is too busy to be involved in campaigning, or does not have lots of spare hours to read into the issues in detail. Imagining you're talking to your 'Marge' means that you don't speak in the activist or expert language that spokespeople often slip into. Your 'Marge' could be a parent, it could be a school friend or someone you met in the pub. The key thing is that your 'Marge' is not in your work/campaigning bubble - but is someone who would care about the things you work and campaign on if you explained it to them in the right way.

We recommend that you write down the name of your 'Marge' on your envelope to remind you that your language and messages should be free from activist language and jargon, and to avoid using too many statistics and numbers. You should approach your interview thinking about the people out there who are yet to be convinced of the importance of the work you're doing.

TOP TIP

Here's a simple exercise that enables you to get into the zone of making your 'Marge' a bit more operational. Find a friend and ask them to take the role of your 'Marge'. Tell them who your 'Marge' is. Then spend three minutes talking to them about your issue and why it is important as if they were your 'Marge', avoiding jargon and complicated assumptions. Afterwards, reflect together on how your use of language was different. What was difficult to explain, and how could you say it in a way that is more understandable?

MANTRA

So this might come across as a little bit cheesy, but we strongly encourage you to think of a short motivational mantra and write it down as part of your preparation - and repeat it to yourself! Here are some examples of mantras that other people have used.

"I deserve to be here."

"I am enough."

"My words matter."

So much of the business of these media appearances is about confidence, and so much of this confidence can be based in structural entitlement. Not everyone has a background where they have been socialised to feel confident in putting themselves forward with something interesting and relevant to contribute to public discussions.

Of course these mantras don't address any issues of structural oppression or marginalisation in the newsroom - but they can help us navigate these spaces, and represent our causes the best we can. They are a small reminder of why you should feel entitled to enter and engage with these media spaces even if you haven't been socialised to do so.

KEY MESSAGES

Naming your 'Marge' is the first step to developing great key messages. Once you've done that, you need to work out what you're actually going to say in the interview. Your *key messages* are what should make up the core of what you are going to say. We recommend writing your key messages on the three points of a triangle on the back of your envelope.

Key messages are really important as you have a really small window of opportunity to get across the important things you want to say to your audience when you are doing your interview, so you need to prepare the 'killer' and avoid the 'filler'.

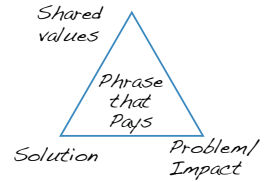
Messaging guru Anat Shenker-Osorio says that a good message should **engage your base, persuade the middle (your 'Marge') and present the hardline opposition for the outliers they are**. After you've written down your messages think about whether they pass this test.

Your key messages shouldn't just be three random things you think are important, they should consist of these crucial components. And messaging matters. The content and wording of your message which will either persuade new people to your cause or not.

Key messages can also be important as a means of accountability for an organisation that you are representing e.g. these are the messages that you have agreed with your organisation are the most important ones and you are committed to making sure that they get aired to the best of your ability.

1. Shared values

If you're trying to convince new people of your position it's always good to start your sentence with a statement which builds a bridge with your audience. This is sometimes called 'creating the big us' and often takes the form of statements like, 'most people would agree that...' or 'we all care deeply about...' or 'everyone has a right to...'



Example: In an interview on increasing use of stop and search to stop knife crime 'We all agree that every life lost to knife crime is a tragedy for families, communities and our whole society.'

2. Problem/Impact

It's crucial that you lay out in clear terms what the problem is that you're on air to talk about, and the impact that this problem has on people.

Example: 'Knife crime numbers have gone up, but that is a direct result of spending cuts from the government which have seen youth centres closed, and support for young people disappear. Communities are being ripped apart because of these needless cuts - and there's no evidence that stop and search will help solve the knife crime problem.'

3. Solution

This is important. All of the evidence suggests that messages which don't include solutions actually make the audience fatalistic about the prospects of change. That means that you could be making a 'win' for your cause less likely if you don't get across any solutions. We also suggest that you 'emphasise design' whenever possible - that means explaining that the *current* situation was created by someone for a reason, and it *can* be re-designed to be better.

Example: 'It doesn't have to be like this. When the government invests in communities, and supports young people rather than criminalises them, everyone is better off. As a start, the government should stop the cuts to youth centres, rather than using the blunt tool of stop and search which will only increase tensions.'

TOP TIP




One way of evaluating how well your interview went is by how many of your key messages you managed to get in. None at all? Definitely have a think about what you would do differently next time. One or two? Great. All three? Amazing!

PHRASE THAT PAYS

A phrase that pays is the one thing that you want to be remembered from your interview. Often it will be a metaphor or imagery that will stick in people's minds. You want to say this phrase at least once, but quite likely a few times during the interview. This phrase can also be really short - literally just a phrase rather than a whole sentence and might involve rhyme or alliteration as a means of making it more 'sticky', which means it's more likely to stick in people's minds.

In the above example, regarding knife crime, the phrase that pays might be: 'Stop and search is a blunt tool which divides communities'. The term 'blunt tool' sticks in the mind, and the division of communities is key to the argument being made.

If the phrase that pays is going to be useful and relevant to a whole series of media interviews on a particular issue over a long period of time, it is worth sitting down and trying to get creative about what a good phrase that pays might be to hammer your message home.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY	EXAMPLE OF A PHRASE THAT PAYS
This Budget is bad for the environment	 <p><i>The Budget has put a wrecking ball through the Government's environmental record.</i></p>
The Immigration Bill will marginalise migrants	 <p><i>The Immigration Bill risks kicking migrants onto the street and slamming the door in the face of people who have built a life here.</i></p>
The firm isn't paying a living wage	 <p><i>The poverty pay set by the fatcat bosses risks forcing ordinary people to foodbanks to put food on their families' tables.</i></p>

WHY THE TRIANGLE?

It's not just because we are trying to bring geometric diversity to the envelope. We're trying to get people to think about their key messages in a more 'diffuse' way rather than a 'linear' way. People shouldn't think of their key messages as a shopping list that needs to be read out. You will get asked questions that correspond to different key messages in a random order, and so you should be prepared to dance in a nimble-footed way around the triangle while dipping into the phrase that pays as appropriate.

STATISTICS AND NUMBERS

You're never going to win an argument on statistics alone, and for many people hearing big numbers being thrown around simply alienates them from the debate. We recommend using stories wherever possible, but having some statistics to hand is useful. You must always make sure your numbers are 100% correct, as an incorrect statistic can derail an interview and end up undermining your point.

When using statistics, there are some simple ways to make them more persuasive and easy to understand:

- * Fractions seem bigger than percentages. So if 20% of people are in poverty, it's better to say one in five. And if you want to make a proportion of something seem smaller, it's better to use percentages.
- * Big numbers are hard to understand. Instead of 200,000 people, you could say, 'the equivalent of a city the size of Portsmouth'.
- * Areas are hard to understand too. Rather than using square kilometers it's better to say 'that's an area the size of Wales'.
- * Round up or down. 'Almost a million' rather than '986,000'.
- * If you can't clearly express a statistic in a sentence, avoid it.

STORIES

Stories are a brilliant way to connect with new audiences. This could be a personal story about you, or a story of someone you work with. Or it could be a more generalised story that paints a vivid picture. There can often be an element of vulnerability in using your own personal story - especially if it is in

relation to a sensitive issue. It's always worth thinking about whether or not you are completely comfortable about your personal story being in the public domain and the possible consequences of that. It's not worth using it if you are not comfortable with that. And it's perfectly okay to politely divert the question if the host pushes you to share personal stories. The ABC technique (see below) comes in handy here.

An example from the stop and search case study:

'Think about what it's like to be a young person in one of our cities. First you are stopped and searched every other day by the police, then you turn up to the Youth Centre to find its doors boarded shut, then you try and access mental health support and the waiting list is six months long. That's not an exception - that kind of story is the norm.'

ABC

ABC is a spokesperson's best friend (apart from maybe their actual best friend).

Most of the time you when you are doing interviews you will get asked anything from unhelpful questions to tangential ones or, at worst, outright hostile questions. It is easy to get derailed by these lines of questioning, forget your key messages, or get bogged down in parts of the debate that aren't as relevant. ABC is the fundamental way you can steer the interview back to the topics and messaging that you want to talk about. It's not always easy - but using this method helps a lot.

Below we explain what we mean by ABC, and give you some examples. Remember that the audience wants to hear authenticity, so the more naturally you can get onto your key messages the better.

Acknowledge

The first thing you need to do is acknowledge the question you're being asked. You can't pretend it hasn't been asked, or go straight into answering a different question. One of the most important things to remember here is that it is ok to say if you don't have a specific statistic in front of you, and much better than attempting to make one up.

Bridge

Once you have acknowledged your question you need to ‘build a bridge’ to delivering your message. This is a verbal technique which takes you away from potentially difficult ground onto speaking directly to your audience about the issues you want to talk about.

Communicate your message

This is the bit that really matters. At this point you can deliver your key messages after successfully moving away from a question you might not want to answer.

Below are just some examples of Acknowledgements and Bridges - but the best ones will be phrases you use naturally.

ACKNOWLEDGE	BRIDGE	COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE
That’s clearly an important question	But what you asked me on here to speak about is But to put this in perspective But what matters most to your listeners is surely	Key Message
I’m glad you brought that up	Because it gives me a chance to be very clear with you	Key Message
I can’t comment on that specifically but...	What I can tell you is that the broader context is	Key Message
That’s clearly a crucial question	But to put it in context, let me just say that	Key Message

ACKNOWLEDGE	BRIDGE	COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE
I can't speak for every x/y/z but	▶ What I can say from my own experience/the evidence in front of me is..	▶ Key Message
That's a fair question, and I don't have that exact statistics in front of me, but	▶ What I can tell you is..	▶ Key Message
I'm not sure that's a fair portrayal of the issue here	▶ What's really happening is	▶ Key Message
I can understand your concern there..	▶ ..but what the research clearly shows is...	▶ Key Message

USING THE ABC IS NOT CHEATING!

If you start watching or listening to interviews with an awareness of what ABC is, you will see that it gets used all the time. Most of the time interviewers will not challenge you when you use ABC as it's in their interests too (with some hostile exceptions) that the interview goes smoothly and that you steer the conversation on to subjects that you are confident and comfortable to speak on.

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS THAT ARE LIKELY TO COME UP

You should also spend a few minutes trying to anticipate difficult questions that may come up. This might involve looking through the Twitter feed of the presenter or other guests, or it might mean thinking about areas of your research or campaign that are most commonly misunderstood or questioned.

BEFORE YOU GO ON AIR

Your back of the envelope is ready, you've confirmed all of the details of the interview - you're almost ready to go. Before you go on air, though, there are a few things you can do to help you feel even more prepared, and empowered to tackle any question that gets thrown your way.

The first thing is to do a practice interview with a friend or colleague. This can be in person or over the phone. You should ask them to ask you a mix of easier and harder questions. Tell them to put themselves in the mindset of a grumpy presenter and then ask them for feedback afterwards. It's amazing how even a really short practice with a friend before going on air can act like a very effective vocal warm up...loosening your tongue and allowing some of your messages feel much more comfortable coming out of your mouth.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- * Practice 'power poses' at home so that when you get into the studio you can use them to get yourself mentally into the zone.
- * Listening to music, doing breathing techniques or even some light exercise right before an interview can have a huge impact on managing the flow of your adrenaline whilst motivating you to feel ready for action.
- * Be assertive in controlling the space around you before going on air, by avoiding distractions such as other panelists/interviewees asking you questions. Getting into your zone is the priority.
- * If you're getting hair and make-up done in the studio, be assertive about your boundaries. It matters how you feel about your appearance, not others.
- * To deal with stress before an interview, a good technique is 7-11 breathing - there are great instructions for this online.

Physically preparing for media interviews through body work can be a great opportunity to take control of our nerves, build our confidence and maximise our message. During our interviews if our body feels relaxed, we will look relaxed; allowing your messages to flow through and engage the audience.

Body work also enables us to build resilience techniques that help us mitigate against exhaustion or trapped adrenaline. From adrenaline rushes before and during our media work, to the emotional comedowns after an interview; practicing body work helps us to build the capacity to do this work long term and sustainably.

Acknowledging our bodies' experiences in this work, and honouring this through action, requires practice. But it can be the key to unlocking our best performance, and enabling us to be sustainable and successful in our work. So, after each section this blue box will give you some physical preparation techniques.

BIG UP YOURSELF ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The final thing you might want to do before going on air is bigging up yourself up on social media or letting a trusted friend or support network know that you're doing an interview. You can do this by updating Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with details of your interview, or maybe with a selfie outside a studio or in a green room. You might also want to tag the presenter or the channel so that they might share it too. Some people choose not to do this as it makes them more nervous - and that's totally ok too!

DOING AN INTERVIEW

So now you've prepped your key messages, had a practice interview and you're about to do your interview. This chapter will explain what you can expect in an interview, run through most of the common types of interview and give you some tips on dealing with the most hostile presenters and guests.

Of course a 'good' interview isn't an objective fact, but we think that the key to a successful piece of broadcast is when you have communicated your key messages to the audience who you want to hear them. It's not about 'winning' a debate or impressing friends who already support you.

There are some things that the vast majority of interviews have in common:

- * The opening question is likely to be more open than the following questions.
- * The presenter is unlikely to know a huge amount of detail about the topic you are speaking on, but they will have been given some information on it by a producer.
- * The presenter will not usually ask the questions that you want to answer.

There are no hard and fast rules that will govern how you respond to all interviews, but here are some important things to consider:

- * This is not a normal conversation. Don't waste the precious amount of air time you have giving full answers to questions that are not relevant. Make sure you bridge to what you want to talk about and your key messages.
- * Chances are you will talk too fast - especially when you are not so familiar with giving interviews. Consciously slow yourself down. Breathe! It's fine to take a breath before you answer a question.
- * Really think about how you can use the first question to get across the most important thing you have to say.
- * Remember your smiley face! Try to smile for at least the first bit when you are being introduced.

- * Remember your “Marge”! The majority of the people who will be listening to you are not people who are super clued up about your issue - and you need to pitch it as such.
- * Remember your mantra.
- * Remember - you belong here!

Most common mistakes

- * Running late and arriving at the studio flustered.
- * Getting distracted by hostile or irrelevant questioning and failing to stick to key messages.
- * Repeating your opponent’s negative framing or messages in a debate. Don’t waste your valuable time repeating (and implicitly reinforcing) the bad things that your opponent has to say - it’s always better to focus on delivering your key messages instead. Even if you are responding directly to their negative frame, make sure you move it swiftly on to the things that you want to talk about.
- * Reverting to activist/expert language that your audience won’t understand.
- * Rising to the bait - see point five in the ‘tips for hostile interviews’.
- * Speaking too quickly.

REVERSE PUNCH LINE

Journalist and commentator Rachel Shabi says that a good interview should be like the opposite of a comedy show: you use your best lines first. This isn’t just because getting in all of your key messages early guarantees you against an interview being cut short by breaking news, but also because presenters tend to give you more time to answer the first question than those which follow. Make your first answer around 45 seconds to one minute if possible.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- * Your body language should allow the audience to trust you: relax your shoulders, keep your hands rested together and when appropriate a soft smile can make you seem open.
- * Ideally sit near the edge of your seat, with your legs hip width apart, one foot slightly forward and one foot slightly back: this can help you stay alert and poised.
- * Hand gestures can help to animate an important point, but avoid rally-style gestures
- * Mini-breathing techniques during an interview can help ground you, especially if its an adversarial interview.
- * Stay in control: pause before answering the question and finish your point before the interviewer interjects with the next question.

TOP TIP: IN THE STUDIO AND GREEN ROOM

If you go into the studio, it's likely you'll be met by the producers, and might be waiting backstage with fellow guests. It might sound obvious, but try to be friendly and make a good impression - but don't feel any pressure to have in-depth chats.

Before your scheduled interview time you may be asked to wait in a 'Green Room'. This could be in a separate part of the building, next to the studio or perhaps just a corridor with some chairs in it. It's likely that other guests will be in there. Some people like to use this as a chance to chat casually with other guests, while others prefer to put on headphones and prepare by reading their notes.

Remember that casual chats with other guests might also be them trying to work out what your lines are, and that you can do the same with them. You may not want to disclose your killer lines. If you prefer your own company feel free to just say 'I just need a few minutes to go over my notes'.

Green rooms can be intimidating places - where the others guests and presenters seem to all know each other. Just remember that you absolutely deserve to be there - and that you should take your time to do whatever feels the best way to prepare.

INTERVIEW CATEGORIES

Most interviews can be put into one of two very broad categories: neutral or hostile. It should be noted that these divisions aren't easily categorised by channel or show, but more likely by the actual presenter conducting the interviews.

NEUTRAL

The majority of broadcast interviews are 'neutral'. This does not mean that the presenters will be in any way supportive or even friendly. It means that they will ask probing questions, including questioning the stats you use and your arguments, but they will do so in a way which allows you to answer and make your point. They will treat guests equally and not show obvious bias in the interview. Examples of shows like this are Shelagh Fogarty on LBC, Iain Dale on LBC, John Nicholson on talkRADIO, Emma Barnett on 5Live, Matthew Wright on talkRADIO, as well as some presenters on Sky News and the BBC.

HOSTILE

Many broadcast interviews are hostile. These interviews tend to see the presenter intentionally trying to pick apart your argument to embarrass or undermine you. They also tend to see presenters put forward their own views in the show and research statistics before the show which they may use to undermine your case. Examples of shows like this are Nick Ferrari on LBC, Julia Hartley-Brewer on talkRADIO, Stephen Nolan on 5Live, and Piers Morgan on Good Morning Britain.

SUPPORTIVE

A small number of interviews are what we would call 'supportive'. This is when the presenter appears to be 'on your side' and asks helpful questions which intend to allow you to make the points you wish to make. This type of interview is most likely to be on alternative media shows, some local and community radio and TV shows. Sometimes this will vary from topic to topic. For instance Eamonn Holmes on talkRADIO is interested in climate change, Alexis Conran is very much anti-Brexit. Their job is to challenge you to some extent - but everyone has their opinions. So it's worth doing some research on the presenters beforehand (although it's best practice to never expect an easy ride).

A NOTE ON HOSTILE MEDIA

Though we strongly believe that it is good for spokespeople to go on shows with hostile presenters if they can, it's also crucial that no one does something that causes them harm. If you think that a presenter is likely to deny your lived experience or identity, or personally attack you - then you should feel empowered to say no to interview requests. We want to do broadcast media to reach new audiences, but your own safety and mental health are too important to put at any risk.

TOP TIPS FOR HOSTILE INTERVIEWS

- 1 Think in advance about the most likely lines of attack from the presenters. What angles might they take to try and undermine you? If you're nervous then take a calm and supportive person along with you to the interview.
- 2 Acknowledge to yourself beforehand that the interview will be hostile and try and create a mental force field around yourself so that as much of the hostility as possible will bounce off and leave you unscarred. NB this is easier said than done, especially for people who have had lived experience of the emotional damage caused by living in a racist, sexist, classist, ableist, homophobic society.
- 3 Check and double check your statistics and have a source for them at hand. Expect everything you say to be scrutinised - so don't overstate your claims or say things you can't substantiate.
- 4 Use the presenter's name, smile if they are being obtuse and be polite but firm if they won't let you speak. A well timed 'Nick, you have asked me on here to give my views so if you would just let me finish my sentence' can be very effective.
- 5 Many presenters will try to bait you. They will say things to rile you up and make you splutter with outrage. Don't rise to that bait. Try to stay in good humour (again, this may be easier for some people than others, as in point two) and be amused by the ridiculousness of what the interviewer is saying when you contradict them.

- 6 If you are asked a niche statistical question don't be afraid to say 'I don't have that number on me right now, but I'll happily look it up and send it over'. Use lines like 'I'm a campaigner, not an encyclopedia'. Don't pick numbers out of the air - do say 'I think what's clear from everything we are seeing at the moment is...'
- 7 Don't go on social media too much afterwards. Hostile presenters tend to have an army of admirers who will critique you whatever you say. Ask trusted friends for constructive feedback. Some of the spokespeople we work with have said that they plan something nice and relaxing to do after an interview.
- 8 If you get some social media blowback, you might want to ask friends or colleagues to post supportive things about you. Note that directly engaging with negative comments can sometimes fan the flames. If you're a member of the NEON Spokesperson Network, you can ask fellow spokespeople to big you up!

TALK RADIO PAPER REVIEW: A QUICK GUIDE

We often get bookings for the Talk Radio paper review slot on late Sunday afternoons with John Nicolson.

The host: John Nicolson is generally a very fair and friendly host. He's a gay man who used to be an SNP MP and has progressive politics. He's not particularly favourable to the current leadership of the Labour Party. Perhaps surprisingly, he's good friends with Michael Gove. John likes to speak from his own perspective. He lists restoring derelict houses, skip diving, books, travel and films amongst his hobbies in the latest edition of Who's Who?.

The show: The paper review slot is on air from 4.30pm to 5pm in two segments, but first-timers will usually do just a 15 minute slot. You need to arrive by around 3.45pm with your stories.

The studio: The studio is in London Bridge - in the same building as The Sun and The Times. 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF. It's right next to the Shard.

Before the show: We recommend that you buy the newspapers yourself in the morning and look through each of them for stories that you'd like to talk about. For each story you pick, we recommend writing a few notes of what you want to say. If you don't want to buy the papers beforehand, you can look online, but the disadvantage to this is that you can't be sure if the story itself appears in the newspaper. You can also check if your local library stocks the main papers, or if your employer will let you claim back the cost of buying them if the interview is work-related. When you get to the studio you will still need to find the story in the actual papers themselves.

Types of stories: This is key - do not only pick serious stories relating to the work you do. John wants to have broad, friendly discussions on a wide variety of topics. We recommend that you pick three or four 'serious' and three or four topics that are more conversational. So if you have about eight stories in mind, they might get whittled down slightly. You can do more of the serious ones, but make sure you mix it up. Examples of less serious stories might be around lifestyle, the royals (!), quirky research, popular culture, pets etc. You should use a variety of different newspapers.

How to 'be' on the show: This isn't a political slot, nor a policy show. The best way to 'be' on the show is to 'be yourself'. We recommend talking from your own perspective, telling any relevant stories from your life, making jokes as you see fit and so on. The aim for the show is a slow Sunday afternoon news review which is fun to listen to.

Remember:

- 1 Pick a selection of stories, including some fun ones
- 2 Be light-hearted and jokey where you can
- 3 Relax - it's a great show to be on.
- 4 Be on time
- 5 If you have any worries about the show NEON can help.

THE MATTHEW WRIGHT SHOW ON TALKRADIO: A QUICK GUIDE

The host: Matthew Wright is a neutral radio presenter, who could maybe be seen as being progressive. Matthew is known for rooting for the underdog in interviews.

Types of stories: Matthew has a list of topics that he gravitates towards and will often invite people to discuss on the show. These include homelessness and the housing crisis, tax avoidance and CEO pay, social mobility and inequality, drug policies and euthanasia, police, crime and prisons, and the environment.

Topics that don't often get covered on this show include Brexit for the sake of Brexit, international stories unless at crisis level, and London-centric stories.

The show: Matthew Wright's show is at 1pm every weekday, it is not a call-in show and runs for three hours but your slot will probably be 10 to 15 minutes.

The studio: It is always best to go into the studio because you have a better chance of making a good impression and being asked on again. The studio is in London Bridge - in the same building as The Sun and The Times. 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF. It's right next to the Shard.

How to be on the show: This will not be a hostile interview, but Matthew will ask probing and difficult questions. He will give space for a proper debate about your topic. So do not go on the offensive and open it up to having a conversation with someone who will question you on certain things. You have a good opportunity on this show to get your key messages across.

Typical guests on the show:

- * Politicians and political commentators
- * Academics behind reports or specialise in niche subjects
- * Think tanks
- * Celebrities, entertainment guests and authors

So when's best to contact the producer?

- * Early in the morning before editorial meetings are happening
- * 10am-ish if it's responding to a news item
- * Do not call while the show is on air

THE NICK FERRARI SHOW ON LBC: A QUICK GUIDE

The host: Nick Ferrari is one of Britain's fiercest broadcasters, but it's possible to do well on his show. We recognise that going on this show won't work for some people - and we'd never suggest going on the show to anyone when their identity or lived experience is in any way 'up for debate'. But with over a million people listening to the show, and many of them potential supporters of our cause, we have written this guide to help those who feel able to make the most of the opportunity of appearing on the show.

The host: Nick Ferrari is a very tough interviewer, and at times can really go on the offensive. His own views aren't always easy to know but he is deeply sceptical of 'identity politics', very pro-small business, and has a deep disdain for politicians and activists. Ferrari voted for leave and is fairly disdainful of remainers, however he has also called out some of the worst aspects of the leave campaign.

Ferrari is a stickler for facts and accuracy - and will pick you up on any statements you make which he thinks are false or inaccurate. He tends to enjoy inviting protesters and activists onto his show then attempting to undermine them. He has famously forensically undone numerical claims by Natalie Bennett and Diane Abbott. Sometimes Ferrari takes unexpected positions, such as when he was favourable to calls for Roger Scruton to be sacked from a government position over Islamophobia. Ultimately he likes to present himself as a prophet of 'common sense'.

Types of stories: The LBC Breakfast Show covers most of the major stories of the day - but does tend to latch onto stories that they can portray as 'political correctness gone mad'. They like covering political scandals too - and will go in equally hard against the Tories as they will Labour.

The show: The Nick Ferrari show is very popular, with well over a million listeners per week, and that number is growing. It is on from 7am-10am every weekday. The show is a mixture of feature interviews, debates and call-ins. You could be booked for any of these, and we'd expect you to be on for between three to eight minutes. Get your key messages in early!

The studio: The studio for Nick Ferrari is in Leicester Square, central London - but it is unusual to go there for the show. Most interviews are done on the phone.

How to be on the show: There are three key things to remember when being interviewed by Nick Ferrari:

- 1 Keep calm and be ready to laugh/smile
- 2 Never say anything you can't back up with facts
- 3 Be assertive

Before going on the show you should think carefully about what the most likely attack lines from Ferrari will be, and practise answers to them. It's easier said than done, but being light-hearted as Ferrari works himself up is very effective. Being assertive is also crucial - so be ready to say 'Nick if you let me finish' or 'you invited me here to hear my opinion, so if you'll let me finish'. [See p.46 NEON guide on dealing with hostile interviews] Nick also has a tendency to pick up on clumsy or obvious 'bridging' - if he thinks you are being evasive on an answer he could well keep coming for you to answer the question. Try and present a 'common sense' argument saying things like 'surely one thing we can all agree on is..'

Typical guests on the show: The Nick Ferrari show tend to invite guests from across the political and campaign spectrum. We are always careful about accepting invitations if it feels like a guest is being invited on to be attacked, or being used to criticise other parts of the movement.

So when's best to contact the producer?

Most, but not all, of the bookings are done in the afternoon and evening before the show airs. Sometimes calls will come in very early in the morning or during the show.

AFTER AN INTERVIEW

We sometimes don't acknowledge enough that being a spokesperson can put you under an awful lot of stress. It's inherently putting you in a position of vulnerability - things might not go according to plan in a very public way. When you combine this with the fact that women, non-binary folks, trans people and people of colour can sometimes face a hostile and abusive backlash online after their appearances, we need to develop more of a culture of aftercare for spokespeople. This will ensure that people look after themselves and can access support, so that they can continue to do broadcast media in a sustainable way. Here are a few pointers:

> TRY AND HAVE A LITTLE TIME AND SPACE AFTER YOUR BOOKING

It's normal to have a big adrenaline surge when you have made a media appearance, especially if you haven't done many before. If you can, it's not a bad thing to schedule in a little quiet time (even just 15 minutes) to ride out the adrenaline and ground yourself a little bit. Do a little bit of 'physical' shaking it out if necessary.

> ASK FOR SOME SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK IF YOU NEED IT

Was the interview challenging or unpleasant in some way? Has it left you feeling a bit shaken or triggered? Let other people know about it. Find some supportive affirmatory friends or colleagues who you can chat with about the experience.

> ASK FOR SOME FEEDBACK FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES OR FRIENDS.

This is very different to asking for support! If you are feeling fairly robust and grounded, then you could ask people to listen and give you some feedback. It might be better to think about asking a 'Marge' type person (see Chapter 2) for feedback rather than someone in your organisation or group. For instance a 'policy person' in your organisation might not be familiar with 'what makes a good interview' and might focus solely on which statistics you did or didn't reference.

> LISTEN AND EVALUATE FOR YOURSELF

Again, if you are feeling fairly robust and confident, you might find this useful. There's no such thing as a perfect interview. Listen back and ask yourself, what went well, what could I have done differently and what will I do differently next time.

> SEND A TEXT OR AN EMAIL TO THE PRODUCER.

You could let them know that you enjoyed being on the show and that you would be up for future bookings. Make it sound chatty and natural.

> SEND THE CLIP ROUND TO FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, WHOEVER

So you have made a clip (see box) - then don't be shy about sharing it. A little bit of self-promotion isn't a bad thing if it's primarily about promoting the issues. Maybe you know some people with more of a social media presence who have a shared interest in the issue and who would also want to share it if they knew about it. Maybe you can set up some sort of collective of like-minded folks who can do some sort of 'solidarity signal boosting.'

CLIPPINGS

- * A recommended software is Movavi Business Editor 15 - a package will cost around £150. There are free programs out there as well: Showmore.com & Openshot video editor.
- * Watch a tutorial on Youtube to learn how to use the software
- * Always subtitle clips to make it accessible
- * For subtitles, upload the video onto Youtube and use the functions there
- * Then record screencast again and export to your desired format and post on social media.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU THINK THINGS HAVE GONE BADLY

You stumbled over your words, or you got a fact wrong, or the other guest got the upper hand, or all of these things. You feel like you have humiliated yourself publicly, or you have done the movement a disservice. If you think the interview has gone badly, that can feel horrible. Mistakes in interviews are par for the course, even for experienced spokespeople. And often they're much less serious and impactful from a broadcaster perspective than they feel from a personal perspective. But it's important to acknowledge how you feel, and reflect on your experiences for next time. What do you do?

> TRY TO GET A LITTLE BIT OF PERSPECTIVE

The first thing to do is to remind yourself that it might not even have actually been that bad. And if it was that bad, it might not actually matter that much. We're all in it for the long game, and one interview that doesn't go according to plan has to be put in the context of a whole other series of bookings where you shine and make all sorts of important points. A 'one off' just isn't that important in the greater scheme of things. The news stream moves so fast these days and chances are people won't fixate on this. And today's headlines are tomorrow's chip papers.

> ASK FOR SOME SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK

This is similar to asking for support after any interview [see p.42]. To reiterate, make sure it is someone who is properly empathetic and supportive. Chances are they can help you get that bit of perspective you need.

> TRY AND THINK OF IT AS A GIG LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Mistakes can be the best teachers. Try to be motivated by the fact that the mistakes you have made in these circumstances can be massively influential in how you do things better next time.

> HAVE A SELF-CARE ROUTINE READY

Take some time for yourself, and do something that makes you feel better and takes your mind off the interview.

> SOCIAL MEDIA

Spokespeople can face hostile internet reactions on social media, so it is important to have a strategy for this. Some people turn off their mentions on Twitter or get a trusted person to go through their Twitter or Facebook feed to delete negative comments after an interview.

It is very valuable to have a network of support, which is something that the NEON network offers to spokespeople. NEON are very open to tailoring support to your needs. Often members of the Spokesperson Network will retweet clips of interviews and show solidarity on social media and people's appearances are often promoted on the mailing list as well.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- * Creating a post-interview care routine is essential in order to build sustainability into our work, and ensure we can do this for the long term. Adrenaline comedowns and emotional comedowns happen without us realising and we must be generous and patient with the rest we give ourselves.
- * Block out rest time or alone time afterwards. Be flexible and appreciate the countdown could be the next day or a few days later. Walking or taking baths can help soothe the effects of adrenaline.
- * Drink plenty of water throughout the interview and carry dates or a sugary snack to rebalance sugar levels immediately afterwards.
- * Ask yourself: what does my body feel like I need? And then listen and act on it.
- * Have someone to call or text afterwards that will give you the celebration you deserve for being bold; the NEON Spokesperson Network is a great support network to enable this.

PROGRESSIVE VOICES IN THE MEDIA

A large part of becoming a progressive voice in the media is creating a visible profile. We encourage spokespeople to do the following to make yourself known to bookers and producers to further the aims of your organisation or campaign - view the below tips as a means to an end.

- * Keep your Twitter profiles active, tweeting timely comments on news items to express your opinion. Social media is a major source of ideas for news segments for producers so if they see that you have an opinion about something they might contact you.
- * Follow journalists and producers on Twitter.
- * Pitch and write comment pieces to get your name out there as a reputable spokesperson on issues. Write as much as possible - book chapters, book reviews and maybe even a book! This especially applies if you are not linked to an organisation.
- * Put yourself up to speak on panels at talks, events and festivals. This boosts your visibility as an expert in your field.
- * Take up media opportunities, especially for smaller radio stations or shows on talkRadio for example. It is always good to get yourself comfortable doing media but also to show producers that you are an experienced spokesperson.

We spoke to some spokespeople about what it is like to do broadcast media, what keeps them going despite it being a difficult task and how they deal with any bad experiences. Below we have put together some of their answers to key questions.

How did you feel before your first broadcast interview?

A mix of terrified and reasonably sure I knew my stuff - the training helped me stay a bit calmer.



What motivates you to do broadcast media?

The need to get a progressive voice out into the media and politics. We need to challenge the standard economic story that gets told and take

the fight to reactionary groups like the Tax Payers Alliance that are a world away from what most people in the UK think. It's also great for building individual and organisational profile.

How have you dealt with any bad media experiences that you've had?

Try to realise that ultimately it moves on. Learn from my mistakes and try to be better next time, though also be careful not to beat up on myself. This is a long game that goes beyond any one interview.

What's one thing you would have liked to know about doing broadcast media before doing it?

In some ways, everyone is playing a game of acting. It's a highly contrived environment and if you keep your calm it'll usually go well.

How did you feel before your first broadcast interview?



I was incredibly nervous before my first interview and was convinced they would ask me something I didn't know or couldn't answer. The nerves were particularly bad just before the interview and they didn't entirely go away during, but treating it like a conversation and not just an interview helped.

What motivates you to do broadcast media?

I think it's important to try and reach as many people as possible, and if there's a popular narrative you don't agree with, it can be really helpful to try and think about how to change that.

How have you dealt with any bad media experiences that you've had?

I've tried to learn from them - not every interview is going to go how you want and sometimes you might react in a way you wish you hadn't or said something you don't think was quite right. But trying to learn and do something different, as well as not being too hard on yourself, is important. Right after media appearances, it can be helpful to try and do something totally different to take your mind off it and not let the adrenaline get to you.

What's one thing you would have liked to know about doing broadcast media before doing it?

That you don't need to know absolutely everything there is to know about a particular topic. It's good - and important - to be prepared and you don't want to be agreeing to do interviews about something you know nothing about, particularly if you know people better placed than you to comment on it (saying no is fine and good too), but there are always things you don't know and that's fine. Plus, the most likely thing is you won't get asked the question you can't answer and if you do bridge away from it.

AND FINALLY...

Thanks for reading this handbook - we hope it was useful. We know that appearing on broadcast media is difficult and at times scary, and can be particularly challenging for people who come from communities who are traditionally underrepresented on TV and radio. But we also know that broadcast media is important. Not only can it raise the profile of your campaigns and organisations, but it can also give you a chance to change the minds of people who otherwise might not have heard your point of view. Millions of people watch TV and listen to the radio, and millions more see and hear clips that are shared on social media. This huge audience hears from people like the Institute for Economic Affairs, the Adam Smith Institute and Migration Watch all the time - but sadly they don't hear enough from people who are making a case for progressive change.

At NEON we want to change the media landscape. That's why we are always on the lookout for new people to join our Press Officer and Spokesperson networks. It's why we run messaging days with campaigners and organisers, and it's why we've created this handbook. If you think that your campaigner or organisation could do with our support - please get in touch, and in the meantime, enjoy the handbook.

NEON

NEON is a network of over 650 UK organisers from different trade unions, grassroots groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based campaigns, political parties, civil society groups and movements from across the country. We run powerful trainings and support campaigns to help progressives win social, economic and environmental justice.

The Comms Hub

The Comms Hub was founded by NEON to help social movements communicate more effectively. Working together with PIRC we help people develop effective messaging, master interview techniques and improve their press officer skills. Our aim is to have more persuasive and representative voices in the media.

The Hub already has a number of key resources available and ready to be used. If you need help with your communications – from writing press releases to preparing for a media interview – please do get in touch.

Trainings

We run a number of trainings. Twice a year we run National Spokesperson Network trainings and Regional Spokesperson Network trainings. We also run two Press Officer Schools per year, and people working in comms roles are welcome to apply to join the Press Officer Network at any time for access to monthly evening events, workshops and online discussion.



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