



## THE MEDIA ANGLE

### **WHERE'S THE JOURNALIST?**

When you agree to be interviewed by a television news journalist don't assume they will turn up for the interview. Yes, that's right, the reporter may not be there in person but will send a TV crew to record the interview that they will conduct via phone or satellite.

Don't get offended, they're not being rude. There are many reasons they may not be able to attend. They may be in another city or state or even country to you, they may have had a diary clash and the only way they can do the interview is if they do it by phone, or they may be close to deadline and cannot leave the office.

This has happened to a number of my media training clients and is a common form of interview for TV news and current affairs. I conducted many when I was a journalist.

**So how do you look and sound your best when the person you are talking with is not in the room?**

#### **1/ Where should I look?**

The reporter or camera operator will tell you where to look. If the journalist is only going to use one or two short quotes from you for a package you will generally be asked NOT to look down the camera lens. Instead they will ask you to look slightly to the right or left of the camera. This can be difficult as you are looking at nothing in particular. If there is a sound recordist there ask him/her to sit or stand where you should be looking. If not ask your Communications Manager or another colleague to step in. It's far easier to look natural if you have a real person to look at.

If there is no one around to stand in the right spot you will be asked to look at particular spot in the room. When you do this your eyes may wander. Ask the camera operator to let you know if your eyes are shifting.

If you are asked to look down the lens try to have a picture of the reporter in your mind as you are speaking to them. If you don't know what they look like picture someone else you know like your partner or a friend. This will help you look more at ease and less like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

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### **How will I hear the journalist?**

You will either be given an earpiece (you could use your own if they call on your mobile) or your office phone will be switched to speaker. Sometimes it is hard to hear the reporter well if they are on a mobile. If you can't hear them properly tell them to speak up or call back on a different line.

### **How should I speak?**

Whatever you do DON'T SHOUT. It's important you speak to the reporter as if they are in the room with you. There's a strong temptation to ramp up your volume especially if the phone line is bad. Shouting will look and sound terrible in the news story. You could come across as aggressive, angry or domineering.

If the reporter cannot hear you well and asks you to speak up explain to them you do not want to shout. Ask if they could call back on another line or use another phone.

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