

Communication with the Media
or being
MEDIAWISE

Workshop

Janice Harland
HarlandHall Associates

Agenda

- Why be Mediawise
- Planning what you are going to say
- Writing for the press
 - What constitutes a good story
 - Basic rules
 - Embargos
 - Group exercise
 - Write your own release
 - Review and summary
 - Questions

Agenda

- Electronic Media - 20mins
 - Ground rules
 - Review presentation
 - Handling an interview
 - Review and summary
- Discussion and Questions

Why be MEDIAWISE?

- 24h media - news has never been more important
- Role to help to get science get reported properly
- Very little gets into the media by accident
- No comment - NEVER!
- Tell the story on your terms
- Enjoy the publicity for you, your business or animal science generally

The Approach

- 2 ways:
- they contact you

■ you contact them



Responding

They contact you.....

- Establish credentials
- Are you the right person?
- Do you need to obtain clearance?
- Plan what you are going to say
- Be aware of the 'sound bite'
(no off-the-record!)

Planning

Contacting the media....

■ Targeting

- reach the right people, know the media

■ Timing

- land at the right time, be aware of copy dates

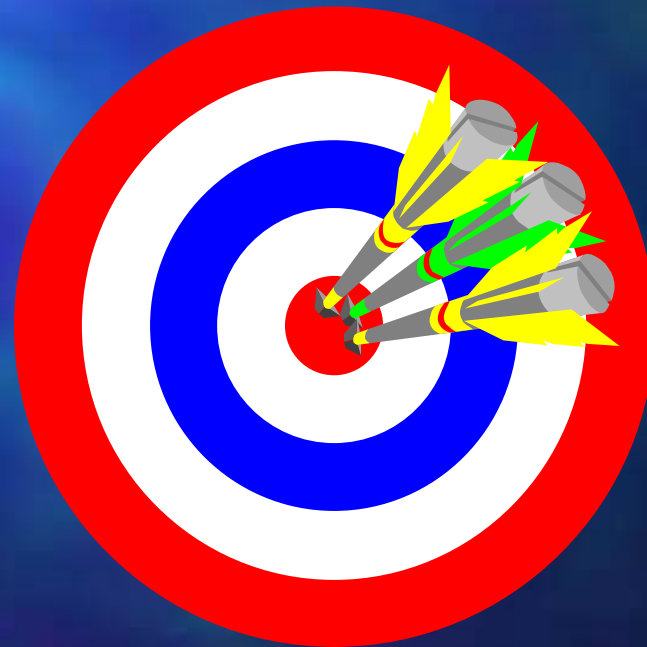
■ Hooks

- topical, major announcement, interesting, unusual, celebrity.....

Planning

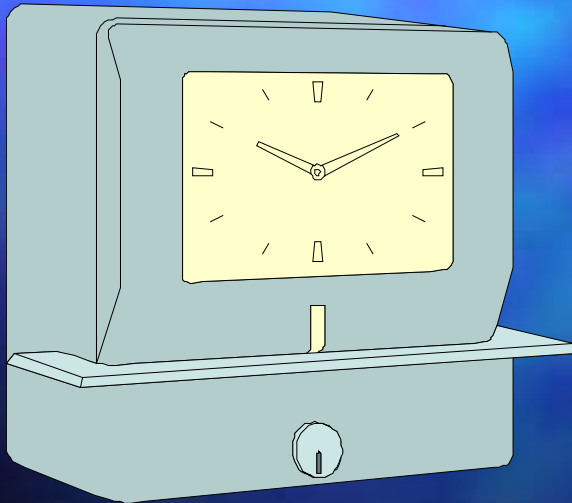
■ Targeting

- Written media
national newspapers, daily, specialist
magazines w, m, q
internet
- Radio
- TV



Planning

- Timing
 - respect deadlines/agree
 - don't be pressurised/ring back



Planning

- Hooks
 - its got to be interesting
 - get to the point quickly



Writing for the press

- What constitutes a good story
 - Basic rules
 - Embargo
 - Review and summary



Writing for the press

- What constitutes a good feature
 - Hooks
 - tell a good story
 - Targeting
 - Timing
 - land at the right time, be aware of copy dates

Remember you only have one shot to get it right...

Writing for the press

- Factual, accurate, to the point
- Headline that tells a story
- Date the feature/release
- Put all the main points in the first paragraph
- Include quotes or comments from named spokesperson (you)
- Avoid jargon, long words, long sentences, long paragraphs
- Include contact details of named person

Writing for the press

- **Headline**
 - short and snappy
 - feature/release must deliver



Writing for the press

- Date
 - old news is rarely news!

Writing for the press

- First paragraph
(may be the only one to be read)
 - tells the story
 - avoid hype and plug

Writing for the press

■ Layout

- At the top: name, address, organisation or eye-catching branded news release paper
- Leave enough space between letterhead and headline for sub editors instruction
- 1.5 or double space typing on 1 side only
- wide margins
- short pithy sentences
- no more than 3 sentences per paragraph
- indicate if going to 2nd page (max 2), include page no
- don't split paragraph at end of page
- write 'END' at bottom of last page

Writing for the press

■ Embargo

If it is time critical information, include a clear stated embargo.

“This information is subject to an embargo on its use or further release until 7am 1/1/2007.”

Writing for the press

- Group exercise

What is wrong with ABC Mail release?

10 mins

New Street
Some Town
The Shires

MAJOR CONTRACT FOR LEADING CARRIER

Britain's number 1 carrier ABC Mail has landed a major new contract with Top Electronics plc the country's biggest supplier of electronic components.

Marketing Director, Peter Child, "acclaimed the Top Electronic contract as a great achievement," saying that, "it was one of the most sought after contracts in the whole business".

"Top Electronics has gone for us because they realised that no-one could reach the professionalism achieved by ABC Mail, its network or range of highly developed services."

Top Electronics will be using Datapost, Super Post 24, Super 48 and the standard service to send its products speedily on the way to their nationwide destinations.

ABC Mail's unrivalled nationwide distribution network will be running a peak performance to guarantee success for Top Electronics. Its unmatched delivery fleet, which carries 250 million items a year, will be used to reach Top Electronics' huge network of 2000 outlets.

"We chose ABC Mail because they proved that they had the products, pedigree and the reliability to match our needs," commented Top Electronic General Manager, John Smith.

With Top Electronic distribution needs extending across the whole of the country ABCM has proved yet again that it is really the only carrier that can deliver the goods to meet such a major national distribution challenge.

As Peter Brown, District Manager of ABCM distribution centre pointed out, " We will be using all the services at our disposal to make sure that Top Electronics is a satisfied customer. These services range from the express services such as Datapost and Super 24 to our guaranteed 3-day standard delivery service. TE has bought the best by using ABCM." The unique services available to TE shows, said Peter Child that "ABCM is truly the best choice of business customers."

Writing for the press

Group exercise

- No date
- Breaks paragraph at bottom of page 1
- No page numbers or 'continues' at bottom of page 1
- No further info contact
- No "ends" at bottom of page 2
- Headline is nebulous - offers no essential information
- Over hyped – “major new” etc too many overstated claims by ABC – “unrivalled”, “unmatched” etc
- Too many quotes from too many sources
- Important facts missed - WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE CONTRACT! What is Top Electronics business, What are all the services mentioned, Where is the ABC distribution centre - why is it mentioned?
- Abbreviations and use of jargon, eg ABCM, TP, Super 48

Writing for the press

- Exercise for you to practice...
 - Write your own feature/release
- Leave it a few days and then review...
 - Does it deliver?
 - Is it interesting/understandable to the layperson

Writing for the press

■ Review and summary

A story for the press should be:

- well written
- relevant
- clear
- succinct
- complete

NOT

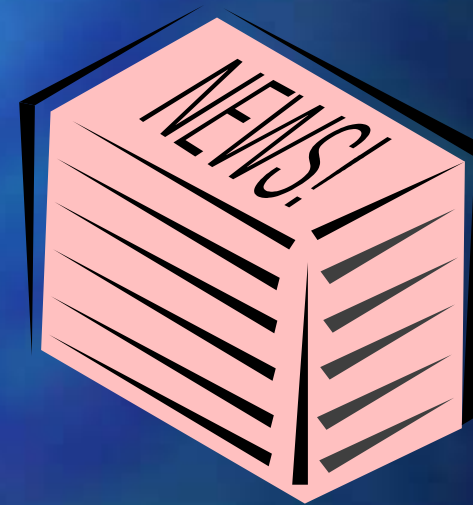
an obvious plug, too long, misleading, an obvious advert.

Better than everything else that lands on the desk that day!



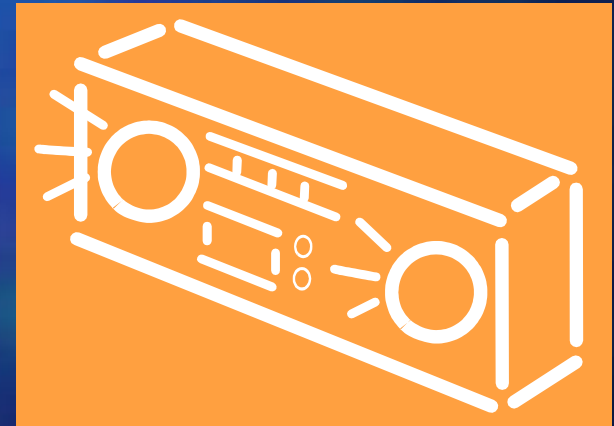
Writing for the press

■ Any Questions!



Electronic Media

- Agenda
 - Ground rules
 - Research
 - Preparation
 - Handling an interview
 - Practice interviews
 - Review and summary
- Discussion and Questions



Electronic Media

- Lay down ground rules...
 - what you are prepared to discuss
 - choose live interview for preference
 - for down-the-line interviews ensure you have a good phone line and NO interruptions
 - be comfortable with the location
 - are you the right person?
 - do you need clearance from anyone?

Electronic Media



■ Research

- the subject
- the programme, interviewer, audience, interview length
- degree of detail required
- ask what will be the first question

Electronic Media

■ Preparation

- know your subject
- crystallise your thoughts
- jot down ideas/bullet points
- identify 3 points you would like to make
- identify tricky questions and prepare answers
- choose your words carefully - practice by recording or talking to your self to get the right words to use
- use everyday language, graphic, precise & emphatic

Electronic Media

- Handling an interview/interview technique
 - sit comfortably
 - be positive
 - be sure to respond to negative openings
“your research is resulting Frankenstein pigs...”
 - tell the truth
 - make your 3 points
 - keep answers to less than 30 seconds
 - don't tell lies
 - don't use jargon
 - don't number points, be over-familiar, loose your temper
 - watch the time
 - try to get the last word!

Electronic Media

- Practice makes perfect...



Electronic Media



■ Review and Summary

- Ask about the programme/audience/time
- Ask first question
- Decide 3 points
- Practice your words
- Make your 3 points
- Counter negative statements
- Be firm, polite, everyday language
- Get the last word

Electronic Media

- Discussion and Questions

Thanks for your attention