



Media Tips

Media tips and advice

From BBC Breakfast Editor, Adam Bullimore

BBC Breakfast has an average of 6.5 million viewers. This can reach 9 million during extreme weather. On average people watch it for 45 minutes and the average age of a viewer is 58-60 years. TV watchers are on average aging.

Stories that tend to do well...

- have a hook
- are important
- are quirky 'I never knew that...'
- have a mystery
- have strong accompanying pictures/video
- have a relatable or memorable character
- are relevant to current news
- are social media friendly
- have a solution to a problem (The One Show particularly like people working to put something right)
- are 'ist' stories eg the tallest, biggest, smallest etc

Don't worry if you haven't had a professional photographer involved in your story. Smartphone photos can be submitted with your story and will be adequate.

The Breakfast team often look to social media to find stories so do make the most of your channels and post about your project activity regularly. Using hashtags may make it easier for people who don't follow your channel to stumble across your story.

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From CBBC Newsround Deputy Editor, Kirsti Adair

Newsround targets 6-12 year olds. It can be easier to get your stories featured on Newsround than BBC Breakfast. It is starting to focus more on digital/social media/web news in addition to the traditional news bulletin on the television. It is also focusing on engaging older children too (14-16 year olds) This could be very helpful for Our Bright Future.

Stories that tend to do well:

- quirky / funny
- cute
- one-off
- educational
- those including strong accompanying pictures/video
- happy endings

Newsround is leaning more to creating animations as it has found that a presenter slows the story down. Children have a short attention span. Think what a nine year old would be interested in. Sometimes child presenters are used. They are usually aged 9-15 years. This could be a good opportunity for young people at your project to talk about their activities. It proves more engaging to have children talking to children rather than adults talking to children. Be aware that more adult stories can be edited to suit a younger audience. For example scientific research about the orca menopause was made into a CBBC Newsround story about 'Granny orcas'.

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From Radio 4 Farming Today Presenter and Reporter, Caz Graham
BBC Radio 4 Farming Today airs at 5.45am and has 1 million listeners (typically those commuting to London who live in the South East). Farming Today covers all countryside, environmental and farming issues so don't be deceived by the title, there could be opportunities for Our Bright Future promotion. BBC Radio 4 You & Yours is more consumer focused but don't just think of it as things you can buy. Experiences and lifestyle issues are discussed which could be relevant to Our Bright Future.

The key to radio interviews is to have passionate people. Enthusiasm must fill their voice. Through the radio people want to feel that they are out there and getting insight they don't usually get access to. Transport them. Use all the senses. Paint a picture. Texture the programme. On Farming Today the interviews tend to take place outside to pick up the surrounding sounds and bring the interview to life. If you are doing a radio interview be yourself. Stories that do well on Farming Today:

- 'I never knew that'
- weird and wonderful
- news related

- quirky
- include facts and figures

There is usually a lead in time of two to three weeks, so give a good amount of notice if you have an event or story to feature.

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From BBC News Science Correspondent, Victoria Gill

Twitter is a good way of reaching journalists. Follow relevant ones to your area. With science stories they often start with a scientific paper or journal and find a story within it. The stories must work on multiple channels. Shorter versions will be created for Facebook and Instagram. There is a hunger for young female scientists in the media. Do give plenty of notice ahead of the story.

To make your story news worthy it needs to be relevant now. What makes it more of a story today than any other day? Why is it relevant? Feature stories can be less time sensitive than a news story.

From BBC Countryfile and BBC Radio 4 Costing the Earth Presenter and Reporter, Tom Heap
As with The One Show, Countryfile likes stories that are solutions-based. Guilt and powerlessness turn people off. Be optimistic. Countryfile plans six weeks in advance.

Key tips:

- think about who your audience is. Keep your pitch simple. Journalists are time poor but will know what stories suit their audience
- ask what your first question will be ahead of time (either print or broadcast) so that you can prepare
- jeopardy is an easy sell to an editor
- 'est' words do well (smallest, tallest etc.)
- local pride works well

Know what you want to say

This is called messaging and it's a vital part of the process of speaking to any reporter. You are not speaking to a reporter just to answer their questions. This is your opportunity to deliver a message of your own.

Less is more

Speaking to reporters requires getting down to the bottom lines as quickly and as quotably as you can. Deliver the supportive data, facts and backup information after you're sure you've delivered your bottom-line message. Try to make your message as accessible as you can to the greatest number of people (no jargon!)

Enjoy yourself

When you're confident, it'll show. Give reporters what they want; access, good quotes and reliable information and you'll be accessing opportunities for yourself and your organisation to tell the world about your story.

Tom is drawn to young people being given responsibility as a way of recovery and development; e.g. a project that gives young people with anti-social behaviour issues access to sharp tools to use them for conservation rather than damage. This could be a great angle for some Our Bright Future projects to pitch to Countryfile.

Tips for media interviews

Be available for interviews for the 24-48 hours that the story lands and ask if you're unsure about the interview.

Accessibility counts

If you're going to work with the media, you're going to have to accept that reporters live by the deadline. If you're going to accept the interview, accept it immediately. They you can buy yourself as much time as you can to prepare.

Interview the interviewer

Any legitimate reporter will have no problem answering a few questions before the interview that help you prepare for it. Ask the reporter what they want you to contribute, who else has been or will be interviewed and when the reporter's deadline is.

How to prepare for a media interview

- don't give the interviewer a list of questions; it indicates a lack of confidence in your subject
- do not ask for a list of questions – even if you do, the interviewer may not stick to them and that could throw you off track
- try to think about the questions you might be asked so you can have answers at your fingertips – remember who, what, where, why and how
- find out what you can about the programme you are appearing on; the angle being taken by the reporter and the other guests appearing with you
- check if the interview is live, recorded, in the studio, on location and dress appropriately for the location

Getting the message across

- try to sound positive. If it's a good news story then smile, the tone will come out in your voice
- tell them why it's important and how you feel about it
- try to vary the tone of your voice, nothing makes a listener turn off more quickly than a monotone
- try not to umm and aah, have long pauses or unfinished sentences. One trick if you feel an umm coming on is to elongate the last word you are sure of ie 'Yes, we are going tooooo ensure the money targets social need'
- assume the listener has no prior knowledge of you. Don't refer back to off air conversations you may have had with the presenter

- listen to the question and answer it concisely and accurately. You are not having a conversation; this is a performance. Just give one point at a time rather than packing everything into your first answer
- use examples to build a picture. Try to be anecdotal (but not too long winded). Humanise your story and be emotive but avoid sounding like an advert
- be honest and don't exaggerate
- don't be too friendly with the interviewer or use their name.