

Communications Toolkit

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Introduction

Welcome to the Croquet Association Communications Training Resource. This Resource has been specially designed to provide training in the basic skills required for working with the wider media. The course is made up of separate self-supporting modules that can be dipped into in any order required and also will serve as a useful refresher and key checklist resource.

It is recommended that all undertake 'Why Work with the Media' which performs the role of introduction to the full remit of skills. 'Attracting the Media' is aimed at people who are looking for help in publicising activities and attracting media attention. 'Being Interviewed' is an essential support in preparing to be a media spokesperson or be interviewed by the media. 'Additional Skills' is an optional additional skills section; the units of which can be studied as a whole or selected on an individual basis with the aim to improve your skills at producing supplementary materials to support media work. It is envisaged that periodically there could be temporary additional modules specifically tailored to support activities such as National Croquet Week or the World Championships - these modules will look at detailed key messages and frequently asked questions around these issues and will be withdrawn once no longer topical.

It is hoped that using this toolkit will be enjoyable as well as developmental for those participating and feedback on any aspects of the toolkit either on going or upon completion will be greatly appreciated. Remember the key principles within this toolkit can be applied to supporting communications on any number of topics not just croquet.

Whether you are working through this toolkit purely for personal development or because of a role you have taken on within the croquet world the key thing to remember is to enjoy the learning experience.



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Why Work With the Media

Why Media Work is Important

Exercise A - Why do you want to work with the media?

Ask yourself and jot down some answers to the following question. Why do you want to do work with the media?

There is no hard and fast answer to this question but simply media work is undertaken because of the power of the media to inform on issues, encourage sponsorship and or playing members and even the media's ability to influence local and even national government decision making. The media in all its many component parts has the ability to rapidly communicate an issue to a very large number of people. The media can also be a useful tool for fundraising for projects such as ground improvements.

Exercise B - Who are the media?

Now ask yourself and jot down your response to this question. Who or what are the media?

The media are most often represented on the ground as reporters, interviewers and photographers but the media itself is much wider television, radio, website, blog, influencer, newspaper and magazine. All these basic media forms come from local to international and increasingly organisations will be multi-media i.e. covering several different types of outlet. Similarly the media can be encountered as news reporters, documentary makers, and discussion leaders or even via the use of drama such as soaps to spread messages.

With the great diversity of media, there are literally thousands of pages and a similarly large number of minutes of airtime to fill every day, the news gatherers are busy people and though generally well educated they may have little knowledge of the issues you are trying to promote. This is why it is essential to target and plan media activities.

Media work can be an effective tool to enhance and support activity. However, it needs to be thought through strategically, targeting the right media at the right time.

Strategic work with the media can:

- Raise the profile of an issue amongst a range of audiences
- Raise the profile of Croquet as a sport, and therefore something to try
- Inform wider reporting by journalists on issues that concern us

In drawing up your pro-active media strategy, you need to think about:

- What is the overall aim and objectives of your media work?

- How to prioritise your messages, so as not to overload the journalist and the audience
- How to make your messages accessible – using real life examples, ‘humanising’ the issue.
- The timing of proactive media work – when will it be of greatest impact and advantage?
- The audience(s) you need to target.
- What media would be best for which audience (e.g. decision-makers may read a particular newspaper or blog, particular parts of the population may watch/listen to particular programmes).
- What are the needs of different media? Television, radio and press have different needs that would make a news story work for them. Be clear with the journalist about what they are really after, and what you can realistically deliver.
- What is the best way of informing journalists – one to one briefings, press conferences, taster sessions for journalists, press releases and materials, club visits, letters to newspapers? This partly depends on your objectives.
- How can you ensure maximum impact of media coverage – it is said you need to say something three times for a message to sink in. In the longer term how can you build on a piece of media work so that it continues to support your overall plan?
- What will your media work depend on – e.g. it’s useless putting out a press release unless you have a good spokesperson available to talk to any journalists who show interest.
- What are the threats that you might encounter and how will you handle these? For example, dealing with difficult questions and how you should answer these – make sure you are fully prepared and robust.
- Be sure you can deliver – don’t embark on media work unless you are as sure as possible that you can carry it through, meeting reasonable demands.
- Do call on national and or Regional support for your activities.

The Need for Co-ordination

Modern media is international by nature, monitoring the media in countries all over the globe. This global aspect of media makes co-ordination and planning of media work all the more important. There is little benefit to an organisation to host two different high profile events on the same day and even more disastrous is issuing two apparently conflicting messages on the same day. This aspect is why it is essential to have a part of the organisation that has an overview of all communications work. In the case of the Croquet Association the marketing team performs this role.

The marketing team's work can involve contact with practically any other part of the organisation. We aim to integrate different elements of external publicity work. However, in addition we can get enquiries on anything, relating to any aspect of the game or geographical area.

The marketing team work on a wide variety of projects, on any issues that may be of concern to the Croquet Association, and with a wide variety of media – national, regional, local and even international.

Reactive media work

The marketing team responds to media enquiries on a vast range of subjects and deals with a variety of requests for help.

Calls can come into the marketing team from any media - UK regional, UK national, international media, and freelance journalists.

Enquiries can consist of:

- Requests for an interviewee on any topic.
- Requests for our position on different issues also general information on different issues or who else they can talk to.
- Requests by journalists to visit events, etc.
- Enquiries about the sport in specific areas, any stories that might be of interest.

The marketing team responds to reports in the media - identifying opportunities for writing letters to editors, or taking forward issues that may have already been highlighted in the media.

The marketing team also co-ordinates the putting together of reactive press lines and strategies on difficult issues so that the Association is clear about what response to give if approached by a journalist.

Pro-active media work

The marketing team undertakes a variety of pro-active work - pushing forward croquet and the issues that concern the organisation and its players. This can help the organisation in a variety of ways:

- Raises the profile of the organisation so as to encourage further support and brings in funds.
- Contributes to informing the public's thinking generally on different issues.
- Supporting initiatives, thereby helping to push issues forward and trying to influence decision-makers by using the media effectively.
- Helping journalists to understand better issues that concern us, so that their reporting is more accurate and not misleading.

Proactive work may involve:

- Taking up stories from clubs and 'selling' them to appropriate journalists.
- Working on a specific media project in order to gain coverage.

There are several things to keep in mind when doing media work on croquet:

In the UK there have in recent years been massive changes in the media, with for instance the introduction of digital broadcasting, expansion of cable, and the increasing variety of media outlets and the growing influence of social media.

It is therefore increasingly important to be quite specific in the choice of media targets, considering what audiences you are wanting to reach with whatever message(s) you are trying to communicate. A club member might therefore not see croquet in the media they watch/read/listen to - but this does not mean that the sport is not gaining coverage elsewhere and touching a different audience.

Linked to this is that a successful media project should not be measured by the number of pieces of coverage but by the quality. For example whether the sport's messages have been accurately put across, and the target audience has been reached. There are many different tools we can use to get our messages across - often press releases and press conferences are inappropriate or would be ineffective.

Other marketing team tasks:

- Media training for clubs/members who might need to do media work, and advising generally on how to work with the media. Much of this can be delivered via on-line workshops.
- Protecting the organisation's reputation from potentially damaging media stories.
- Contributing to other marketing work within the organisation. Placing materials on the website and in our internal and external publications.

- Supporting film, audio and edit capability for making in house video as well as linking to external documentary production

And finally - a roundup of what we broadly ask from you

- If you hear of anything that you think might be a good media story, do let us know and we can consider talking to a journalist about it.
- If your area is undertaking some activity that you think might need our input then please come to us as soon as possible. It is sometimes surprising what can interest the media in terms of a story so if in doubt please run an idea past the marketing team we will be happy to advise. It is very hard to realise that something that to you is a relatively everyday event might be of interest to the media
- If something happens in your area that you think we should be aware of in order to limit damage or because we may need a reactive press line then please let us know.
- Please try to keep in mind that we often have to work to external deadlines, and that's why sometimes things we ask you to do might seem very last minute.



A Media Plan

Croquet Association resources are limited both in terms of time and finance. These limitations do not mean we should avoid doing media work but it does mean we must be strategic and plan activities in order to maximise the gain and minimise the pain. The key task to formulating a media strategy is to decide clearly what the key message and purpose of any planned activity are.

A concise plan will clarify objectives and target audiences and impose clarity and structure to activity.

A media plan needs to start off with an objective, goal or purpose.

Why do you want media coverage for the issue? What do you expect to gain by raising the issue in the media? What action or reaction do you wish to stimulate in those seeing coverage?

Having clarified your objective now decide on the audience you want to reach to achieve this and the most effective ways of reaching this particular audience. Typically you may find yourself targeting one or two distinct audiences; a primary audience and a secondary audience, who you would also like to reach but are not thought as key to the objective as the prime audience.

Finally decide upon the message you want to get across to the audience, only in exceptional circumstances should the key messages be more than three issues.

Memory Aid - Media Strategy

Aim/objective

Key messages

Message support

Target audience

Target media

Spokespeople

Actions

Exercise C - Making a media strategy

Pick one activity that you would like to achieve media coverage for and apply the three basics of media planning to it.

Goal: (Why do you want to achieve coverage?)

Audience

Primary target:

Reached by:

Secondary target:

Reached by

Key Messages:



What Is News

Generally speaking there are three types of news:

Hard news: breaking events or the release of new information and facts. Hard news can be created by something you release or by information released by others or a crisis or emergency. It is important to establish yourself with journalists as an expert in areas you wish to make comment to ensure that they will come to you for comment when someone else makes the breaking news.

Features/Documentaries: These are more in-depth looks at the issues that underlie particular stories. This type of news is less time sensitive and can often be a long time in the making.

Opinion Pieces: These are in-depth pieces by people considered experts in an area and usually relate to stories currently in the media agenda. An opinion piece is an opportunity to put out messages free from editing. Opinion pieces also tend to be read by decision-makers.

The key thing about news is that it must be new. News is about new developments, new findings, new events and change, something that is different from the norm. A news story does not have to be a one-off event it can be an on-going issue that merits regular revisiting as it develops.

Exercise D - Creating a media story

Write a single sentence that encapsulates the core issue of your story.

(This should take the basic form of who is doing what and why they are doing it)

Now evaluate your sentence to decide how newsworthy it is by ticking off, which of the following elements the story contains (you do not need all elements to be newsworthy).

1. Is all or some part of the story new?

2. Is there a human face to your story?

3. Is there an action happening or called for in the story?

4. Is the story relevant or having an effect on a significant number of people in the community?

5. Is there a celebrity or curiosity factor in your story?

You can increase the opportunity for keeping a story running:

- Offer fresh angles by looking at the same story from a different angle such as how a particular problem impacts on a different group.
- Release little snippets of news such as a comment on someone else's statement.

- Create new approaches by involving a visit or new surveys.

Key issues to consider as to whether you do or don't have a good story are:

- How relevant is the story to your audience. Local aspects are always advantageous or if the issue raised will affect those you want to reach.
- Is the story interesting?
- Additionally consider ways to make the story more human interest or find a personality to add to the media attraction though this is by no means an essential.



Attracting the Media

Contact Lists

The media contact list is perhaps the single most important tool for interacting with the media. The contact list should contain contact details for all journalists working in your area.

Building up a contacts list enables you to rapidly contact all relevant media when you have a news story and assists in building relationships with key journalists. Contact lists are particularly effective as databases with space to include information on previous contact with journalists.

Of course it is very important that the contact list is maintained and updated, as an out of date contact list is little more use than no list at all.

How to construct a media list

- Read, watch and listen to local media/influencers and find out what issues specific journalists/influencers cover.
- Find out which audiences the different media reach
- Make contact with key individuals just to introduce yourself. This will pay dividends not only will they know who you are when they receive releases from you they will be more inclined to go to you for comment on other people's stories. Investing time in journalists and editors also enables you to run ideas past them as to which approach to an issue would be best suited for their needs.
- A web search can be a useful tool to identify key journalists and influencers also the local library may have information, also make sure you always include the local correspondent for the Press Association.

Exercise E - Creating a media contact list

Now build up a media contact database for your area.

News Releases

The news release is a written document that outlines concisely the issues you wish the media to cover.

A well-written news release should make life easy for the journalist. The aim is to give journalists enough information in a short punchy style to persuade them to run your story.

The prime purpose of the news release is to let the media know that you have information that they should be interested in.

News release structure

- **Start** the release with a simple, descriptive and catchy headline to grab attention and the date of the release.
- **The opening paragraph** tells the story in a nutshell, and details **who, what, when, where, why, how and how much/many**. The why can be covered in subsequent paragraphs, which progressively expand the details.
- **News releases are pyramid shaped**. The more important information is, the earlier in the news release it should appear.
- **A quote** is a useful means of changing the tense, tempo and interest, and will usually appear as paragraph three.
- A **'Further Information'** section should contain your contact name and telephone number (please make sure you will be available on this number).
- The **'Notes to editors'** should always include a brief description of croquet.

Writing style

- **A good news release reads like a story**; if it doesn't, the chances are that it won't get used. Very few stories will be about croquet directly. They will usually be about the people/community taking part, doing the helping, or making a sponsorship donation etc.
- **The story is not only the hook to gain coverage**; it should also provide a clear illustration of the message. Start with what you're trying to say (message), then find a way to say it that is different and interesting, and that illustrates it clearly (story).
- **The quote must sound like someone actually said it**. Try to get at least part of your key message in the quote – it's the one part no journalist should alter.
- **Avoid jargon, emotional language and croquet-speak**. Always bear in mind the audience – and that includes both journalists and readers/listeners.

Style Tips

- Try to make the release one page only, with 1.5 line spacing.
- At the end of each page in the bottom right corner **"More/..."** in bold.
- At the finish of the body of the release write **Ends** in bold at left hand margin.

- **Numbers** from 1 – 10 should always be written in full and written numerically above 10.

Memory Aid - News Releases

- **Headline**
- **Lead**
- **Details/Context**
- **Quote**
- **Conclusion**
- **Contact details**
- **Notes to editors**

Distribution is generally best by e-mail. You can either distribute to your entire media contact list or send only to selected journalists from that list, it is important to hide addresses on an e-mail so the journalist feels they are not part of a mass mail-out and also if personal addresses are included to avoid falling foul of the GDPR legislation. Use BCC if available rather than sending lots of times. Releases should always go out early in the morning as most media hold editorial meetings around 10am when daily assignments are agreed upon. Also make sure you are aware of deadlines for weekly and monthly publications which in some cases can be several months before publication date.

There are five basic types of media release:

The advisory

A short release sent out well in advance of an event to put it into the forward planning diaries and followed up by a quick phone call. The advisory is basically about who, what, when, where and why. The key is to make the why compelling and include a catchy headline.

The action release

Say what you did and why in the opening paragraph. Include details of the number of people involved any interesting nuggets of information. Include background information that explains why the actions have occurred and put forward solutions for any problems raised.

The reaction release

This is a good way to be mentioned or quoted in relation to a breaking news story, such as a government report. To effectively react you must be rapid in response and brief in content including a quote. In order to be reactive it is necessary to monitor the news agenda.

The study release

Similar to the action release but focusing on a report/survey just published. The release should summarise the key findings of the report and should be written so as to avoid too much jargon.

The background release

A background fact sheet of information that a journalist can refer to for background on a particular issue. It could for instance be a summary of Croquet and how it is played/terminology. It is often a good idea to include contact details for experts so an interested journalist can follow up with them.

Embargoes

Embargoes to prevent premature publication should only be used if absolutely necessary, say to ensure that longer lead time journals are ready at the same time as shorter deadline media, or to give journalists the opportunity to read accompanying information in time to digest it before writing. In all other cases, you should use “For immediate release”.

Exercise F - Writing a news release

Follow the template below to write a media release on an issue you wish to raise in the media

Headline

Your story's focus but in as few words as possible (you may wish to write the release first and then complete the headline)

The lead

This is the first paragraph of the release and should cover everything you want to say, the news and the story. Make sure that this paragraph includes who, what, when, where, why and how. Make sure this is engaging otherwise the journalist will not read on. Limit the lead to six lines maximum.

The second paragraph

Describes the details and context of the lead announcement in the same order. This is where sources and new findings would be quoted. This is where the story and the most newsworthy details should appear.

The third paragraph

Quote from spokesperson. The quote should be able to stand alone without the context of the previous paragraphs. Use the quote to put over a strong or emotive opinion not a string of facts.

The conclusion

This should either restate the lead or add interesting detail, which is not essential to the story but adds an extra angle to the journalist.

Notes to editors

Add any information such as timings of events, a need for RSVP or other items available to support the story such as reports, photos or video.

Pitching the Story

- Always follow-up news releases with phone calls to relevant journalists. If they are being invited to an event the follow up call should be made about 2 days before the event. Be prepared to re-send the release to journalists following the phone-call.
- Try to phone journalists in the morning when they are usually less tight on deadlines.
- Practice what you will say to the journalist with a friend before making the call, but don't work to a fixed script as that will sound stilted.
- Have the original release and a few notes in front of you when you call and try to keep the call to no more than a minute, this means you need to condense the release into a few snappy sentences.
- If asked a question you cannot answer don't make it up offer to find out and call the journalist back.
- Keep notes on conversations to add to your media contacts list.

Exercise G - The Pitch

Produce a snappy pitch in note form for the media release you drafted in exercise F.

Key Contact

It is important on all news releases and dealings with the media that they are provided with a key person to contact for more information and interviews. Ideally this person should be available on numbers 24 hours a day 7 days a week, so where possible a mobile number as well as a landline number should be provided. Nothing annoys a journalist more than being unable to get hold of a designated spokesperson for a story.

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor is an open letter written about a current news story being covered by the publication you write to. Letters to the editor can either criticise coverage or bring additional information to the debate. Letters to the editor are read by a lot of people and thus represent a good opportunity to put across your points without a journalist editing your comments.

In order to be published letters to the editor need to be concise, long letters are liable to be edited before publication or even discarded. In general terms you should aim for a letter to be around 12 lines long, but check through the letters page you are targeting and gauge the average letter length for the publication if you require a more accurate length.

If criticising the paper try to do so in a considered manner backing your criticism with facts, expressions of anger can often undermine your credibility.

Format

- Use headed paper and add on the address of the publication targeted
- Letters generally begin with Dear Sir
- Then in bold reference the article you are referring to
- Follow this with the substantive of your letter in no more than three paragraphs
- Sign of yours sincerely and include your name and relevant croquet related title. If you are a doctorate, reverend, knight or similar include the relevant initials it does greatly enhance the chance of publication.

Exercise H - *Writing a letter*

Now chose an article from a local paper and write a letter to the editor putting forward your viewpoint bearing in mind the issues raised above.

Press Conferences

The idea of a press conference is to bring all the media you want to know about a story together into one room where they can be briefed. A press conference is particularly useful for getting over complex issues where the media will have questions for your spokespeople. Ideally at a press conference you should have several spokespeople. The down side of a press conference is whether the media will turn up. Generally speaking you need to have a very strong story for a press conference to work as the media today prefer to get individual quotes via interview from named spokespeople rather than share the same speech with another journalist. This is where issuing advance advisory releases and following up with phone calls to at least the key media is essential.

Media activity around a press conference

- Put out a media advisory notice about one week ahead of the conference
- Put out a second more detailed release that encapsulates the main issues behind the conference and contains a strong quote from the main spokesperson three days before the conference.
- Ring round target media two days before the conference and be prepared to resend releases.
- If the story is big offer a day before exclusive of an exciting story relating to the conference but be careful not to give away the full story, the idea is to create increased interest and topicality, blow the whole story and no one will come to the conference.
- The best time to hold a press conference is late morning and definitely before 2pm.

Practicalities

- Have the media sign in at the conference this can be added to your contacts information and also indicates who did and did not attend useful if you wish to pursue specific targets.
- Provide media hand-outs at the conference with key details of the conference, contact information, short biographies of the spokespeople and preferably some photos to illustrate the event.
- Keep presentations short no more than five minutes each and ensure speakers address different aspects and are experts in that area or affected individuals.
- Allow plenty of time for questions with a chair who purely chairs and does not comment on the issues and restrict the conference to 45 minutes duration.
- Set aside post conference time for individual interviews with the spokespeople
- Ensure that speakers can be heard even if this means hiring microphones.

- Do not put speakers up against a window, as the lighting will ruin video and photo opportunities.
- Remember a press conference could easily be a virtual conference hosted over Zoom or similar platform.

Exercise I - Advance event checklist

- Work through this checklist for a press conference you are planning based around the release you wrote in exercise F
- Objective for event/audience/message
- Budget
- Speakers, booking and briefing
- Venue – including layout, capacity access, virtual
- Advance publicity plans
- Running order
- Catering requirements
- Media pack contents
- Equipment required

Memory Aid - Press Conference

Advance

Objective
 Budget
 Speakers
 Venue/Equipment/Catering
 Advance notice
 Media Pack
 Running Order

On the Day

Branding
 Equipment
 Register
 Refreshments
 Toilets
 Air conditioning/Heating
 Time Keeping

Photo-calls

A strong photographic image can get a message across instantaneously and the printed media are always looking for lively pictures to fill their pages. So planning a photo opportunity can be a good way to raise awareness of an issue.

Before embarking on arranging a photo-call you need to be clear on:

- The key message you want to convey?
- What you want the picture to say and how will it do this?
- What do you want a reader to do?

Remember when planning a photo-call that branding can play an important role in this process so make sure you have suitable materials available to brand the picture. But don't overdo it as too much branding will mean the picture will not be used.

Photo-call ideas

- Approach a local celebrity/politician to join you in calling for an action
- Involve a local sports team/business in the above
- Involve a local school/children in the above
- Action is essential if something interesting is going on people will be drawn to the photograph.
- Props can help add to the interest of a picture as long as they are relevant and preferably in use.

Always ensure you have your own photographer present in order to take pictures to forward to those media outlets that do not attend.

Key steps to involving the media

- Issue a photo-call notice this should clearly state who is doing what where and when.
- Photo-calls should be during office hours and preferably between 10am and noon.
- Check there is nothing else going on at the same time that would clash with your event.
- Keep records of photographers attending, by using an attendance book.

After the event

- Send pictures plus a media release about the event to any media who did not come along
- Make sure you send details of those in the photograph with the picture including ages of any children involved.

Exercise J - Organising a photo-call

Now plan a photo-call to support the media story you chose for exercise F. Starting with the key messages and then detailing how these will be illustrated and who you would choose to illustrate them and any props you might use.



Press Packs

A good press pack contains facts, contacts, visuals and story angles a reporter can use when writing a story. A press pack should be seen, as a tool to support a story or call for action it will not achieve coverage in its own right. Journalists are very busy and will not be prepared to wade through reams of information so be succinct and selective over the contents of a press pack.

A standard press pack will contain

- Media release
- Background sheet
- Frequently asked questions
- Key contacts for interviews
- Charts, visuals or photographs
- Quotes from experts

Background sheet

This should be no more than two pages in length laid out in a bullet text format, including contact and website details. The background sheet should be a summary of the key facts around the issue that you wish to highlight.

Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions should be no more than one page long. It is not essential to include this in the pack but it is essential to prepare in advance of contacting the media to ensure all spokespeople stay on message. This sheet should cover the most difficult questions likely to be encountered and along with a half page key messages sheet will form the basis of briefing materials for spokespeople.

Key interview contacts

Maximum one page should list the key spokespeople and how to contact them; this may include young people, beneficiaries or other professionals. Try to give brief biographical details that show why the individual is a relevant spokesperson.

Charts, visuals and photographs

Pictures can be a very useful additional extra. Pictures of spokespeople are useful to include as well as those relating directly to the issue. If statistics are involved charts often help to convey the story better than words. These materials are best provided as electronic images and it is a good idea for the whole pack to be available on a disc for journalists.

Quotes

The quotes should be punchy and short. This sheet is not essential to include though if spokespeople are difficult to contact or you wish to use the voices of young people without obvious identification this could be the best way to do this.

If you are sending out a media kit to spur a news story, include a short letter to support the pack, which outlines:

- The immediate news hook
- The key points of the story and backup data
- Reasons why the journalist should be interested
- Sign the letter personally and address individual letters to individuals, journalists do not like to feel part of a global mailing.

Exercise K - Preparing a media pack

Prepare a media pack to support a press conference planned around your release from exercise F, then write a supporting letter to accompany this pack to a journalist who has not attended the press conference



Media Calls

A media call is a phone call to a journalist or editor to either pitch a story or follow up on a news release. The media call lets journalists know to look out for your story and helps to build a relationship with the journalist. It is also a good idea to call friendly journalists perhaps once a month for a quick update on what is going on even if you do not have a particular story at the time, just to keep the relationship going.

Always check that the journalist is not busy with a deadline before pitching a story if they are arrange to call-back. If the journalist says they are not going to run with the story try to find out why so that you can pitch more relevant stories in the future.

Don't ring up and ask did you get our media release, journalists get hundreds every day, announce yourself mention the story and why you think it is of interest and be prepared to resend the media release to the journalist. Sometimes if your story is not very strong you may have more success by pitching to an individual journalist without a media release on the basis that you've come to them first and if they want the story you are happy to leave it with them.

Key terms for chats to journalists

Off the record - means not to be reported

Background - means non-attributable information i.e. a croquet player said

Always exercise caution in going down either of these avenues, it is not advised to go off the record with a journalist you do not know. And if you make an unattributed comment will it be obvious to all that it could have only come from one place.



Video News Releases

Video news releases are used to interest the media in covering a story that they have so far failed to commit cameras to. The footage should be of broadcast standard. A VNR should be 4 to 5 minutes long and is generally preferred in an unedited state.

The VNR can stimulate coverage for an issue or spur broadcasters to send their own cameras to cover the story.

Independent video producers can be found in most towns around the UK who will reduce costs for not for profit organisations to shoot video footage, alternatively you may wish to shoot your own video as most modern smart phones are capable of producing broadcast quality images.



Articles

There is little mileage in sending articles to publications without first getting agreement to produce the article, as they are unlikely to be used. However occasionally you may be commissioned to write a feature particularly for a specialist journal and also many of the plethora of postcode based local magazines are now crying out for quality content so well worth getting in touch and potentially arranging regular features.

A few simple pointers for writing an article:

- Make sure you get a word length and then stick to it. If you go over the limit the magazine will edit down your piece, far better to choose what is cut yourself.
- Avoid using jargon and abbreviations, obviously if writing for a technical journal this is less of a problem.
- Bear in mind the audience who will read your article; will they be specialists in which case you can use more technical language or will it be a more general audience with little knowledge of your subject area.
- Have a punchy introduction, which includes the main points of the article and a strong ending. The introduction should compel readers to read the full article whilst the ending is what they will remember.
- Give examples to illustrate your points.
- Provide at least two good supporting images.



Media interview guide

Logistics

The first stage to carrying out a successful interview lies in getting to the interview, this phase is referred to as the logistics.

Things to consider are:

- Where will the interview be?
- How are you and/or the journalist going to get there?
- When will the interview take place both in terms of date and timing?
- Who will be interviewing you?
- What type of media is the interview for; print, radio or televisual?
- If broadcast media is the interview to be live or pre-recorded?
- What audience is the interview likely to go to?
- What is the journalist looking to get from the interview?
- Is the interview face to face, down the phone or in a remote studio?

If you are arranging an interview yourself go through all the above using the checklist below whilst making arrangements.

- Where
- How to get there
- Date
- Time
- Interviewer
- Media Type
- Live or pre-recorded
- Main audience
- Issues of interest to interviewer

If a reporter calls and catches you unprepared for an interview work through the checklist with them and offer to phone them back at an agreed time. This will give you time to prepare for the interview; do not let yourself be bullied into carrying out an unprepared interview. Make sure you do make the call back as it is part of the process of building a relationship with the journalist and failure to call back will damage your reputation with the journalist. If you really feel you will be unable to help with the request suggest somewhere else they could go with the issue this will help in building your relationship as a source of information.

Preparation

Having sorted out the logistics of the interview it is necessary to prepare for the interview in the same way that athletes prepare for competition.

Key Messages

The first issue to address in preparation is what do you want to get out of the interview and more specifically what messages do you wish to convey. This stage is formulation of your key messages. Sometimes you will already have been provided with key messages for the issue but on other occasions you may need to develop these yourself. It is best whenever possible to work with one or more colleagues to develop key messages. Remember that in a short interview you will only be able to get over a small number of key messages generally three is the limit for any interview. It is also important to keep key messages simple, complex messages are very hard to get over to the public. If the interview is about a situation that is awkward for the organisation decide what you can and can't discuss and have a rationale for why you can't discuss these issues (it's under investigation, I am not yet in full possession of the facts).

Supporting materials

Having developed the key messages it is time to gather some materials to support them. A few key facts are useful but too many sounds like a shopping list. Also take time to consider the most effective way to use a fact, in general large numbers and percentages are more difficult for the public to understand. Also look for a way to use human interest to get over your point, a more personal story can be much more effective to get a point over than a series of statistics.

Penumbra of uncertainty

To be interviewed you do not need to know everything about a subject just ensure you know all the things a listener would expect, it is this penumbra of uncertainty that you must fill before the interview common areas where people get caught out are along the lines of costs and or participation numbers.

How do you want to come across?

The way you conduct yourself in an interview and indeed the package of information you will provide will be influenced by the way you wish to be seen by those viewing your interview. Do you wish to be perceived as compassionate and caring, as an expert in your field, as strong and in control in a crisis? You may wish to be all of these or just some or different things on different occasions depending on the subject matter of the interview.

Practice makes perfect

Finally use a friend relative or colleague to practice being asked tough questions. It is especially important to practice immediately prior to the interview as it gets your mind into the right mode to deal with interviews. If you listen to the local radio you will notice that some interviewees start off slow and hesitant before developing into confident interviewees, they almost certainly failed to warm up in advance. You are unlikely to practice the actual questions you will be asked but you will be well prepared.

Exercise L - Preparing key messages

Pick an issue for which you would like to generate media coverage now prepare yourself for an interview on this topic by developing the following.

Key messages:

Supporting materials:

How do you want to come across?

Finally practice difficult questions with a colleague



Presentation

Appearances

- Speak from the heart
- Relax, adopt a comfortable posture, a few deep breaths immediately prior to interview can help relaxation. BBC rule – bum in back of chair if you can't stand allows better voice projection.
- Be yourself don't put on a special interview voice use your normal speech and voice tone
- Avoid using jargon, too many statistics or unexplained abbreviations
- Be concise with your responses
- Don't worry about hand movements, they are a natural part of communication.
- Don't lose your temper; the calmer you are the more unreasonable a hostile interviewer will appear.

What to wear

Be comfortable in your clothes and dress appropriately for the environment where the interview will take place.

A few dos and don'ts for television

- BBB rule be a bit boring
- Dark colours convey more authority than light colours
- Avoid black though as it makes features hard to distinguish on television
- Avoid very bright colours, as they tend to bleed onto the screen
- Avoid fancy patterns on ties, shirts, blouses and dresses they tend to draw the viewer away from concentrating on the messages
- Avoid check or herringbone patterns these tend to go jazzy on TV
- Brush your hair and check your appearance
- If being filmed at a desk make sure it is clean and tidy.
- Don't wear sunglasses you will look like a member of the mafia, consider not wearing ordinary glasses as they can cause reflections though often add to an appearance of knowledge if this is the image you require.
- Pastels are the most appropriate for shirts/blouses
- Wear make-up if offered the option
- Make sure any tops are not too low cut as you may appear to be naked when cropped down.
- Don't have notes and look down at them

On radio

- Make sure you don't talk too fast, as without the visual medium of pictures you may need to slightly reduce the speed.
- Also don't talk too slowly, as this is very dull for listeners.
- Don't breathe loudly into the microphone, turn your head instead
- Don't rustle your notes or knock the table

Never go off duty whilst with a journalist many people have been undone by casual remarks made to a journalist whilst relaxing over a drink post interview

Remember all interviews are a meeting of two agendas your plan of issues you wish to raise and the journalist's story they wish to tell. Although the journalist is asking the questions you are in control as the answers are down to you.

In pre-recorded interviews if you are unhappy with an answer you give then ask the journalist to redo the question.



The Interview

There are four main types of interview:

- informational
- interpretative
- personal/emotional
- confrontational

Of these the first two are usually the most straightforward to deal with. You are being interviewed because you have first-hand or expert knowledge about the subject and the aim of the interview is to elicit that information. The personal interview is designed to get an impression of the personality of the interviewee or to give the emotional rather than factual details of a story. The toughest to handle is, of course, the confrontational. Often such interviewers merely sound rude but you should never rise to the bait. You need to sound impassioned but never angry or defensive.

You have prepared thoroughly and have decided on the key messages and what you want to say. But what if the journalist doesn't ask the right questions? This is where you can exercise control of the interview and give out your key messages. This does not though mean entirely ignoring the questioning as this is frustrating and makes it appear that you do not understand what has been asked or worse still that you have something to hide and are being evasive.

Bridging

ABC rule – acknowledge, bridge, communicate

When faced with questions you were not expecting or are unsure how to answer you need to deal with that question very briefly and then move on to your main point again. There are several phrases known as bridging that are very useful for this:

But what's really important

But just let me say

To return to my original point.....

You must remember.....

That's an interesting idea but what I'd really like to say is.....

Yes but let's not forget

That's certainly something to consider but we really need to focus on.....

The real issue here is.....

The important thing to remember is.....

What the research tells us is.....

The fact of the matter is....

But...

Look ...

The crucial thing is to move back to your original point; otherwise you are losing control and allowing the journalist to dictate the agenda.

If you need a little time to gather thoughts for an answer begin by feeding back the question in your own words whilst ordering your response, this should help to avoid an uncomfortable silence.

Every question should be treated not as an assault but as an opportunity for you to put across your message. But there are various pitfalls you would do well to avoid.

Having words put in your mouth. If a journalist says "Don't you think that this is the worst thing that could have happened?" and you agree it will be reported as though you actually said it yourself.

Rebuttal. If a question has a built in premise with which you do not agree with then you must rebut it. For example if the interviewer says "So you threw caution to the wind and went ahead with this new project?" you should make plain you only did it after careful consideration.

Negatives. In broadcast interviews you should try not to repeat a negative statement with which you disagree. "So, this outcome is pretty disastrous?" Do not say "I don't think it is disastrous it's just what we expected in the circumstances". This just reinforces the idea of disastrous better just to say, "No it's just what we expected".

Don't be drawn into speculation

Don't be led into areas you do not wish to talk about.

Don't get carried away into unimportant side issues.

Repetition. Rather than referring directly to a previous answer it is best to say, "I would like to emphasise...."

Keep it short and simple. Do not talk for too long. There is always a tendency especially in print interviews to keep talking. Give your message and examples and then finish the interview. Never move onto unprepared territory. Remember the journalist is not attacking you personally just doing their job. Do not get angry. An angry person is out of control. A good way to engage interest is to paint a picture a good way to do this is to start "Imagine what it must be like.....".

Most people's worst nightmare is to attend an interview where they are subjected to an intimidating interrogation designed to make them look bad. In reality such interviews are so rare they are almost an endangered species. You are invited to interview because you have something to say that the interviewer wants to hear. There may be some difficult questions but this is not because the interviewer hates you it is there for four distinct purposes:

- Test out what you are saying on behalf of the audience.
- Signal that you are being given a professional interview and not a free publicity opportunity.
- Elicit a sharp and punchy response from the interviewee.

- Produce a change in tone for the listener's interest.

In general journalists look for seven core things in an interview: Who is doing What? Where? When? Why? How? How much?

In general the key questions asked are likely to include:

How bad is it?

What can be done about it?

How much will it cost/what resources are needed?

Interview tips for TV and radio

There are various types of broadcast interview, which can be summarised as:

- Live or recorded
- One-to-one or group discussion
- Phone-in
- Down-the-line.

Live or recorded. There are pros and cons to both. The live interview is the only way to be sure that everything you say is broadcast, recorded interviews are usually edited. Although you may worry about drying up live on air this rarely happens as the adrenaline keeps you fluent. In a recorded interview you can repeat anything you are not happy with but your response may well be edited and the safety net of repeating should not be used as an excuse for giving a sloppy interview you want the journalist to come back to you again, they certainly will if the interview can be completed with a minimum of takes.

Group discussion. Some programmes use a panel discussion to bring out all the arguments surrounding a story. You should always find out who else will be involved in advance of a recording and decide whether you are happy to join them on a panel. The principle of focusing on the key messages you wish to convey still holds but make sure you pay attention to the points of view of fellow panellists and avoid being caught on camera dozing off or picking your nose.

Phone-in. Prepare as for any other interview, thinking up good examples to support your arguments and likely questions you will be asked. Avoid long conversations about individual's personal problems there is little can be done without more information instead suggest they leave details with the programme and you can call them back later. Make sure you do call back.

Radio Tips

Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. It will give you clues about how the interview is progressing as you can detect boredom or interest. It also helps you to sound like you are talking to a real person.

Avoid taking notes in they rustle and make you sound stilted.

Do not read out prepared answers you will sound like an automaton.

TV Tips

Maintain eye contact with the interviewer and avoid moving your eyes around, it makes you look shifty.

Do not worry about using your hands. They will probably be out of shot and it looks natural provided you are not constantly waving your arms about.

Stay still. Moving about in a chair or rocking on your feet makes you look nervous and not in control of the situation and can even take you out of the camera shot.

Do not refer to notes. You have to look up and down which makes you look uncertain of your facts.

Smile if appropriate. It takes an effort but transforms a boring looking person into a warm human being. However bear in mind there are circumstances where it may not be appropriate to smile.

Looking straight into camera is unnerving for the viewer and should be used sparingly for emphasis only such as 'come down and try croquet this Saturday'.

Key terms for chats to journalists

Off the record - means not to be reported, though some journalists may treat this more as per background i.e. non attributable, avoid using this unless you have a good relationship with the journalist as reporting of such information could lead to you being seen as the only likely source.

Background - means non-attributable information i.e. a croquet player said

No comment - avoid using no comment it implies guilt. Look to use a phrase such as 'It's too early to be able to tell you anything now but as soon as I have got to the bottom of this issue I will be delighted to speak to you again'.

With TV there is often a need to film establishing shots post interview which may require you to be filmed talking with a journalist or going about your daily activities this can take as long as the interview. Do not move out of shot until told to do so by the film crew as the camera may still be rolling

Press may require an action or portrait shot of you to accompany an interview it is a good idea to build up an electronic portfolio of such pictures to use when needed.

Post Interview

After an interview has been done it should be seen as an opportunity to analyse performance and build on the positives for future interviews. This should never be done alone as you are usually your own most vociferous critic and you are not looking for the faults but the good bits to build on. Watch/listen or read with a relative or friend and listen to their views on which bits worked well and why and feed in the bits you felt went best.

Remember even the most experienced interviewees give bad interviews occasionally, so don't be disheartened if it goes badly and remember the sport will not collapse on the back of your interview.

If a story contains factual errors or you have been misrepresented

Consider how serious the situation is. If it is really bad ask for a correction otherwise use it as an opportunity to re-contact the journalist and educate them on the issue and build your relationship with them. Call-up at a time of day when the reporter is less likely to be rushing for a deadline (generally the morning). If the issue is serious and the reporter will not make a correction ask to speak with the editor/producer. If it is a broadcast piece call promptly as these are often repeated at regular intervals and print pieces generally are posted on websites.



Memory Aid - Being Interviewed

Phase 1 - LOGISTICS

Where will the interview be?

How do you get there?

When will it be?

Who will be interviewing?

Type of media and is it live or pre-recorded

What audience will this media reach?

What is the journalist looking for?

Phase 2 - PRESENTATION

How do you want to come across?

Normal speech and voice tone

Take a comfortable pose BBC rule

Do not worry about hand movements this is normal

Phase 3 - PREPARATION

Decide on your key messages

Prepare a few accessible key facts to support the messages

Practice difficult questions with a friend just before interview as a warm up.

Phase 4 - THE INTERVIEW

ABC rule

BBB rule

Stick to key messages

Relax

When not live ask to repeat any answers you are unhappy with

Be concise

Speak from the heart

Personalise your answers; your key strength is personal experience in the field

Avoid jargon and too many statistics

Avoid issues you are unsure of

Phase 5 - HELP & FEEDBACK

Go through the interview product with a colleague

Focus on the positives and build on these



Gathering Case Studies

A case study is a brief biographical piece on an individual person or project to illustrate a wider issue.

A case study makes use of human interest in an individual story to raise wider issues that would, perhaps, be not so attention-grabbing on their own. It also adds an element of authenticity – showing a real example of the affect.

It can also be used to break up longer, “drier” text by humanising the issue being written about.

What does a good case study contain?

Every case study is an individual, unique experience. Bring out this individuality. Include the quirky/unusual/humorous things. Don't write them as though they are a statistic or an example to illustrate a theory.

Do make it:

- readable (in chatty, conversational style)
- lively
- human
- descriptive

Don't use:

- a stiff, formal style
- jargon
- value judgements
- patronising sentimentality

Exercise M - Making a Case Study

Draw up a framework of details and questions you would need to ask to obtain a good case study to support the media story you worked on in Module 2.

Taking Good Photos

A picture can say a thousand words. That's the saying. In reality, very often our photos don't come out as well as we hoped they would. However, photos are an important way to illustrate a story and there are a few simple techniques that can transform your basic snaps into good quality, creative images. Photos can be used with case studies in a wide range of communications including press articles, adverts, posters, internal publications, social media, websites, talks, slide shows and exhibitions to a wide range of audiences. They provide a powerful and immediate way of illustrating our work and are essential to most forms of media communication.

Principles

Words and images have the power to do good as well as harm. They can create or destroy.

Important image guidelines include the following principles:

- The dignity of the people playing croquet should be preserved.
- Where possible, try to achieve a balance of images, which accurately convey the spirit and diversity of croquet.
- The images and text used in all communications must be accurate and avoid lazy stereotyping, contradictory messages and clichés.
- Give careful consideration to the language used to describe the people who play, not only in terms of factual accuracy but also tone.
- Attempts should be made where possible to identify and quote people who appear in the photographs. If they wish to remain anonymous, this should be respected.
- Images must not be cropped or edited in a way that distorts the accurate situation.
- Images should be used in context, and matched accurately with text. Avoid using outdated photos with current situations without explaining the distinction.

Equipment

If you have a camera, it is likely to be either a digital SLR camera or a basic digital camera (this includes most phone cameras), you may of course have a 35mm film camera. The advantage of digital is being able to download images onto a computer immediately to send out to the media. It is also more cost-effective as you don't have to worry about film and printing costs. If you have time however, prints from compact cameras can be taken to a local camera shop, scanned and put on a CD to use in the same way. A zoom on any camera is really useful, particularly if it ranges from 35mm to 70 or 105mm which enables you to take both group pictures at 35mm – 50mm, and portrait shots from 70 to 105mm.

Digital Images

- With a digital camera, all images that are intended for printing in newspapers or other publications will need to be taken at 300 dpi or higher to get the best quality or they won't be used. Refer to your camera handbook to find out how to set this on the camera and make sure that they are downloaded on to the computer at the same resolution quality.

Composition

Good composition is a key element in creating striking photographs. Experiment all the time with different ways of framing each picture:

Centre of Attention

- Aim to have the main point of interest positioned away from the centre of the frame. The 'rule of thirds' means that the main elements of a photo are placed at points one-third of the way from the sides of the frame, rather than in the centre, which can be very static. Try placing the horizon in a landscape or the eyes in a portrait on or near the points where the lines intersect.
- Most automatic cameras will focus on one point in the centre of the picture and if your subject is not in the middle of the picture it may not be in focus. To avoid this, most auto-focus cameras have a focus lock facility. Place the centre of the viewfinder on the main subject, press the shutter button down half way, keep your finger on the button to lock the focus and move the camera back to how you want to take the picture and press the button fully to take the photo.

In your sights

- Try to fill the whole frame. Often just taking a few steps towards your subject will make a huge difference and avoid leaving the subject too small and insignificant.
- Avoid having things in the frame that conflict with the main subject unless they add to the picture significantly.

Get perspective

- Viewpoint is important try out different angles to get the best shot.
- Vary your viewpoint – move to the left or the right, look down from above. Zoom in to eliminate unnecessary cluttering of a picture, or move forwards or backwards. Experiment with horizontal (landscape) and vertical (portrait) pictures.

Photographing people and children

- Make sure consent is given by all people being photographed, including from parents or carers if taking pictures of children. Make sure that the subjects are aware that images may be used in publications, the media, the website etc.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to take pictures.
- Permission pro formas are available from the next section of this toolkit.

Up close

Portraits are close-ups of a person's face and are a good way to illustrate case studies of individual people.

- Take portraits vertically with the head and shoulders filling the whole frame.
- Always focus on the eyes and get the subject to look directly at the camera. If the eyes aren't sharp the picture will fail. Most automatic cameras have a portrait mode which throws the background out of focus and makes the subject stand out better. Alternatively, eliminate cluttered backgrounds.
- If you have a zoom lens, portraits are best taken between 70 and 105mm as this will ensure the most flattering perspective at the same time as filling the frame while keeping a comfortable distance from your subject.
- If using a compact camera remember not to get closer than the minimum focussing distance, usually 1m.
- Try and get as much light onto their faces and use a flash if necessary, even if you are outdoors. If you have a manual camera, take the meter reading from a person's face and adjust the exposure to let more light into the camera.
- Very often the best pictures come immediately after you have taken the picture. People relax and so a second photo may capture a more natural pose.

Group shot

Crowded, happy photos of groups are always a success, particularly when they are crowded round your camera and quite close up. While posed, smiling pictures are great, it might also be worth trying to get informal pictures of people interacting with the environment.

- Try and get names, ages and permissions of all people in a photo.
- Take a few shots to make sure you have one where everyone is looking at the picture.
- Sit and watch, let people forget you are there, and take photos.
- Action shots of people playing sport are difficult to get in focus. Use a digital SLR or a high speed film (400 ISA) and move the camera along at the same speed as the subject while taking the picture.

In context

Environmental portraits include the subject's surroundings as an integral part of the image, providing a context for the portrait. They are particularly important in illustrating case studies and issues.

- Zoom out and use the widest angle possible on your camera.
- Get close so that nothing comes between your camera and the subject.

Being creative Themes

- Try to illustrate the issues and ideas in the case study. Not only does this mean taking pictures of the subject, but it can also mean taking close up pictures of balls, hoops etc. that can be used as filler photos to the main story.
- Try thinking of broad overall themes to explore through the pictures and case studies. Document the work of the project, focus on one subject of the case study. Think of themes such as 'a day in their life', 'their dreams', 'friends and companions' 'desires and ambitions', 'fears', 'generation to generation', 'where they live' etc.

Lighting

Light is the key to good photos.

- Natural light is always more flattering when photographing people.
- Be aware of the sun's position. Avoid people having to look directly into the sun as they will have to squint their eyes. Avoid having to shoot directly into the sun. If someone is wearing a hat which puts half their face in shadow, get them to look up more or push the hat back a bit. Overcast weather is ideal for portraits.
- Colours will look washed out during the middle of the day.
- Colours and skies are warmer in the late afternoon and in the early morning and the best time to take pictures, particularly on hot days with lots of sun.

Sharing photos with the media

Your photos will have many uses, in the media, on the web, in leaflets and posters, to share with partners. To ensure they can be accessed quickly when necessary; make sure they are stored with relevant information in an organised way.

- Label each photo with names of subjects, date, location, event name, name of photographer etc.
- Include copyright details.

Exercise N - Creative ideas

Make a point of looking at images in magazines and on the internet, look at angles, composition and messages. This will give you ideas and inspiration. Try taking a film of one subject / place using a mixture of different angles, composition, light, portraits, groups, posed, unposed,

Memory Aid- Photo Composition

- Centre of Attention
- Fill the frame
- Perspective
- Context

Exercise O - Confidence

Go out and take ten portraits (head and shoulder) of people in your town / surrounding area. This will help get over the fear of asking people if you can photograph them.

Photographic contracts and permissions

When we take pictures of someone or something that does not belong to us, we need to get a release form (or contract or permission form) signed

Strictly speaking, in the eyes of the law the photographer is responsible for all model, object and property releases relating to what they photograph. However, since any potential flak from not obtaining these will hit croquet first, we always get them ourselves.

Model release:

These come in two flavours, Adult and Child. Here the definition of child is extended to anyone who is legally incapable of making a decision such as those with certain mental disabilities.

The Adult Release allows an adult to give us their permission to take photographs of them and use them as we see fit.

The Child Release allows a parent or guardian to give their permission for someone who can't legally give their own permission.

Property release:

If we are taking pictures on someone else's land or that might include someone else's building, we need their permission to take and use the pictures. These are best gathered well in advance of the event and can sometimes require delicate negotiations to convince the land owner that:

- a) It is necessary and
- b) They aren't selling their soul to you.

Object release:

This is for things that aren't obviously people or land or buildings. The text is almost identical to the property release. Examples in may include: someone's car, an ancient tree, a bench. In cases of doubt, the Object Release and Property Release are pretty much interchangeable. The same caveat about delicate negotiations applies!

Using the releases:

1) Model Release:

The Model release has four clauses which will need to be explained to people.

Clause 1) I give my permission for your photographer to take my picture today

Clause 2) You may use it for whatever you like including photo-editing it (usually done to tinker with light levels)

Clause 3) I understand I have no claim to the ownership of these pictures

Clause 4) I understand what I'm signing.

1b) Model Release for children:

The Model release for children also has four clauses which will need to be explained to people. The only differences with the clauses in the Adult version are:

Clause 1) I give my permission for your photographer to take pictures of my child/ward today

Clause 3) I understand I have no claim to the ownership of these pictures and neither does my child/ward

2) Property Release:

Remember to negotiate this well in advance.

3) Object Release

The object release is nearly identical to the property release. The only difference is that the word "property" has been replaced with "object."

As with the property release, it is best to get this signed off as early as possible.



Adult Release Form

Event name:	Date:	Event location:

Name of the person being photographed (in full):

--

1) I **(insert name of person being photographed)**..... do hereby give the irrevocable right to the inclusion of **(insert name)**..... in photographs taken at **(insert location here)**.....on **(insert date)**.....

2) I give permission for the images (without any restriction as to changes or alterations - including but not limited to composite or distorted representations, or derivative works made in any medium) to be used for press and promotions purposes by

3) I understand that I **(insert name of person being photographed)** do not have any claim to the copyright of the image.

4) I have read this form and understand its contents.

Signed:.....
(print name).....

Date:.....

Child Release Form

Event name:	Event date:	Event location:

Name of the child attending the Event (in full):

--

Name of parent/guardian of the child (in full)

--

1) I **(insert name of parent/guardian here)**..... do hereby give **(insert name of photographer here)**..... and his/her licensees, the irrevocable right to the inclusion of **(insert name of child)**..... in photographs taken at the **(insert event name here)**..... **(insert location here)**on **(insert date here)**.....

2) I give permission for the images (without any restriction as to changes or alterations - including but not limited to composite or distorted representations, or derivative works made in any medium) to be used for press and promotions purposes by

3) I understand that neither I nor **(insert name of subject / child)**..... have any claim to the copyright of the image.

4) I have read this form and understand its contents.

Signed:.....
(print name).....

Date:.....

PROPERTY RELEASE

I _____
of _____ (address/company name)
and owner / representative of the owner(s) (delete as applicable) of
_____ (Property Name)

do hereby give _____ ("the Photographer"), his or her assigns, licensees, successors in interest, legal representatives, and heirs the irrevocable right to use any photograph or photographs of _____ in all forms and in all media and in all manners, without any restriction as to changes or alterations (including but not limited to composite or distorted representations or derivative works made in any medium) for advertising, trade promotion, exhibition, or any other lawful purposes, and I waive any right to inspect or approve the photograph(s) or finished version(s) incorporating the photograph(s), including written copy that may be created and appear in connection therewith. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless the Photographer, his or her assigns, licensees, successors in interest, legal representatives and heirs from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of photographs, or in any processing tending toward the completion of the finished product. I agree that owns the copyright in these photographs and I hereby waive any claims I may have based on any usage of the photographs or works derived there from including but not limited to claims for either invasion or privacy or libel. I am of full age and I am competent to sign this release. I agree that this release shall be binding to me, my legal representatives, heirs and assigns. I have read this release and am fully familiar with its contents.

Witness _____

Signed _____
Property Owner / Owner(s) Representative

Address _____

Address _____

Date _____ Year _____

Telephone _____

OBJECT RELEASE

I _____ of
_____ (address/company name)
and owner / representative of the owner(s) (delete as applicable) of
_____ (Object Name)

do hereby give _____ ("the Photographer"), his or her assigns, licensees, successors in interest, legal representatives, and heirs the irrevocable right to use any photograph or photographs of _____ in all forms and in all media and in all manners, without any restriction as to changes or alterations (including but not limited to composite or distorted representations or derivative works made in any medium) for advertising, trade promotion, exhibition, or any other lawful purposes, and I waive any right to inspect or approve the photograph(s) or finished version(s) incorporating the photograph(s), including written copy that may be created and appear in connection therewith. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless the Photographer, his or her assigns, licensees, successors in interest, legal representatives and heirs from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of photographs, or in any processing tending toward the completion of the finished product. I agree that owns the copyright in these photographs and I hereby waive any claims I may have based on any usage of the photographs or works derived there from including but not limited to claims for either invasion or privacy or libel. I am of full age and I am competent to sign this release. I agree that this release shall be binding to me, my legal representatives, heirs and assigns. I have read this release and am fully familiar with its contents.

Witness _____

Signed _____

Object Owner / Owner(s) Representative

Address _____

Address _____

Date _____ Year _____

Telephone _____

Video Production

Introduction

Video is often the best way to illustrate a situation, often more can be explored through moving images than still ones, allowing a permanent record of events. Video is an effective way to convey a message or to represent sport; in more detail than a still image allowing people to see with their own eyes.

Video can be used to support a variety of areas such as profile raising, support generating, gaining publicity, as an educational tool, as a review tool and/or fundraising and often illustrates a situation that words alone cannot do. With this in mind it is important that you represent events as true to life as possible.

This section offers advice on various aspects of filming, from preparing for a shoot to shooting on spec.

Planned Shoots

Before embarking on a video project no matter how small the first thing you need to think about before even picking up a camera is your aim; who is your audience and what are you trying to tell them. Think about the uses of video mentioned above, with the type of video you intend to make in mind think about your audience; this will obviously depend on what you are using the video for. For instance if it's an educational tool it could be school children of a particular age. Think about what would appeal to them and how best to tell your story with them in mind throughout the project.

Know Your Story and planning your piece

Prior to arrival at a location, sit down and write a short paragraph about 'the story' get it clear in your head exactly what you wish to tell others, this will help you with how to best represent it. Think about what has helped you understand the situation and how you could convey this through film to your audience. A good trick is to sit down and write a **story summary** prior to embarking on the filming; this will ensure that you don't lose the plot. If you have time, pictures and storyboards can help to visualise your ideas. A good summary reveals the characters, outlines the main point of the story and suggests where it will lead. Do some research, make sure you are aware of the whole story and think about what you wish to capture on film, why and who it is for.

Do this even if it's just general views (GV's) of a situation you are shooting for background footage for a news piece, for instance. Your piece still needs to tell a story (of sorts) and not

just be a succession of shots thrown together. If you have visited the location previously you will be aware of what you are likely to see and possible people or events you could include.

Decide how to tell your story

Your story angle determines the scenes, sequences and shots you need to plan. Try and work out your pieces angle; are you trying to show things in a positive light, or like some stories, do you wish for your audience to go through a learning process (journey) whilst watching your piece? If so think about building this up.

Think about what sequences you could put together to tell your story, who you could interview and other elements that represent the story. A 'sequence' is a series of shots cut together so that the action flows seamlessly.

The planning process

As mentioned above story boards are a good preparation tool, as are shot lists. It is always a good idea to work out a brief shot list; shots that you think you'll need to get to cover your story. Think of the type of piece it will be for, for instance a video diary may include pieces to camera (talking into the camera lens), longer sequences to show events occurring and possible interviews. Whereas a news piece would be shorter, sound bites of information and images to get across quickly what you want to show to the audience.

To use your time most effectively perhaps do a brief shooting schedule, work out what to shoot and where.

If you are pre-planning a shoot then you already have an idea about the situation you are going into, you may have already done a recce (short for reconnaissance) of the area to assess possible filming locations and the difficulties that may arise, such as noise problems, traffic and people obstructing shots. You will have a fair idea of the shots you want, if possible, these will be based around actual experience of the location from the recce. You will have assessed the best possible filming locations for specific shots, pre-empted the problems that may arise and based a lot of the planned filming around the location.

What to look for in a recce

Indoor shoots will differ from outdoor shoots, but the key elements remain the same. You should look for places to put the camera in order to set up a shot; you should then look around this area for anything that may be an obstacle to both vision and sound, such as moving traffic. Be mindful of distracting noises, audio sources can be very distracting and may ruin shoots where sound is being gathered. Try to use secluded areas where distractions will not occur.

When inside assess the sound in terms of acoustics, for example small rooms may have an echo this will distract from what is being said. Assessing the area for noise will also help you decide what microphone to use; an omni directional microphone will pick up sound from all around and is not advised when doing an interview as it may pick up unwanted sounds, such as far away footsteps. The built in microphone on your camera is likely to be omni directional. In this instance think about using a hand held microphone, held in the direction of the person speaking, or a clip mike (microphone clipped onto clothing). If it is an interview both parties will have to wear a mike, if it is a video diary the person featured in it should wear the mike.

On inside shoots also look for logistical things such as plug sockets for lights, windows and doors (light sources).

Recces should also be used to gage what shots one should get, so walk round the location and look out for elements that will add to the narrative, think about the practicalities of getting these shots whilst doing this, think about where you intend to put your camera, what your shots will look like, where any interviews could take place and any additional things that should be filmed that you feel would be important in telling the event or story that you are trying to tell.

Remember no matter how much planning you do whilst out filming unforeseen events often occur so be prepared to follow any new developments and do not worry if you deviate from your plan.

Unplanned spontaneous shoots

In some instances your shoot might be unplanned and you decide to film something whilst out at an event; if this is the case still try and consider a) your audience b) how you're telling the story and c) what elements best tell it. It's also a good idea to have in the back of your mind how the footage can be edited together; this will help you build the piece instead of just getting lots of random shots that can't be used for much on their own.

Building sequences in unplanned shoots

A *sequence* can refer to a whole chapter within your piece or a succession of shots edited together to create a small piece. A sequence could be something simple such as four or five shots put together to illustrate something. The act of putting the shots together creates the sequence, even though it's very simple it tells a story. This one sequence can be used for different uses; such as GV's for a news piece, or a small sequence within a video piece.

A sequence can also be something a little more complex and use elements other than shots to tell a story, such as an interview. For example if you wanted to film someone's personal

story work you would build your sequence around an interview; which could be used in part as a voice over that tells the story being represented by the video images. You will then need to film various shots that tell their story and put these together into sequences.

Start all sequences with an establishing shot, which will be a wide shot of the location, this will set the scene or establish what the audience is about to see. Get cutaways, (joining shots) to link sequences.

Remember that sequences need a beginning, middle and end, and that if things change the audience will generally need to see the change occur.

Shooting tips

Framing and composition

As with photographs good composition is a key element in creating a striking, visual image. There is a term which comes from painting called the '**rule of thirds**'. If you imagine your image is divided into three sections vertically and horizontally so that you have 9 parts. The idea is to use these imaginary lines to frame your image putting points of interest along the lines. This generally leads to a more effective and aesthetically pleasing image.

If this confuses you just remember look through your viewfinder and ascertain whether what you can see is what you want the viewer to see; this should be employed throughout filming whether it is for an interview or sequence. Make sure you are making full use of the screen and there are no big spaces around the interviewee's head or whatever you are filming. Always be aware of what is in the shot and what isn't.

Filming tips:

- Experiment with different ways of framing each picture this gives you more options in the edit.
- If you are not confident that you can zoom slowly, steadily and without the focus changing, stick to keeping the camera on a wide angle setting and physically move in closer if you want a closer shot.
- If not confident with your camera work don't pan or tilt keep shots as still as possible - the only time you might pan the camera is when you are following the action - e.g. a person walking.
- Consider repeating the action once in a wide shot and then in a closer shot - this will obviously require an explanation to all involved but is well worth doing if you can.
- Use your body as a tripod if you don't have one, stand with your legs a shoulder length apart and hold camera towards your body, gives a steadier shot. **Other methods:** place the camera on a straight surface for static shots, such as a wall or bonnet of a car. In these instances try to make sure the surface is level, it may be

hard to do this so try to avoid framing shots with anything that will make it obvious, such as a straight wall or background.

- Hold shots for at least 10-15 seconds - ideally more, either end, it gives the editor something to work with. If filming someone walking try and get them to walk out of your shot.
- If framing an interview think about **headroom**. This refers to the space above the subject's head. It is standard to leave a couple of inches above the head in an interview situation, don't leave too much as the shot will end up looking like a low angle shot and either add power to the person or make them look intimidating.

Key shots:

- Technically you can cover most action in just one shot. But this leaves you with only two choices in the edit - use it or lose it. Try and get a variety of shots of the 'action'.
- A wide static establishing shot covering the main area of the action (introduces where you are, sets the scene.)
- A variety of closer shots of the main activities going on.
- Close ups of any signage that indicate what the subject is. Logos are good!
- Get lots of GVs (general views) that help to tell the story.
- Get cut away shots, joining shots, to link sequences, this gives the editor something to work with. Cut aways can be any differing shot often close ups of a feature such as hoops and balls or feet walking.

Light

Cameras will vary with light settings, which control how bright the image that is recorded appears when played back. Read the manual so you are familiar with what each does and when you should use them. Often most cameras will prompt you to adjust light effects, for instance if your camera has an ND filter setting (1 or 2) it will flash in the view finder to put a filter on as the light source has changed; do as it asks. Please note your camera may not have some of the below settings, if in doubt use auto focus. Bear in mind if you have your flip view finder open the actual screen has its own light adjustments so you are not seeing a true representation of what the colour will look like once played back.

AE: Auto exposure - set to shoot specific shooting requirements (i.e. soft portrait, sunset etc). Press and change using dial if you wish to use.

Exposure: Controls the amount of light getting into the lens by physically closing the hole the light gets through (also known as the IRIS). In situations with less light the iris should be opened up to allow more light in.

Shutter speed: (Cannot adjust if using exposure) Controls the amount of light getting to the chip by altering how long the light is allowed to hit the chip per frame. Also alters the

perception of movement. Due to this, the shutter speed usually remains at 1/50th (of a second) and is often the last adjustment to make.

Gain: Often referred to as a volume control for the video signal, the gain electronically boosts the video signal between the chip itself and the tape. Be wary that as the gain is an electronic boost it also can make your image look grainy. So you'll have to make a decision about whether you mind losing video quality. If you are filming something that will be broadcast check if who you are making it for has a maximum amount of gain allowed. As a general rule, avoid gain changes as much as possible.

Neutral density (ND) filters: Cuts down the amount of light coming into the lens; often if you move from an indoor shoot to outdoors you will notice a change in the colour of your picture and your camera will prompt you to turn a filter on. If you do not your image may appear burnt out. Start your camera in auto exposure, with a gain of 0 and shutter speed at 50; use the ND filter if you move into bright light.

White balance: As well as the amount of light coming into the camera, you need to control the colour temperature of that light. White balance adjusts the intensity of the colours being recorded according to the existing light. Sometimes you may notice that the light looks blue or cold. You need to balance the camera to different light sources whenever you enter a new lighting set up. Some cameras do this automatically others require manual white balance. Check white balance whenever the lighting changes.

Lighting a shoot

Light gives shape and depth, but is difficult to get right and on television looks different to how it does to our eyes. In all situations you need to identify your principal light source. Available sources are usually the sun, a window and/or interior lights. Lighting works in principle with three sources and two types of lights hard and soft. Think about where the light is coming from and what you are using as a source; normally whilst outside you will have to rely on natural light. You can change the iris (exposure) on the camera in order to let more light in or out, depending on how bright it is.

Tips:

- Best to shoot when the sun is lower in the sky - early morning or late afternoon, keep the sun behind the camera and get a frame that doesn't have too much sky in it or white reflective surfaces to avoid burning out. (put the ZEBRA effect on to see if your shot is too over exposed)
- If in doubt stick to outside locations
- Be aware of the sun's position. If interviewing avoid your subjects having to look directly into the sun as they will have to squint their eyes.

- Avoid having to shoot directly into the sun.
- Be aware of shadows, if the sun is strong it is likely to cause shadows. You can play around with camera placement, shot composition and in an interview where your interviewee is stood to alter this to avoid casting shadows on faces.

Focus

There are two ways to focus - auto and manual. When you focus in manual, you control the focus. To make sure your shots are in focus, zoom in and focus up close first, then zoom back, a good tip is to do this on someone's eye. This ensures that what you are shooting is focused to the greatest extent possible. Manual focus is good to use when there is a lot of movement.

The push auto button switches the camera from manual to automatic just for the time which you hold down the button. This can be quite useful as it avoids the camera hunting for focus. Once it has set, take your finger off the push auto button and focus returns to manual control.

Sound

A top mike on a camera will generally be pointing roughly at your subject, but may be quite far away from them. If possible, attach the mike to a boom pole and get someone else to hold it closer to your subject. Alternatively consider radio mikes (clip on mikes). The trouble with microphones strapped to the top of the camera is they tend to pick up anything and everything - rather than being selective.

Tips:

- Check your sound channels, they'll move up and down if sound is coming in, most cameras have a peaking option if the levels appear to go into the red they will be distorted. This will be very hard for an editor to work with, try and keep the levels below the point where they will distort.
- Use headphones it is the only way of really knowing if the sound is being recorded at the right level/any level.
- Get the microphone as close as possible to the sound source.
- If you have time, at each location record 30 seconds of 'atmos' i.e. the natural background sounds of the location this is for the edit.
- If you must record in a noisy area (e.g. beside a busy road or in a factory) make sure you have a shot of the source of the noise. Viewers will put up with loud background noise if they know where the sound is coming from.
- When working outdoors on a windy day use a wind gag over the microphone to reduce wind noise.

Interviews

If you are interviewing someone or have video of someone talking, you generally do not want them looking directly at the camera. You want the person to be looking off to the left or right of the camera, towards where the interviewer is sitting. The interviewer should sit close to the camera on either side. In order to get the eye line correct they should look at the interviewer, if it's a one-person shoot perhaps with just the camera person and person being interviewed, pick a point that corresponds to a practical eye line and get the interviewee to look there. Perhaps draw a spot on the wall for the interviewer to look at that would correspond with where the interviewer would be sat if there was one.

- Frame your shot so that there is talking room; leave some extra space to the side of their face as if you were going to draw a dialogue box for them, this space is talking room. If the person is talking to another person on camera, this is shown as a space between them. If interviewing someone and they are walking towards the shot give them space to walk to. It leaves space in the shot for the action, whether it is words or walking.
- Always get the interviewee to address questions in the answer ... 'my name is...' 'the situation here in

Lighting interviews

On indoor shoots if you have lights, interviews are normally lit using 3 lights: a key light, a filler light and a back light, positioned almost in a triangle to remove distracting shadows and to create a mood. The key light goes in front of the interviewee on the same side of the camera as the person doing the interview. Think of this as a light source similar to the sun, coming in at that angle. A filler light will help remove shadows created by the key light and will normally be placed on the side furthest from the key light. This light should be softer than the key light. The backlight is then placed to one side behind the interviewee to make them stand out from the background.

When you don't have lights you will have to rely on natural light as your source. Use all possible lights in a room; you can also use the window as a back light (a light behind the person being filmed) if it is not too strong or a key light, which should be behind the camera, slightly to one side.

Memory Aid - Video Plan

Story	What is the simple story you are trying to tell
Plan	Pictures needed to tell the story, location, actors, break into parts
Establishing shot	Sets the scene, wide shot, cover all events, steady camera
Close up	Pick up the details, then take general views
Keep it simple	Don't pan, don't zoom, long steady shots are best

Memory Aid - Video Interviews

Intro Establishing shot to introduce interviewee, preferably involved in the subject for the interview

Camera set-up Head and shoulders facing camera but to one side of frame, main light behind the camera. Be able to see both eyes, which should not be in shadow. Avoid strong back lighting. Point directional mike at interviewee's mouth but keep it out of shot.

Eye lines If interviewee is on right of frame then interviewer should be facing them with their left shoulder next to the camera or vice a versa. Interviewee should not look direct into the camera.

You should use the release forms in the previous section to obtain filming permissions



Gathering Radio Sound

Sound recording is usually on an MP3 clone with sound digitally recorded and potentially then transferable via computer and Internet to any venue in the world. The equipment is also light, fitting easily into a jacket pocket. Most modern mobiles have this ability.

What makes a good recording?

Sound is a medium that relies solely on hearing, which means that for a sound to work, it must be able to paint a mental picture of what is going on. When making a recording close your eyes and try to think what picture the sound paints for you. If it doesn't paint the picture you intend then the recording will not work.

Phrases such as "over here", "look at this" do not work unless accompanied by a suitable picture and even then it is better to have a description.

Background Sound

During the day you will encounter sounds that could be interesting as background for the future. Make recordings of these sounds as a rough guide no more than a few minutes of each sound. In editing these sounds can be laid under the voice recording to add depth and interest. Useful sounds might be balls being hit, applause, or even doors closing.

How to get best result from a recorder

- Whenever possible rest the recorder somewhere stable.
- When no stable surface is available always coil loose microphone wire up and hold in the same hand as you are using to hold the mike. This prevents it banging around in the wind which creates hissing, ensure that you hold it in such a way that it does not touch the microphone as this creates feedback.
- Try to shelter the mike from the wind as this can greatly distort a recording in general if recording outside use a windshield (fluffy).
- Always start each recording with a sound level check to ensure that the equipment is working and the mike well positioned to capture an audible recording. It is usual to ask an unrelated question that will initiate an audio response without passion, in the UK it is generally "can you tell what you had for breakfast today".

Log

- At end of each recording write up a brief log of what has been recorded in the form of Track X Interview with Y in Z time W minutes. If you feel confident to indicate good tracks in terms of content indicate so.

Other Tips

- Practice using the recorder before recording proper gets underway so you become familiar with the equipment.

- Speak in your normal voice the only potential change to normal speech would be for fast speakers who should slow down a bit, only do this if advised so.

Interviews

- Always start each new recording with date and name of interviewee, plus any other pertinent introductory information such as lived in x between y and z. Spell out any names with unusual spellings to ensure that they are correct when attributed to the recording by others.
- Always use open questions not closed ones as these facilitate the best answers. ‘Tell me about your time in’, not “you lived here in ...”. Closed questions can facilitate monosyllabic answers the idea is not to record you interviewing someone but what the interviewee has to say. A few closed questions may be necessary to set the scene such as “who are you”, “where did you live” but these are better than “name”, “you lived at x”.
- Always get the interviewee to address questions in the answer ... 'my name is...', 'the situation here in
- Remember the key questions in the listener’s mind always centre on the following questions it is your role to guide the interviewee to ensure these are covered off in answers. The key questions are: *who, what, where, when, why, how* and *how much*.

Memory Aid - Radio Sound

- Don't dangle cables
- Rest recorder in stable position
- Shelter mike from the wind
- Keep a log
- Sound must paint a mental picture

Exercise P - Gathering Sound

Try capturing background sounds that you think will paint a picture on radio. Then play these sounds back to a friend or colleague who was not with you when you gathered the sounds and see if they can identify the sounds. If they can you are on the right track.

Blogging

Keep it to 300-400 words. This is the ideal length for a blog post and is the amount that people tend to read from start to finish. Anything less than 250 words won't be recognised by search engines.

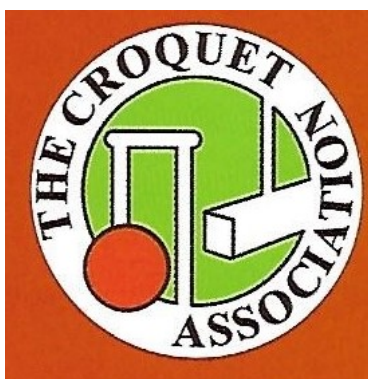
Linking is the lifeblood of the blogosphere. If your blog is going to be promoted by Google, other people will need to set up 'inbound' links pointing at it. And if you aren't linking out to anyone else, it's unlikely they will link to you! And you could end up talking to yourself which won't be much fun for anyone.

Starting a blog is like starting a conversation or a debate. The crucial aspect is you think it's a conversation that will still be of interest six months after you start. Another great opportunity you have with a blog is opening up your club by allowing comments and dialogue. Whether you are asking for feedback, sharing stories, or urging people to take action, providing a place for your community to share back with you shows your openness to feedback and interest in the community.

Use keywords. Be sure to use keywords related to your club in your blog post and its title. Think of needs or pain points your audience might have and what terms they might search in an effort to solve them. These will help your posts get pulled into search engine results and will also alert your reader to the overall subject of your post.

Provide a call to action. What do you want your readers to do after reading your post? Share a comment, visit a website, attend an event, and check back for another post. Invite readers to participate in some way.

After completing a blog remember to make sure you promote it via social media and by directly circulating the link to key targets



Social Media

Overview

In this guide, you'll get an overview of the main social networks that have the most to offer your events: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. We'll tackle each of these networks from the perspective of an event organizer and will focus on how each can be used throughout all stages of your event.

A few key social media rules:

- Proof read before posting to check spelling and grammar.
- Aim to leave at least 2 hours between posts.
- Post only one area specific status a day.
- Check what has been posted previously, to ensure there is no overlap.
- When posting about events, try to stick to upcoming events within the next four weeks only. Avoid posting about smaller events months in advance.
- Aim to make no more than 6 posts a day.

Facebook

With over 1 billion, Facebook is the largest social network in the world. Facebook is a great way to connect with existing supporters, make new contacts, and get the word out activities. It's also the network which has the most to offer your events. It's likely that most, if not all, of your event attendees will be familiar with Facebook and have experience interacting with brand Pages. That means you'll be able to get the word out early and know you'll have an engaged audience throughout all stages of your event lifecycle. Facebook also has the most to offer event organizers when it comes to the type of content you can share. Photos, videos, surveys, and links to your event webpage are just some of the types of content you'll want to focus on sharing on Facebook.

Twitter

Twitter is the second largest social network, with over 200 million active users. Twitter is a real-time information network that empowers its users to share and discover interesting content through status updates (or "tweets"). Twitter is often referred to as a microblogging service because it limits your status updates to 140 characters. But the brilliance of Twitter is really in its simplicity and brevity. Twitter is one of the quickest ways to get a message out to people who may be interested in your activities. For that reason, Twitter has become especially popular amongst event attendees, which use an event "hashtag" to generate a conversation around your event. Hashtags are used to mark keywords or topics on Twitter, as a way of organizing content. Also, because Twitter is the most "public" of the social networks (users do not have to send requests to view the content of other users) Twitter makes it easy to generate word-of-mouth for your event. So adding Twitter to your event strategy could help introduce your event to a whole new audience.

Instagram

Instagram is a fast growing platform that is all about picture content. Get the right image and you can get a wide reach particularly good for images with overlaid words to generate interest and for short video. It is easy to post Instagram content straight to Facebook as well.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the most "professional" of the top social networks and is most popular with business-to-business users. Businesses and organizations can create pages that outline the who, what, and where of their operations, and users can create profiles that are tantamount to an online resume. If you host any type of professional events (training seminars, networking gatherings, or industry conferences) LinkedIn proves to be particularly valuable. LinkedIn is a prime location for users to find details about these types of events, which means your target audience will be responsive to your promotions. LinkedIn Groups allow you to connect with like-minded individuals, grow your network, share information, and

find support. Groups will be a valuable resource throughout all stages of your event process—from planning and promotion to post-event follow-up.

Pre-event planning

Social media can be added to your event strategy, right from the get-go. As the idea for an event begins to percolate, if you're unsure if others will share your enthusiasm, you can mention your idea on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or some combination of the four. Ask your fans, followers, and connections what they think about the idea and whether they would be interested in attending. An open-ended question ("We're thinking about hosting a summer open day to show off playing croquet. Would you be interested in attending?") or a link to a short poll would suffice. If you get enough positive feedback, you have reassurance that the event idea is worth pursuing. Social media can help with logistical planning as well. Use an online survey to ask potential attendees for their preferences on date, time, location, and food and beverage offerings. The URL to your survey can be posted on any of your social media networks to solicit feedback. As a bonus, the mention of the event and fact you're looking for feedback from would-be attendees can help build buzz for the gathering.

Event promotion

Social media lets you get the word out early by posting a save the date right when key details are set. After opening event registration, the social media component of your event can really take off. You can continually promote your event through social media with more frequent posts than you can with email. Yes, you should send email invitations to prospective attendees, with a polite follow-up as the event draws near, but with social media the rate can be a bit more frequent without irritating fans and followers. Plus, with all the noise and continuous stream of updates on sites like Facebook and Twitter, it's good to put out reminders once in a while to catch those fans and followers that may have missed your previous updates. That doesn't mean every tweet, Instagram post, Facebook post, or LinkedIn network update should be promoting your event. We recommend at least an 80/20 ratio for all your social media efforts, with 80 percent of your updates focused on informational and non-sales posts, and 20 percent on straight sales and promotion. If all you do is promote your event, your fans and followers will tune you out and may stop following you all together.

Build interest through scarcity

Announce when there are only a limited number of places left (if that's actually the case). "Only 5 places remain. Get yours now ..."

Fill last minute cancellations

Rather than having an empty space, use social media posts to let people know there are a few last-minute seats available for those who still want to attend but may have originally missed out

Promote what attendees can expect

Post short updates to give prospective attendees a glimpse at what you have planned for your event.

Brand your event with an event hashtag

Hashtags are typically a word preceded by a # sign and can be used to unify tweets from multiple people on the same subject. Brand all posts about your event with the same hashtag (i.e., #OurBigEvent) and encourage attendees to do the same when they mention your event in their own tweets. Hashtags can be easily searched to give an overview of everyone mentioning your event, even those you're not currently following. [One tip: Keep your hashtag short—you only have 140 characters to use, after all.]

As you promote the event over time within your social media circles, varying the language and tactics will help keep the message from going stale.

During your event

Encouraging others to use social media during your event is particularly effective for regular events, where you want to build interest among those who are not in attendance. If people

see what fun is being had, or what is being learned, they may sign up for the next event so they don't miss out again.

1. Think about placement

When you are thinking of where to showcase the hashtag at your event, you'll want to consider where it will get the most visibility. Put it in a central place where people will be able to see it, but don't disrupt the event in the process.

2. Schedule posts before your event

There are plenty of things you need to prepare before any event and it's the same thing when it comes to social media. Scheduling posts with tools like Hootsuite will let you have a presence in the conversation, without having it take up all your time. When you're scheduling posts, make sure the timing makes sense.

3. Have a presence without hijacking the conversation

Your presence online should reflect your presence at the event. You want to be there to interact with your attendees, but you don't want to be the only one who's contributing to the conversation. The purpose of the hashtag is to give your guests a way to better engage, not to overwhelm them with information. The power of social media for your event strategy doesn't stop when people show up at your venue

After your event

1. Upload pictures of the event

Upload pictures to Facebook and Instagram, or share them on Twitter and LinkedIn. Showing how much fun people had can be a great selling tool for the next time you host the same event or something similar.

2. Upload videos from the event

Upload videos—where appropriate—to a free video site such as YouTube. The videos could be used in future promotional efforts and by those who missed the event.

3. Leverage your blog

Leverage your blog with posts about the event. Chances are your readers are just the people you want registering to attend future events. Share your event reactions and key takeaways. Blog posts make for great content for your social networks and provide an opportunity to generate further discussion around your event.

4. Thank attendees for coming

Thank attendees for coming through your social media channels. When doing so, post links to pictures, videos, and other sharable material from your gathering. Doing so provides greater value to those who attended and gives non-attendees a taste of what they missed. All these suggestions are particularly effective for recurring events, as they can show those who didn't attend what they missed out on. You can also link to these assets when promoting the next event to provide a visual of what future attendees can expect.

Monitoring

1. There is no one killer metric for social media
2. Track anything possible to glean insight
3. Social media is not just about numbers
4. It's all relative (focus on benchmarking and trends)
5. Measuring social media does not = ROI for social media
6. View monitoring social media as a Social Intelligence Program, involving the world's biggest focus group

Social media principles

These online social media principles have been written to help empower you to participate digitally, to represent croquet and share the optimistic and positive comments about the sport.

These online social media principles are indented to outline how to make conversation in the online media space and to guide your participation in this area, both when you are participating personally, as well as when you are acting on behalf of a Club/CA or Federation.

It is critical that we remember who we are and what our role is in the social media community (to build our brand and promote positive feelings about croquet)

The same rules that apply to our messaging and communications in traditional media still apply in the online social media space. Just because the development and implementation online of a social media program can be fast, easy, and inexpensive doesn't mean that different rules apply.

The Croquet Association encourages all staff and members to explore and engage in social media communities at a level at which they feel comfortable. Have fun, but be smart. The best advice is to approach online words in the same way we do the physical one – by using sound judgement and common sense.

Principles

- Use your **common sense** (don't do anything online you wouldn't do offline)
- Be **honest** (write as yourself)
- Be **friendly** – match the tone and language being used by others on the website / forum
- **Admit your mistakes**
- Keep **confidentiality** – remember anything posted online is potentially permanent, so don't share anything you'd rather wasn't in the public domain
- **Respect any copyrights**, trademarks and rights of publicity
- **Utilization of best practices**, listening to the online community, and responding an appropriate standard of behaviour.
- **Don't manipulate** the social media flow by creating 'fake' destinations and posts designed to mislead followers and control conversation.
- **Don't disclose any personally identifiable information** about our supporters.

You are responsible for your actions. Anything you post that can potentially tarnish croquet's image will ultimately be your responsibility. We do urge you to participate in the online social media space but urge you to do so properly, exercising sound judgement and common sense.

Be a scout for compliments and criticism. Even if you are not an official online spokesperson for croquet, you are one of our most vital assets for monitoring the social media scene. If you come across a positive or negative remark about croquet that you believe is important, please consider forwarding them to the marketing team.

Let subject matter experts respond to negative posts. You may come across negative or disparaging posts about the sport, or see third parties trying to spark negative conversations. Unless you are a certified online spokesperson, avoid the temptation to respond.

Be conscious when mixing your croquet and personal lives. Online, your personal and business personas are likely to intersect. The Croquet Association respects the free speech rights of all of its members, but you must remember that colleagues and target audiences often have access to the online content you post. Keep this in mind when publishing information online that can be seen by more than friends and family, and know that information originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on. Remember NEVER to disclose non-public information of the sport (including confidential information), and be aware that taking public positions online that are counter to the croquet's interests might cause conflict.

Websites

Writing for the web

Introduction

- Print content is structurally different from web content
- Don't just repurpose print documents
- Online content is not just about words. Good copy and structure is needed.

Reading on the internet

- 'Grab and go' attitude. Search and retrieve – ruthless browsing, cherry picking information
- Want to read less and read slower online
- Scan read
- Everyone reads headlines, 60% read one-third, only 10% read to the end

Planning to write - Know your reader

Journey of the reader - Attention, interest, desire, action, satisfaction

Good copywriting should:

- Connect with the reader - compelling, personal and energetic. Know your readers' goals and needs not yours.
- Compelling offer
- Includes reasons why
- Includes scarcity element
- Is proven/supported
- Has call to action
- Passes the 'so what' test

Writing for the web

- Write as for newspaper articles - Who, what, where, when, why, how in the inverted pyramid structure
- Style and tone - use their language. Tell a story.
- Keep it short and simple. Be brief – get to the point quickly and try to avoid lengthy introductions
- Succinct - No clutter or over detailed information. Focus on text being easy to scan, persuasive. Short and simple sentences.
- Include a call to action
- Write active content (you)
- Don't be afraid to 'edit, edit, edit'

Improving readability and usability

- For each page – one topic, don't assume reader has seen other pages make sure everything they need is on the one page.
- Succinct style.
- Links to relevant pages/sites, Avoid using 'click here' use links to key words.
- Heading in key words/phrases.
- Summary bullet points, One, two, three – listing and numbering helps.
- Colloquial language.

- Good powerful quotes – without jargon.
- Eye catching layout.
- Use images, tables .
- Printing pages is a good way to check layout and formatting.

Search Engine Optimisation

SEO is the process of improving the number of quality hits to a website – getting a ‘high’ ranking on Google.

Bots trawls sites for:

- Key words
- Page descriptions
- Layout/navigability
- Anchor links/hyperlinks
- How long people spend on your site
- Keywords and key phrases
- On page and off page optimisation
- Backlinks
- Google key words phrases
- Social media
- E-newsletters and news releases
- Repeat key words, decide key words and write around them

Style

- Avoid using capitals or underline
- Not too much bold
- Use pdfs when there is too much information to read on screen
- Take down old content and refresh with new



Find the Right Keywords for Content Marketing

Keyword research is a critical piece of creating an effective content strategy. By using the right keywords, you'll increase the visibility of your content and drive even more traffic to your website.

But how do you find the best keywords for your audience?

There are a number of great tools available for both the novice and the expert search engine optimizers to use that can make the process of researching keyword phrases easier and more effective. How should you use these types of tools to create your content strategy? Why does knowing how many searches there are for a specific keyword or phrase help you outline what your blog should be posting about?

Brainstorm a list of possible keywords

Before you can start monitoring conversations and doing keyword research, you need to brainstorm a list of possible keywords. Keep these ideas in mind:

- As internet marketers, we tend to get stuck inside of our own industry's jargon. **What you and your colleagues think of as keywords may not necessarily be what your prospective customers are using when they perform their searches.**
- Think about **topics that interest your audience** in general, those that **both directly and indirectly relate to croquet.**
- Most people are looking for knowledge to address their concerns, so it's helpful to **look at a search request as a question.** If you can provide useful answers to them, you'll soon find that the likelihood that these visitors will become customers or clients increases greatly.

Use social media to monitor conversations – and get keyword ideas

One effective way to get down to the "street level" and better understand how your clients think is to become active in a variety of social media tools and communities. A good place to start is to use Twitter's search function by putting in a specific topic or key concept that you are focusing on. See how your customer is talking about the concept.

You can also use Socialmention.com to peek at related conversations across multiple social media channels at once.

Monitoring social media for topics that interest your audience has two advantages:

- If you're paying attention to what is being said around some of the topics and concepts that directly and indirectly relate to croquet, **you're more likely to be aware of the subtle differences in how your intended customer might phrase a search request.** As mentioned, folks don't know the jargon and industry vocabulary that you take for granted. As mentioned earlier (but it's so important that it's worth repeating), when developing your content strategy, if you focus on insider language, you're not really going to be able to take full advantage of the traffic that could be generated for your site, for free, by the search engines.
- You can **get immediate insights into trending topics affecting your business.** By understanding what's going on in conversations of potential customers, you can develop rich answers to their most pressing questions.