

Media Awareness



Course outline

Course Tutor:

James Doherty

DURATION: 2 three hour sessions

Course Content:

This one-day course explores all aspects of the media today and how you can better understand and engage and will be of particular benefit to those who want to progress their own media career or looking for an understanding of how Comms and PR professionals engage with the media. There will be frequent screen breaks throughout. The course will look at:

1. Introduction to Media & Its Role in Society

Purpose: Establish core understanding of how media systems operate and influence public perception. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **identify** major media types (broadcast, print, digital) and their functions.
- Participants will **describe** how media organisations structure content and shape narratives.
- Participants will **recognise** key terminology used in media communication.

2. How Media Works: Processes, Gatekeeping & Bias

Purpose: Build awareness of how stories are selected, framed, and disseminated. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **explain** how editorial decisions influence news coverage.
- Participants will **distinguish** between factual reporting, opinion, and commentary.
- Participants will **analyse** examples of media bias and framing using real-world cases.

3. Understanding Media Interviews & Public Messaging

Purpose: Introduce participants to the dynamics of media interaction. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **identify** different interview types (soft vs. hard) and their characteristics.
- Participants will **outline** essential preparation steps before agreeing to an interview (key messages, audience, risks).
- Participants will **explain** how tone, language, and non-verbal cues affect public perception.

4. Critical Media Consumption & Mis/Disinformation Awareness

Purpose: Strengthen participants' ability to evaluate media content critically, particular focus on social media. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **evaluate** the credibility of sources using structured criteria.
- Participants will **compare** trustworthy vs. misleading content and justify their assessments.
- Participants will **apply** critical-thinking techniques to identify mis/disinformation patterns.

5. Hands-On Activity: Media Message Analysis

Purpose: Practice applying analytical skills to real media content. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **analyse** media for framing, bias, and messaging.

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- Participants will **construct** a short alternative framing to demonstrate how narratives can shift.

6. Interview Simulation / Practical Communication Exercise

Purpose: Practice applying messaging in a real-world environment. **Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will **demonstrate** effective interview techniques in a simulated scenario.
- Participants will **apply** key messaging strategies under pressure.
- Participants will **reflect** on their performance and **propose** improvements based on feedback.

7. Crisis Communications – An introduction

8. Wrap-Up, Reflection & Action Planning

Participant feedback: *“Any journalist would benefit from James' training sessions. His experience of working in newsrooms and comms teams means he brings a depth of first-hand knowledge that some trainers lack. You will come away with lots of practical skills that you can apply in the real world. Excellent.”*

“James Doherty was a most engaging, and knowledgeable, trainer who brought much of his own professional experience to the sessions. He delivered this alongside a welcoming, humorous, positive, and inclusive style.”