



On the Record

How can you ensure that your audience gets your point when you are quoted in the media?

Unlike advertising, organizational communication and social media, you cannot control messages presented by mainstream media. You *can* be skilled and ready to develop and deliver messages that have a good chance of achieving your communication goals through unscripted interviews and media mentions. Read on for insight into the dynamics that shape media decisions and how to use a secret weapon that increases your chances of being included in media reports that build reputation and authority.

Be Prepared

Chuck couldn't believe it. As director of public relations for a regional accounting firm, he was thrilled when a key business journal in one of his firm's biggest markets had asked for an interview for a story about a conflict brewing over tax policy. The firm had an expert on just this topic, and Chuck quickly arranged the interview. The expert felt it went well.

Now, with the paper's website glowing on his computer screen, Chuck felt a cold knot forming in his gut as he scanned the only comment attributed to his firm's expert: "This isn't the kind of thing that most companies have to worry about," the expert said. "Unless you love audits!" Competing firms quoted in the story sounded authoritative; Chuck's guy sounded like a clown.

Chuck startled at a soft "ping," and glanced at his incoming emails: One from a partner asking how in the world the firm had been put in that context in the story and another from the hapless tax expert claiming he'd been misquoted. This was not going to be a good day.

Off the Cuff, Onto the Internet

"Hey, buddy, what's wrong? You look like you were just hit by a truck," said Larry.

"Actually, I think I was," moaned Ed. "I thought that once I got past my participation on the panel discussion this morning, I could relax. But I just got ambushed by a reporter from that trade journal. I wasn't sure what to say to him, so I tossed out a couple comments about our competitors' booths. I thought I could follow up later when I'd collected my thoughts. But that jerk just sent out a tweet quoting me!"

"Well, maybe nobody will notice," said Larry. "It's just a trade journal."

Ed's phone bleated and he scanned its tiny screen.

"Somebody noticed, all right," he said. "Reuters. Now they want to know if I'm referring to some rumor about our Western division being spun off. I guess I better call corporate for some damage control."

The Why of Who

When a reporter calls, it is already too late for media training. "Forewarned is forearmed" is never more true than when you are dealing with media inquiries. Your organization won't be the only source the reporter calls. How can you deliver memorable messages that reporters not only quote accurately, but that get chosen for photos, multimedia, and social media promotion?

Media training prepares your experts and to deliver the right message for the right audience at any moment.

Who Do Readers Believe?

Audiences want reassurance that the sources quoted in stories know what they are talking about. Journalists, of course, want to construct stories with qualified, credible sources that meet their own journalistic standards and to communicate to readers that the story is valid.

Within your organization are people who are experts based on **what they know** (their technical expertise) and also based on **who they are** (based on their life experiences, volunteer interests and relationships).

Often, your in-house experts can blend these two authority platforms to develop powerful messages that convey both technical information and engaging truths. For example, a regional bank manager is an expert in lending trends and data – *what she knows*. She also understands the humans behind that data because of *who she is*: a local resident whose neighbors' import business is thriving thanks to an innovative lending program.

If your company makes diapers, you have experts based on what your companies knows – materials engineering and infant health. Some employees can also offer personal insight into diaper technology because of who they are -- parents or grandparents.

If you are on an association board, you are an expert in what you do – the professional experience that qualified you for the board seat – and in what you know – issues and trends related to the cause, and why you care so much about the nonprofit's mission.



Both types of expertise qualify your experts and executives as credible sources who can carry your organization's message to the public through media interviews.

The public is quick to believe some sources...and not others. Edelman, the public relations agency, assembles an annual "Trust Barometer" that parses what media sources are deemed most believable by the news-consuming public.

The two least credible sources on the Edelman Trust Barometer are CEOs and government officials. This

If you heard information about a company from one of these people, how credible would that information be?

67%	Academic/expert
66%	Technical expert in company
62%	Person like yourself
53%	Financial/industry expert
52%	Regular employee
52%	Nongovernmental organization (i.e., nonprofit)
43%	CEO
36%	Government official

Source: 2014 Edelman Trust Barometer

means that both your company's technical experts and regular employees are an invaluable source for cultivating and maintaining credibility with the

public. You can cultivate these assets – your experts – to carry your message to your audiences.

Women: Your Secret Weapon for Winning Strategic Media Mentions

Some industries face major credibility gaps with the public. The energy industry, for instance, is often kept on the defensive by environmental activist groups. Thanks to ongoing economic and political turmoil, U.S. consumers don't believe much of anything banks say.

When the very images of entrenched power continue to dominate the discussion about their industries, the public understandably perceives that energy companies or banks are deaf to consumer and customer concerns. That undermines the public's trust in those companies even more and the cycle continues.

Strategic use of unexpected spokespeople breaks this cycle. When your organization's message is carried by someone who goes "against type," or, who is not whom the public or journalists expect to represent the organization or industry, that person will have a much stronger chance of engaging the audience and delivering strategic messages.

Deliver the Unexpected Demographic

That men represent 93% of senior executives at American corporations is not news. It's also not news that women are now half the American workforce. The gender leadership gap is starting to fray the credibility that American companies have with American women.

Women, who control or influence 80% of all consumer spending and hold half of all management and professional positions, are increasingly intent on channeling money to companies that treat employees well and whose people policies are consistent and transparent – traditionally perceived to be "female values."

Meanwhile, journalists are increasingly aware of the imbalance of women and minority sources in their own reporting.

Women comprise 19% of quoted sources in the *New York Times*, for stories published on the front pages of the world, national, local, science, technology, business, style and health sections, according to a 2014 analysis by the Women's Media Center.

The 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project, which covered major media in 108 countries, found that only 24% of all sources in the news are women.

<u>Women as a % of sources</u>	<u>Topic</u>
16%	Business/law
17%	Government
34%	Activist/nonprofit
31%	Education/health

Source: *Global Media Monitoring Project, 2010*

An American advocacy group, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, released in 2010 an analysis of sources appearing on *NewsHour*, the flagship news program of the Public Broadcasting Corporation.

A discussion by PBS staffers then played out in public via blog about how PBS needs to find and use a much broader scope of sources.

<u>NewsHour sources</u>	<u>Demographic</u>	<u>U.S. Population</u>
67%	White Male	32%
16%	White Female	33%
13%	Nonwhite male	17%
4%	Nonwhite female	18%

Source: www.fair.org

Women comprise 26% of all sources for National Public Radio stories, according to an internal study conducted in 2010.

Discussions in the same vein are common at Poynter.org, the journalism news site. For example, in November 2010, the editor of *Fast Company* magazine lamented the lack of women in technology and defended the magazine's efforts to seek them out.

Silicon Valley and the tech community are not as diverse as they should be," said *Fast Company* Editor Robert Safian. "And not enough attention has been paid to people who are diverse and worthy of attention."

Andy Alexander, ombudsman for the *Washington Post*, noted in January 2011 that letters to the editor written by men outnumber those written by women

three to one. He and editorial page editor Fred Hiatt agree that they are "on the lookout for good letters from women."

This excerpt from the Women in Media Center's report "Status of Women in the U.S. Media in 2014" illustrates journalists' mindsets – and why you have a competitive advantage when women and diverse experts convey your message.

"Minority groups are growing at a fast rate and Census projections show that the majority is likely to become the minority by 2043. How can editors ensure their news reports remain relevant if they don't stay on top of consumer trends and news developments in minority communities?" ASNE Diversity Committee Co-chair Karen Magnuson, editor and vice president/news at the Democrat and Chronicle Media Group in Rochester, New York, told the Women's Media Center.

Magnuson added: "Editors should embrace gender and racial diversity for a few different reasons. First, it helps ensure accuracy and credibility in reflecting the total community in news coverage. In my opinion, authentically reflecting the total community is just as important as upholding our First Amendment responsibilities."

When news outlets publish a photo of a woman or minority source, they communicate that source's gender or race without having to state it in the story.

Of course, this is a bonanza for that source's organization, because being in a photo nearly guarantees a substantive presence in the story.

Women and minorities give you an advantage in winning strategic media mentions.

Reporters and editors are neither gender blind nor color blind. They are actively seeking women and minorities to quote and, even better, to photograph.

Key Takeaways

Consider a wide variety of potential sources to carry your message to your audience through media mentions.

Women and diverse employees are both in sync with audience demographics and highly valued by journalists and influencers.

Scout for candidates who can comment based on both:

- What they know
- Who they are

Media and message training is essential professional development for every expert and executive so you can seize opportunities with the right source, who is prepared to carry the right message, to a key audience at the right time.

Equipped with flexible, memorable messaging and interview skills, you can accelerate your organization's reach and reputation.

Next Steps

Your organization has an array of experts – traditional and unexpected – who can carry your message to key audiences through media stories. Women, minorities and other untraditional sources are ideal quarterbacks to carry your message past mainstream media gatekeepers. These steps can help you frame your plan.

Ownership:

Who or what department in the organization has ownership of media messages? If ownership is shared, distributed or decentralized, make sure you know who has ownership of what types of messaging. That will help you identify who has responsibility for cultivating spokespeople. What are your media policies and guidelines? How are they communicated internally? How are managers and employees encouraged to buy into the organization's communication goals so they suggest good stories when they see them?

Inventory Expertise:

What expertise is inherent in your organization -- i.e., what expertise stems from what you do? What expertise is latent in your organization - i.e., what expertise stems from what you know?

Audiences:

What audiences do you want to reach? Who has the most credibility with those audiences? It is critical to identify spokespeople whose credibility and presence aligns with your organization's values and image. Do your designated spokespeople reinforce – or contradict – the right impression of your organization?

Cross-reference your list of experts against key audiences to detect the best fits. What “soft” factors can blend with professional credentials to amplify credibility? For example, a materials engineer might be an expert in diaper materials and, therefore, qualified to comment about diaper absorbency for a larger audience.

Pipeline:

Who needs media training for immediate opportunities? How will you identify future candidates so you are always preparing new spokespeople for emerging audiences? Candidates might be found among staffers who are:

- rising leaders in association or chapter activities or committees
- leading or slated to lead regions
- on the partnership track
- developing a deep expertise in a newsworthy content category such as retirement planning, education reform or labor relations
- positioned with a compelling personal story that conveys your organizational message

Those who are already positioned as experts include:

- association board members
- association executive directors
- firm partners and principals
- regional managers
- division or business unit leaders
- C-level leaders
- staffers presenting at conferences

Prepare:

Equip current and emerging experts with media training so they are ready when the right media opportunities occur. Be on the lookout for low-risk opportunities for initial interviews, such as internal blogs and publications, smaller markets, and friendly trade publications.

“Silicon Valley and the tech community are not as diverse as they should be,” said Fast Company Editor Robert Safian. “And not enough attention has been paid to people who are diverse and worthy of attention.”

About Wilson Taylor Associates

What you say and *how* you say it ensure that journalists accurately convey your messages to key audiences.

Wilson-Taylor's unique media training methodology positions your experts and spokespeople to effectively develop and deliver quotable quotes...on any topic, for any medium, at any time.

- Three memorable formulas create a flexible, powerful tool for quickly framing on-point messages
- Increase efficiency: shared messaging platform streamlines collaboration among staff
- Win understanding with messages that achieve your goals while giving journalists what they need
- Proven training techniques used by leading professional firms and nonprofits
- Cost-effective small group approach supported by just-in-time coaching and virtual training

Joanne Cleaver – President, Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc.



A business journalist since 1981, **Joanne Y. Cleaver** has profiled executives, covered industry trends, and managed major research projects for national publications including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *MoneyWatch.com*, *Crain's New York Business, Inc.*, *Working Woman*, *Working Mother*, *Entrepreneur*, the American Society of Women Accountants, and numerous others. From 2004 to 2008, she was deputy business/real estate editor at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. From 2010 to 2012, she was a senior content producer at Tribune Digital. She taught graduate-level newswriting for two years at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, and has led workshops in creative nonfiction and blogging. She is the author of eight books, including *The Career Lattice* (McGraw Professional, 2012).

As president of Wilson-Taylor Associates, Inc., Cleaver has conducted media training workshops for corporate executives, small business owners, women's business development groups and nonprofits. Her firm has designed and managed major research-driven strategic communications projects for business associations including Women in Cable Telecommunications, the American Society of Women Accountants, the American Women's Society of CPAs, the Women's Transportation Seminar, and others.

The Wilson-Taylor approach to strategic communications is built on a variety of media training best practices, blended with corporate training best practices and 30 years of experience.

How To Reach Us

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Wilson-Taylor Associates

Media Readiness Professional Development Training

What to say.... How to say it.... You have to have a message before you can get it across.

Through our training, you will gain the skills and confidence to develop and deliver messages in unscripted situations, such as media interviews, panel discussions, social media exchanges, and in public forums.

- Your subject matter expertise, experience as a business person, volunteer, parent, and citizen, all can position you to build your personal brand and your company's authority through media interviews.
- News editors need your insights and expertise.
- Colleagues, industry influencers and customers (current and potential) want to hear your point of view.

The ability to handle any interview opportunity, at any time, for any medium, is an essential professional and career skill.

Be prepared to make the most of those opportunities (and to get in on them!). Media Readiness professional development with Wilson-Taylor Associates' Joanne Cleaver delivers proven message mapping techniques in a structured training session. Participants *immediately* gain confidence and competence.

- Wilson-Taylor's unique methodology equips you with three proven techniques *guaranteed* to help you make the most of any media interview opportunity that comes up, no matter when or where. Commonplace media training is a random collection of do's and don'ts served up by ex-journalists relying on only individual experience. Our training is based on collective expertise.
- The Wilson-Taylor approach is structured using adult learning best practices to ensure that participants internalize techniques. Memorizing canned answers leads to one place in an interview: misquotes. You don't want that (and neither does the journalist). Learn how to navigate freeflowing, on-the-record interviews while delivering 'quotable quotes' that accomplish your communication goals.
- Our training is customized for your industry, relevant news trends, and the experience of session participants.
- "Always on the Record" sessions include working journalists (under a confidentiality agreement) so that participants gain confidence and skill in real-world interview settings.
- Training content can be further customized to prepare participants for upcoming interviews or to anticipate expected interviews.



Wilson-Taylor workshops are available on-site and via virtual platform.

Always on the Record

This essential course prepares key experts and executives to navigate media and unscripted interviews with confidence and accuracy.

- Understand what journalists want and how they think
- Learn how to frame the right message for the right audience
- Gain skills in navigating interviews
- Learn how to be prepared for any interview at any time in any medium
- On-site with digital video coaching or in-studio
- Cost-effective and efficient small group format (3 to 4 participants)

Panel Power

Great news! Several of your employees are tapped to serve on panel discussions at an industry conference. But panel discussions can be a minefield. Make the most of this opportunity with this basic course in unscripted messaging.

- Prepare rising leaders and subject matter experts for successful participation in public panel discussions
- Understanding panel discussion dynamics
- Getting your message across
- Cost-effective and efficient small group format (6 to 8 participants)

Individual Coaching for Message Preparation and Delivery

Whether your last minute media training needs are for crisis communications, or just a terrific opportunity to build the brand, let Wilson-Taylor Associates handle the preparation:

- Just-in-time preparation for high-stakes interviews
- Virtual coaching for on-camera interviews
- Real time practice with practicing journalists...including the hard questions
- Congressional committee testimony—making it count
- Strategic followup that builds your credibility and your organization's brand.

Use the News

Don't you just hate it when you open a news story and your competitors were quoted...and you didn't even know about the story in time to get in on it? 'Use the News' equips you with strategies for making the most of breaking news needs. This two-hour workshop helps everyone in your organization understand how they can contribute to media mentions and wins.

- Understand what news editors want
- Learn the 'silver bullet' for getting found by journalists while their stories are in process
- Designed for groups of 15 to 25
- Cost-effective chapter or professional development program
- Ideal for support staff who must vet media and public inquiries

PR Newswire liked our 'How to Choose a Media Trainer' quiz so much they featured it in their latest Media Training handbook! [Take the interactive quiz.](#)

How to Choose a Media Trainer

Media training is a specialty within strategic communication. This quick quiz will help you size up the qualifications of media trainers.

1. The trainers are:

- a) public relations lifers
- b) former journalists
- c) editors of the company magazine
- d) certified trainers with extensive media experience

2. The session will include:

- a) memorization drills so the trainees know what to say
- b) review of the questions most likely to be asked
- c) war stories from the trainer's glory days as a news correspondent
- d) techniques that equip trainees to respond confidently to any question

3. The most important thing for participants to understand about the media is:

- a) you can't trust any reporter
- b) you can always review the story before it goes to press
- c) what their news priorities are
- d) if you can guess their bias, you can game your answers accordingly

4. The best kind of practice in a media training session is:

- a) several short interviews with a working journalists – in a confidential setting, of course
- b) if the participants understand the principles, they don't need to practice
- c) Q & A's with organization public relations staffers
- d) participants should interview each other

5. Cutting edge media technology is a must for media training because:

- a) you have to know how you look on camera
- b) it's not – media training is about gaining skills and confidence regardless of the medium
- c) everything ends up on YouTube or Facebook these days
- d) it's the only way the communications department can get budget for more toys

6. Crisis communication training is necessary:

- a) once you've mastered media training 101
- b) only for executives
- c) it's not – that's what public relations people are for
- d) for credible spokespeople for each line of business, region or brand

7. There's no crying in media skills training. True or false?

- a) False. It's all about tough love.
- b) True. Professional, experienced trainers critique with class.

8. The sign of a successfully completed media training workshop is that participants leave saying:

- a) I need a drink.
- b) I'll never read or hear a news report the same way again.
- c) Our public relations staffers deserve a raise.
- d) I'm sure I can handle the next media call that comes my way.

The best option for each question: 1 d; 2 d; 3 c; 4 a; 5 b; 6 d; 7 b; 8 d (or c)

Scoring