

Creating soundbites for the

MEDIA

INTERNET

TELEVISION

RADIO

MAGAZINES

NEWSPAPERS

with Steve Dyson

DysonMedia

Who is Steve Dyson?

- 25+ years working in the media
- Editor of papers in Teesside and Birmingham
- BBC local radio presenter
- HARDtalk interview series in West Midlands
- 2010: Dyson Media Ltd, with three main activities
 1. Media training
 2. Regional media pundit and blogger
 3. Editor of *BQ West Midlands*, a business journal
- Training involves a wide variety of clients: from local government to the NHS, and from universities to Premiership football clubs
- Also non-executive board member of Waterloo Housing Group
- **Who are you?**



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Media training session for

Agenda

1. Media background and learning:

- You and the media
- What the media want
- Strengths and weaknesses

2. Cohousing in the media

- General media preparation
- How to simplify the message
- Shaping emerging soundbites

3. Media challenge

- Preparing for interviews
- Adapting your soundbites for media questions



You and the media

- What media do you personally read, watch and listen to?
- What media do you come across in your job?
- What's been your experience of this – good and bad?
- What's your personal view of media?
 - What dangers do you see?
 - What opportunities do you see?



What stories do the media want?

- Interesting stories, that grab attention
- This means it's got to be new
- A significant difference, a change that means something
- Sometimes quirky – that 'blow me, Doris!' moment
- A major milestone or achievement – an anniversary, award, or major number
- Money/jobs is always interesting – a major investment
- Always something about people or that affects people
- Pictures and footage are always needed
- Someone to speak on the record
- All this makes a 'good' story



But 'good' can mean different things

'Good' stories...

- With housing: new homes, happy tenants and families, successful communities, people details
- People pictures, or for TV, people willing to be filmed
- Major schemes, increase in numbers, expert comment

'Good' for the media may not be your ideal stories

- The media are just as interested in housing problems
- The people stories behind complaints or fall-outs
- Any hint of financial issues or suspected fraud
- Any problems with customers' money/investments

Organisations need to be ready for either type of 'good' story

- Positive opportunities for soundbites and statistics that balance
- Good people stories to have ready for bad media periods
- Ability to stick up for cohousing successes

What the media want from YOU?

When the story is 'good' they want...

- Facts and figures and names
- Comments from named spokespeople
- Detailed comments that address the issue
- For broadcast, pictures/footage of the story
- Someone to speak on record, on radio or on screen

When the story is 'bad' they STILL want...

- Facts and figures and names
- Comments from named spokespeople
- Detailed comments that address the issue
- For broadcast, pictures/footage of the story
- Someone to speak on record, on radio or on screen

SWOT of cohousing's media presence

- **What are the strengths?**

What do you feel confident about? Past, current and forthcoming stories, future plans, brand, etc

- **What are the weaknesses?**

What worries you? Perceptions, media treatment, messages

- **What are the opportunities?**

What are the definite positives? Improvements that can be easily made, refined messages, increased exposure

- **What are the threats?**

What, if anything, is getting worse? Politics, regulatory changes, disparate media campaigns on housing

General media preparation

- What do you actually want to say?
- Human examples
- Summarise
- Simplify language
- Guidance sheet
- Keep on track
- Rehearse
- Prepare yourself
- What's the theme? Empathy, smile or serious concern?



Simplifying the message

The simple five Ws approach

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- (Sometimes a sixth – how?)
- If you answer the Ws, the most complex message or response can be simplified
- Then add a quote or soundbite, tie up loose ends, and the response is completed



How the five Ws works

‘Lady Godiva rode naked through the streets of Coventry yesterday in a bid to cut taxes.’

- Lady Godiva (**who**)
- rode (**what**)
- naked (**how**)
- through the streets of Coventry (**where**)
- yesterday (**when**)
- in a bid to cut taxes (**why**).



Wynford Hicks, English for Journalists, Routledge, 2007

Developing soundbites that fit

- Cohousing communities are created and run by their residents
- “We’re building our own housing community”
- Each household has a self-contained, private home but residents come together to manage their community and share activities
- “We’ve all got our own homes, but we get together to share facilities and each other’s company”
- Cohousing is a way of combating the alienation and isolation many experience today, recreating the neighbourly support of the past
- “It means we’re all friendly, helpful neighbours, like it used to be”



Preparing to deliver emerging soundbites

- Try to be yourself!
- Sound interested – alert, polite, positive and ‘smile’ (if appropriate)
- Avoid jargon – how you’d tell your friend
- Be passionate – you’re on stage!
- Know your stuff – details to hand
- Prepare by summarising facts – Ws
- Rehearse soundbites – sentences that can answer any question
- Corporate message, everyday language
- TV: Preparation, water and body control
- All this equals QUALITY



Crisis questions

- Listen
- Clarify
- Buy time
- Explain – never ‘no comment’
- Honesty and transparency
- Creating a positive from a negative
- The safe, holding answer
- Always have a friendly version of an agreed cohousing message ready to be used



The 'red sofa' guest

- This is when BBC TV presenters turn to a studio guest for comment on a story
- This will usually be a 'welcome' and three or four questions
- The BBC don't want to trip the guest up
- They want clear, concise answers, creating a quality package
- But for balance, even with a 'positive' story, the BBC will throw in a 'googly' challenging question



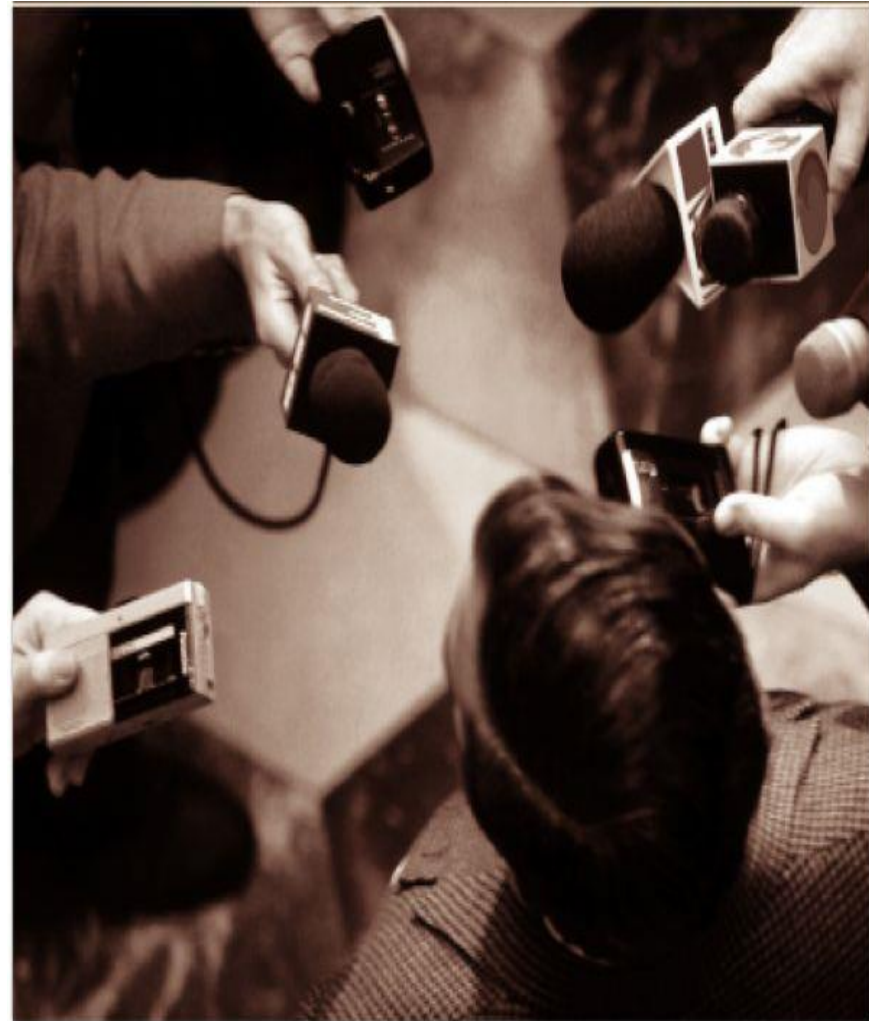
Media challenges

Working in pairs...

- Older Women's Co-Housing
- Cannock Mill Cohousing
- Trelay Cohousing Community

Housing's in the media, and local TV have been out to film the project. You're now in the studio to answer live questions...

1. What's this project achieved?
2. Is this one of the answers to the UK's housing problems?
3. A surprise question...
 - Capacity
 - 'Not joining in'
 - Unfriendly locals



Summary of media planning actions

- What do you want to say?
 - Focus people, useful facts and figures
 - Remember the Ws plan
 - Simplify into everyday language
 - Get rid of any jargon
 - Rehearsals if possible
 - Be passionate – how you'd tell friends
 - Avoid being stiff or boardroom-like
 - Look the part
 - Preparation, preparation...
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Any questions?



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