

Making complex topics understandable

Scientific topics arouse great public interest. Also the coverage of research in the mass media is booming. TV, radio, and the press are the major gateways you can get to reach the public: The very most what people know about the efficacy of a drug, the discovery of a Maya ruin in the rainforest or about climate change come to them via the media. By the way: Also politicians and external capital providers learn things to know from the media.

Why to attend a media training?

Scientists who wish to make their work public depend on a stable and fruitful collaboration with journalists. Moving about in the media environment, however, requires experience and exercise: The rules of press relations differ markedly from those of the scientific community. Only very few scientists are endowed with the ability to communicate their topics in a way that they are attractive to journalists on the one hand, but therefore don't lose their core of the matter.

During one- and multi-day media trainings Diane Scherzler teaches you to draw the journalist's attention to your research or to the achievements of your institute/company. You will learn how to write and structure a good press release and how to give interviews. You will also experience how to actively reduce the possibility of misleading information being reported in the media. You can experience how mistakes and misunderstandings arise, and learn strategies to prevent them, including standard do's and don'ts when cooperating with journalists. Practical and interactive exercises that are oriented towards your specific needs are basic elements of each workshop.

The elements of a media training

Each media training is customised in view of content and duration to the specific needs of the participants. Usually the workshops contain the following topics and exercises:

- What are "the media", which possibilities do they offer to communicate scientific topics? How do the media differ in their target groups and their quality?
- Interaction of scientist and journalist. Work routines of a journalist. What does the general public expect from stories about your research?
- Writing exercises
- The sources of media coverage. How do you keep in touch with the media? Press releases and other information for journalists.
- Writing for non-experts. How to communicate a complex topic in a way that non-experts find it understandable and interesting.
- Exercise: Writing a non-scientific text.
- Which stories are interesting for the media? News values and selection criteria of science journalists.
- How to prepare for an interview. How to give a good interview.
- Interview exercises
- How can mistakes be avoided?
- Strategic press relations.
- How to do press work with a small purse

Furthermore ...

If you have a specific question or a particular problem you can look for specific advice. Diane Scherzler also checks your brochures, your press releases or your website for comprehensibility and possible improvements. Short workshops on particular aspects of press relations (e. g. writing skills, interview techniques) are also possible.

After a media training you will know how to ...

- call the media's attention to your work and to your projects,
- handle journalists und collaborate with them constructively,
- put complex topics during interviews and in press releases in a nutshell so that also non-experts can understand what you want to say,
- exert influence on higher quality media coverage,
- assess your own capacities available for press relations.

Consulting means not to covering a topic

In order to deal sincerely and fairly with science as well as with journalism Diane Scherzler won't cover your research contemporaneously or promptly after a media training/ consultancy.

Your trainer

Diane Scherzler is editor and project manager in the online department of Suedwestrundfunk (SWR), a major German Public Broadcasting Company. The studied archaeologist regularly writes about scientific topics as well as about cultural events. She also teaches Suedwestrundfunk's young journalists about writing for the web.

Since almost 15 years Diane Scherzler is concerned with the subject area "science, the media, and the public" (science in the sense of: science and humanities). The editor works as lecturer at Tuebingen University, where she teaches science communication and writing skills. She gives media trainings for academics who want to improve their collaboration with journalists. She advises scientific organizations on their public relations. Her publications appear in learned journals and books.

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