

# **A SIMPLE GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

## What you will learn

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This is an introductory guide to working with the media. It unpacks the benefits of working with the media and the different audience groups you might want to consider when creating a pitch. It will also help you to put a pitch together for print and broadcast journalists to ensure your best chance of getting good media coverage. It covers the importance of getting your message across and how best to prepare for media interviews.



# Contents

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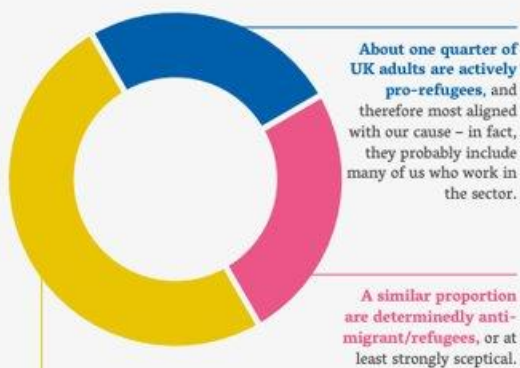
- Why talk to the media
- What makes a good news story
- How to pitch
- Pitching to broadcast media
- Getting your message across
- Preparing your key messages

# Why talk to the media?

## The mixed middle

- Most studies divide the British public into 25% pro-immigration, 25% against and 50% undecided. This group is called the 'mixed middle' or the 'anxious middle.' They have some support for immigration as well as some questions and concerns.
- These are the people we need to reach if we want real change, and we have to reach them on a huge scale.
- The media – even regional newspapers – reach millions of people every month. It's the best way to reach outside your own echo chamber. Certain media outlets speak well to the 'mixed middle' audience such as the ones on the graphic below.

When you ask the UK public their views on refugees and asylum seekers, their answers usually place them in one of three big categories:



In between, there's a 'mixed middle' of around half the population with more ambivalent views, which includes people more or less likely to be 'won over' by either side of the debate.



# Why talk to the media?

## Media changes minds

- The Windrush campaign – stories that appeared unfortunate in isolation, once public, painted a picture of a systemic problem, forcing the government to act
- Calls for the government to do more led to the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme
- IMIX's own research finds that the most persuasive stories for undecided voters are those of refugees and migrants who overcame the odds to try to rebuild their lives in the UK
- So if you want to be persuasive, it's not just a case of emailing a journalist, it's making sure you have a persuasive story to tell

## The week that took Windrush from low-profile investigation to national scandal

Britain's reputation has been shattered by the cruelty of the government's immigration policy



## The British families getting ready to welcome Afghan refugees into their homes

We speak to some of the increasing numbers of people in the UK who are offering their spare rooms to those fleeing persecution

By Eleanor Steadford and Luke Mintz  
2 September 2021 - 5:00am



## Refugees welcome: 100,000 sign Independent petition calling for Britain to 'take its fair share'

David Cameron has said pictures of a Syrian boy washed up in Turkey 'deeply moved' him, but has not specified any policy changes

WORLD • U.K.

British Lord Who Fled the Nazis Becomes  
Champion of Child Refugees

News • Liverpool News • Society

Syrian refugee earns four A\*'s three years after moving  
to Merseyside

# What makes a good news story?

## What the journalist wants:

VS

## What you want:

- A headline
- A good storyteller
- Easy to understand explanations

- An important audience
- A chance to get your message across

Writing a press release that grabs the attention of editors is a skill you can build with practice. The key is emphasising what distinguishes your story – and why editors would want to cover it *now*. Focus on:

- Fresh information / developments that make the story timely
- A struggle, a fight or disruption of the status quo – conflict like the Rwanda deportation or right of asylum seekers to work
- Exclusivity – is your story something new that hasn't been covered before?
- A subject, person or event judged to be of public interest or significance
- Information on upcoming events of public interest
- Human interest stories that appeal to people emotionally.

### Afghan refugee who fled Taliban makes new life in Liverpool

GRANADA | LIVERPOOL | REFUGEES | Monday 28 February 2022, 2:39pm

 Sarah Rogers  
Reporter and Presenter, ITV Granada



### Man who moved from Antigua 59 years ago told he is in UK illegally

Home Office treatment of Elwaldo Romeo's case branded threatening and discriminatory

How the Guardian broke this story



### Beach protesters take stand over 'cruel and inhumane' Nationality and Borders Bill

Dozens of North East groups have signed a pledge this week urging ministers to scrap the controversial legislation

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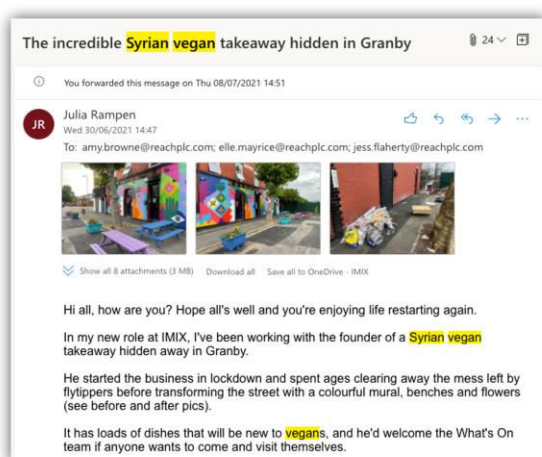


# How to pitch

## Think about the finished article

When you pitch an idea, imagine how it would work as an article. If you were writing up the story, what would your 'hook' be to get readers interested?

Journalists are busy, so make their job easier by showing them what a great piece your story would make. Don't just write down everything and leave it to them to figure out how it would work as an article.



## What makes your story different?

In the example above, the pitch focuses on the fact the restaurant is vegan. It's unusual, it's popular and it's something different.

## Think outside the box

Not everything is a breaking news story, and that's fine. You can often have more impact by taking your story to other sections, whether it's features, travel or food.

By pitching the Syrian restaurant above to the 'What's On' team at the Liverpool Echo, IMIX secured a good review for the restaurant, bringing its owner more customers, and media coverage that subtly adds to the positive narrative about refugees living in the UK.

## Don't give up

Have confidence in your story. Keep trying different papers and outlets until you find an interested journalist. Most pitches are not successful on their first go!

# Pitching to broadcast media

## Pitching to radio/podcast

Think about the show's format. Is it a studio guest piece, a panel discussion, live on location or a radio package?

Who is available for interview? Give a brief description of them and key points/ experiences they could share.

Is there something worth recording on location? An event, a protest, something that would add interesting colour to a radio package.



## Pitching to Television

Think about the show's format. Is it a live interview or discussion programme, video package, or longer investigation?

What can they film to illustrate the story?

Is there a good location/event/ action that's visually interesting?

Who is available for interview?



## The Journalist's Wishlist

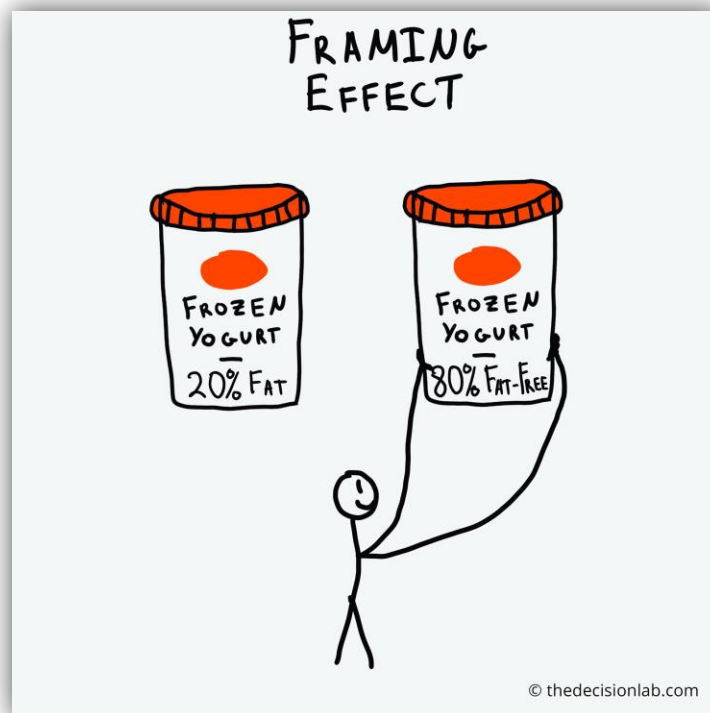
- Stick to **agreed** dates and times
- Answer your **phone** if you have just pitched or are expecting a call
- **Be clear** what is 'on the record' and 'off the record'
- Tell them immediately if you **aren't happy** with the way you said something
- **Complain privately** first, as it may just be a genuine mistake



# Getting your message across

**Narrative Frame:** This is how we talk about an issue - the stories and histories we share; the words and phrases we use.

- Provides a simple, engaging way of **talking about a problem** or issue
- Connects with people's **underlying values or goals** – e.g. natural justice, security, social responsibility, etc
- **Changes perceptions** of an issue and persuades people to be on your side
- Guided by **people with lived experience**.



If you look at the example above – are you going to put the customer's attention on how much fat is in the product or how much fat is not in it? It's all about how you frame it for the audience.

# Preparing your key messages



- **How** would you like **your story told?**
- You need **three bullet points** to keep on message during a media interview.
- **Back it up.** Have some concrete examples that demonstrate your points.

## The Bridging Technique



Journalists don't always ask the questions you want to answer, so you can use a technique called Bridging to get your message across:

- A** - Acknowledge the question
- B** - Bridging phrase
- C** - Communicate your message

### Useful Bridging Phrases

- 'That's an interesting question, but to put it in perspective...'
- 'That's a valid point, but what's equally important is...'
- 'That's certainly been an issue in the past, however...'
- 'I don't have the precise details about that, but what I do know is...'



## Telling the human story of migration

Find us on



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@human\_journeys

And follow our projects



Human  
Journeys



Good  
Neighbours



Un/Documented  
Podcast

Email us at

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