

Preparing to Talk to the Media

August 21, 2019

&

September 26, 2019

Webinars



Pickering
COMMUNICATIONS

TAKE
ACTION
ON RADON

A graphic element for the "Take Action on Radon" campaign. It features a stylized house silhouette with a blue roof and a white chimney. A blue maple leaf is positioned above the chimney. To the right of the house is a purple radiation symbol.

Purpose

- ❖ Today's webinar aims to prepare you for media interviews.
- ❖ Media coverage — *be it print, online, radio or TV* — is one of the most powerful ways to raise awareness & influence behaviour.
- ❖ Securing media coverage is a key element in our strategy to encourage Canadians to test & mitigate their homes for radon.
- ❖ We want you to be the experts that media go to for information.

Overview

- ❖ Media landscape
- ❖ A day in the life of a journalists
- ❖ What journalists want from you
- ❖ What to ask before an interview
- ❖ How to prepare for an interview
- ❖ Do's & Don'ts
- ❖ Tool kit to prepare for a media interview
 - ❖ *Talking points, Key messages & Q&As*

So, you've been asked to do a media interview...



Media Landscape

- ❖ Constant change
- ❖ Social networks & search engines are causing audiences to bypass traditional media
- ❖ Shift in ad revenue
- ❖ Mergers, acquisitions, closures
- ❖ Layoffs
- ❖ Creation of new business models

Long-serving CTV Vancouver staff caught up in latest round of layoffs

By **Connie Thiessen** - July 25, 2019





- ❖ Immediate
- ❖ Accelerated news cycle- 24/7
- ❖ Connected
- ❖ Amplified
- ❖ Consumers are more active

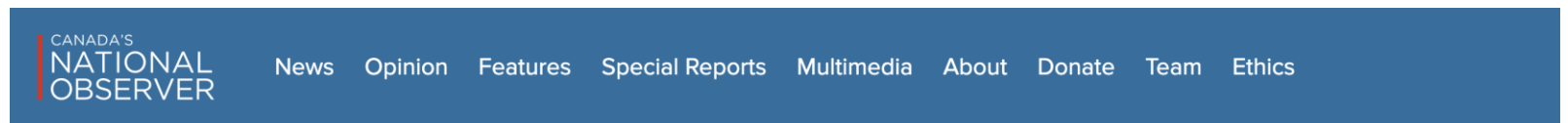
A Day in the Life of a Journalist

- ❖ Shrinking news rooms
- ❖ Have fewer resources
- ❖ Cover several stories in a day
- ❖ Rushed to meet deadlines
- ❖ Poorly paid
- ❖ Have little time for depth or research



What Journalists Want From You

- ❖ Newsworthy stories
- ❖ Accuracy
- ❖ Straight talk
- ❖ No jargon
- ❖ Honesty
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Prompt responses
- ❖ Depth
- ❖ To make their job easy

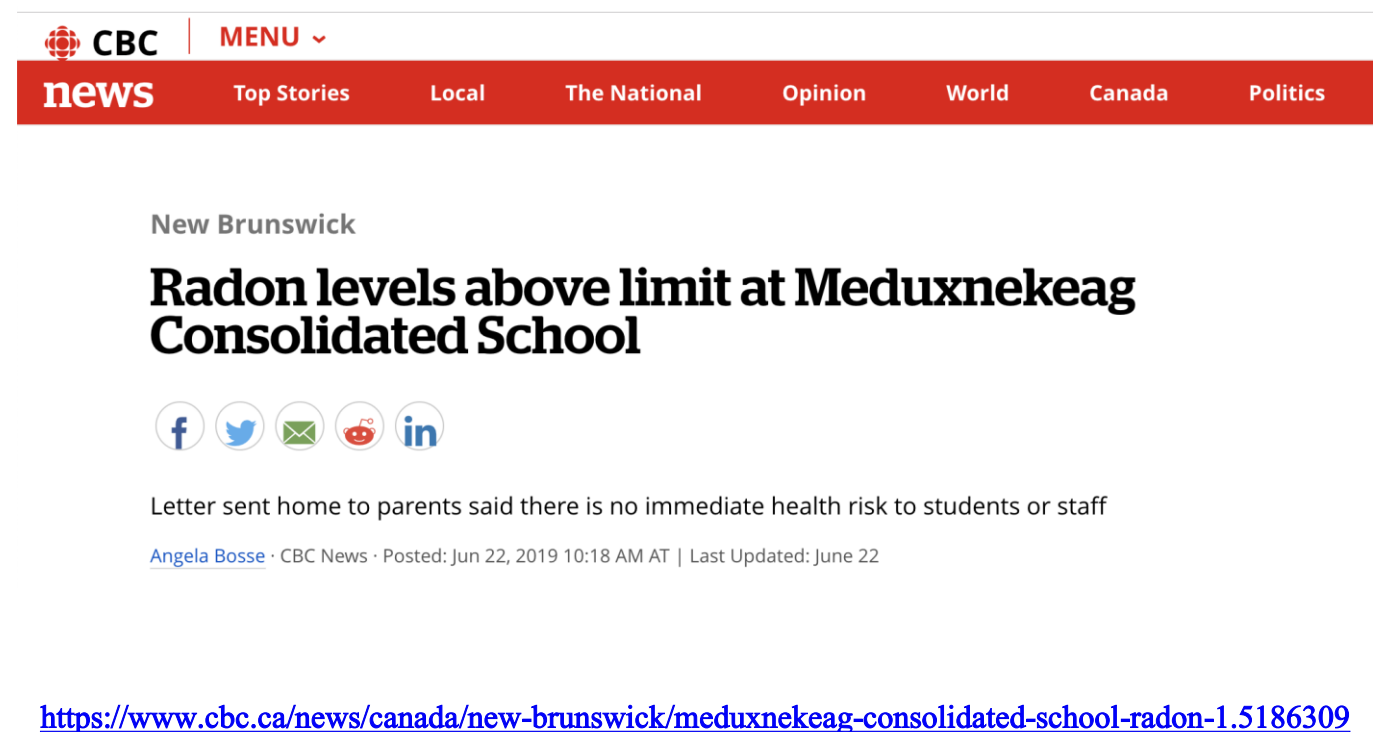


Questionable TVA story a reminder of media's responsibility to report carefully

By [Toula Drimonis](#) in [Opinion](#), [Politics](#) | December 14th 2017

What's a Newsworthy Story?

- ❖ Timely
- ❖ Human Interest
- ❖ Local
- ❖ New/Innovative
- ❖ Drama/Conflict
- ❖ Victory/Defeat
- ❖ Out of the Ordinary



What to Ask Before an Interview?

1. Who are you, what media outlet do you work for?
2. What story are you working on?
3. What angle will you be approaching the story from?
4. Will you be interviewing anyone else?
5. What's the format/where? (phone, live, taped, quick quote or in-depth piece, on-set, etc.)



What to Ask Before an Interview

6. What do you need from me (graphics, backgrounders, news releases, etc.)?
7. What is your deadline?
8. How do I contact you?
9. Who is doing the interview?
10. How long is the interview?
11. When will the piece be published or aired?



A radon detector. Photo supplied by KFLA Public Health STEPH CROSIER / STEPH CROSIER/KINGSTON WHIG-

Do ...

1. ...prepare and approach your interview from the public's viewpoint.
2. ...assume every word you say will be quoted.
3. ...keep to the facts and keep answers short and to the point.
4. ...make your delivery anecdotal and conversational.
5. ...develop 3 - 5 key messages you want your audience to remember.
6. ...provide examples, analogies or metaphors when relevant.
7. ...cite sources when necessary.
8. ...be yourself and be honest.
9. ...dress for the occasion if you're going on TV for an interview.
Avoid all white and busy designs with a lot of colour.

Don't ...

1. ...ever wing an interview. Like any other interview in life, it pays to prepare. Have a Q&A session with a colleague and set yourself up with three to four key points you'd like to communicate during the interview.
2. ...conduct an impromptu interview if a reporter contacts you directly. If you do, you won't have time to prepare.
3. ...ever go off the record or say "no comment". Everything you say during an interview can be quoted. And, instead of saying "no comment," say you are unsure of the answer or cannot discuss it. You can also ask a reporter if you can follow up with an answer before the end of day.
4. ...ever argue or disagree with a reporter. All it takes is one soured relationship for a reporter to never interview you again.
5. ...talk too much and go off on tangents. Try speaking in soundbites and, when appropriate, make comments that are two to three sentences long.

Don't ...

6. ...express personal opinions, speculate or exaggerate. Stick to the facts, or you might have to back up your statements at a later date.
7. ...disparage your competition or speak for others. It's not polite to talk bad about others. If a question comes up about your competition, let a reporter know you can't speak for others, then transition back to your message.
8. ...drop your guard when the interview is over. It wouldn't be good if you said something out-of-context and the camera was still rolling.
9. ...ask to see a story before it runs. Unless it's an advertorial, it's not going through you for approval. If there is a factual mistake in an online or print story after it runs, follow up with the reporter and politely ask for a correction.
10. ...say anything you don't want thousands of people to know. Say what you do want others to know.

In a Nutshell...

- ❖ Be prepared
 - ❖ (Key messages and Q&As)
- ❖ Practice
- ❖ Stay on message
- ❖ Be professional
- ❖ Be authentic & direct

Tool Kit to Prepare for a Media Interview

- ❖ Rationale for 2019 TAOR Campaign
- ❖ Talking Points
- ❖ How to Develop Key Messages
- ❖ How to Support your Key Messages
- ❖ Key Message Worksheet
- ❖ Why it's Important to Develop Q&As
- ❖ Tips to Prepare Q&As

TAOR 2019 Campaign Rationale

- ❖ Radon action month campaign theme: Today for Tomorrow:
#todayfortomorrow
- ❖ Prevention, healthy habits...There are simple ways that Canadians look after their health, choosing healthy foods, regular exercise and a good night sleep. These are healthy habits that are engrained in our mind, we need to add radon testing to our list. Test your home for radon – the link is clear – prevent future lung cancer... a simple action today for tomorrow.

Talking Points

- ❖ November is Radon Action Month and Canadians across the country are encouraged to test their homes for radon.
- ❖ Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas that can build up in ANY home, regardless of the home's location, age, size, design or upkeep.
- ❖ All Canadians should be aware of the serious health risks posed by radon gas in the home.
- ❖ Long-term exposure to high levels of radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.
- ❖ Radon-related lung cancer is responsible for more Canadian deaths per year than motor vehicle collisions, house fires, carbon monoxide poisonings, and accidental drowning combined. Yet, only 6% of the population has tested their home for radon.
- ❖ When it comes to protecting your family's health and safety, testing for radon should be as automatic as installing a smoke detector or buckling your seatbelt.
- ❖ Radon is present, in varying concentrations, in every region of Canada – every home has a potential to have elevated radon levels.
- ❖ Because radon gas is colourless, odourless and tasteless, the ONLY way to know if radon is present in dangerous levels is to have your home tested.
- ❖ Testing for radon is simple and affordable. Test kits may be purchased online or from a C-NRPP Radon measurement professional. The detector kit – which is about the size of a hockey puck – is placed in an area of the home and left alone for 91 days or longer. At the end of the test period, the kit is mailed away for analysis. The results of the test will then be provided to the homeowner.
- ❖ If your home is found to have high levels of radon, a certified radon professional can help determine the best course of action for reducing your home's radon levels. Typically, this will involve installing a mitigation system which effectively reduces radon levels inside the home. Costs for radon mitigation vary from home to home, but are comparable to updating your furnace or installing central air conditioning.
- ❖ To learn more: **TakeActionOnRadon.ca**

How to Develop Key Messages

The **CUBE: A** approach — Messages should be:

1. **C**onsistent
2. **U**nburdened (no jargon)
3. **B**rief
4. **E**ar-worthy
5. **A**udience Focused

Source: Brad Phillips, The Media Training Bible

How to Support your Key Messages

- ❖ Illustrate your messages with examples, details, stats.
- ❖ Put the story in human terms
 - e.g. *radon testing device is the size of a hockey puck*
- ❖ Be prepared to provide basic facts and answer the 5Ws + How.
- ❖ Who, What, Where, When, Why & How.



Example of a Key Message

Long term exposure to high levels of radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.

Human interest/ Story

“In one of the houses I was mitigating, I found out that somebody’s spouse had just been diagnosed with cancer. That will be the 4th case, I’ve dealt with this year,” says Jane xxx, a mitigation specialists.

Statistic

Health Canada estimates that over 1 million Canadian homes have high radon levels. 1 Albertan a day is diagnosed with radon associated cancer.

Sound bite:

Radon-related lung cancer is responsible for more Canadian deaths per year than motor vehicle collisions, house fires, carbon monoxide poisonings, and accidental drowning.

Key Message Worksheet

Message 1: _____

Stories:

1. _____

2. _____

Statistics:

1. _____

2. _____

Sound Bites:

1. _____

2. _____

Message2: _____

Stories:

1. _____

2. _____

Statistics:

1. _____

2. _____

Sound Bites:

1. _____

2. _____

Why it's Important to Develop Q&As

Q&As are a dynamic tool that allow you to:

- ❖ Test the robustness of your key messages
- ❖ Prepare you for effective delivery.
- ❖ Build confidence.
- ❖ Think through all likely scenarios
- ❖ Demonstrate understanding of audience concerns.
- ❖ Keep everyone on the same page
- ❖ Ensure messaging is: clear, concise, credible, consistent, constructive

Take Action on Radon - Q&As

Q. What is radon?

A. Radon is an invisible, odourless, radioactive gas that is released when the mineral uranium breaks down in the soil. Concentrations vary across the country, but all homes in Canada have some detectable amount of radon gas, since low levels of radon are present even in outdoor air.

Q. Does radon pose a health risk?

A. Yes. Long-term exposure to elevated levels of radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths in non-smokers, and the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco. Radon-related cancer is responsible for approximately 3200 Canadian deaths each year – that's more than the annual number of deaths caused by motor vehicle collisions, house fires, carbon monoxide poisoning and accidental drowning, combined.

Q. How does radon enter the home?

A. Radon gas can find entry into homes through foundations, cracks, pipes and drains. Trapped in a sealed, indoor environment, radon gas can build up to dangerous levels, especially during the winter months when doors and windows are kept tightly closed.

Q. At what concentration does radon become dangerous?

A. While there is no 'safe' amount of radon, Health Canada has set 200 Bq/m³ as the maximum 'acceptable' level for an occupied home. Homes with radon concentrations greater than 200 Bq/m³ should be mitigated to reduce their radon levels.

Q. Are some homes more likely than others to have high levels of radon?

A. No. Radon can find its way into ANY home, regardless of location, size, age, construction, design or upkeep. Radon levels can vary greatly from one house to the next, even those on the same street or in the same neighbourhood.

Q. How will I know if there is radon in my home?

A. Because radon gas is invisible, odourless and tasteless, the only way to know if it is present is to have your home tested. Test kits are affordable, simple to use, and may be purchased online or from a radon mitigation professional in your area. You can find listings for approved test kits online at www.takeactiononradon.ca.

Q. How much will it cost to test my home for radon?

A radon detection kit may be purchased for about \$40. A small device about the ^{more}size of hockey puck, is placed in the home for a period of three months, and then mailed away to a lab for analysis.

Take Action on Radon Q&As (continued)

Q. What do I do if my home has high levels of radon?

The first step is to call a certified radon professional in your area. A Canadian-National Radon Proficiency Program (C-NRPP) certified professional will assess your home, and determine likely points of entry for radon gas. They can then recommend and install the radon mitigation system that will be most effective in reducing your home's radon levels.

Q. What is radon mitigation?

Radon mitigation is the process of reducing concentrations of radon gas in a home or building. Types of mitigation include:

- **sealing the foundation** to prevent radon gas from entering the home, reduces radon by an average of 13%
- **removing radon from the ground** below the home using a process called *Active Soil Depressurization (ASD)*; when using a C-NRPP professional reduces radon on average by 90%
- **installing a ventilation system** to reduce radon concentrations in the air, may reduce radon between 25-50%

Q. How much will it cost to mitigate my home?

Because each house is unique, mitigation costs can vary from home to home. The average cost of a radon reduction system is between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Q. How often should I test my home for radon?

Radon levels vary day-to-day or week-to-week, so it's important to test your home for a minimum of 3 months, preferably during the heating season when indoor radon concentrations tend to be highest. Ideally, you should re-test your home every 5 years.

Q. Is there any message you'd like to leave our audience with?

Test your home. It can save lives.

Q. Where can I find more information about radon, find a test kit or a C-NRPP certified radon mitigation specialist?

- www.TakeActiononRadon.ca

Tips to Prepare Q&As

- ❖ Use your own words in developing the answers.
- ❖ Build your answers on the TAOR Talking Points and Q&As
- ❖ Tailor your answers to your community and area of specialty (localize answers)
- ❖ Test credibility of your answers with a reliable partner
- ❖ Keep answers clear, concise, consistent, constructive
- ❖ Update based on feedback

Questions?



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