

introduction to dealing with the press & media

The following notes were produced following a training session run by Rachel Sloane of BBC Radio Suffolk.

The notes DO NOT reproduce in full the presentation as Rachel gave it, but do reflect some basic points to bear in mind when dealing with the media.

The information was correct at the time of going to print, but please make your own enquiries before contacting members of the press, as they may well have changed contact details by now.

This training event was held as part of **making art work**, the professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk. For more information about the scheme, please visit the Suffolk County Council web site at www.suffolkcc.gov.uk and follow the link from Leisure and Culture to the Arts.



making art work is a professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk, devised and managed by Suffolk County Council and part financed by the European Union European Social Fund and Arts Council England Grants for the Arts.

Get to know your local radio stations and press

Do some research, find out names and acquaint yourself with the format of programmes and newspaper contents – otherwise how can you know that it's the right vehicle for your publicity?

Contact details: —

RACHEL SLOANE

BBC Radio Suffolk

01473 250000

email rachel.sloane@bbc.co.uk

Producer = Sally Goodwin

BBC Radio Suffolk daily programme schedule

Breakfast programme, 7am – 10am

Presenter = **Mark Murphy**

Email mark.murphy01@bbc.co.uk

Programme carries news and a phone-in slot.

Make it Happen, 10am – 1pm

Presenter = **Nick Risby**

Phone in 01473 212121

nick.risby@bbc.co.uk

This contains a slot where people call in asking for advice and practical help to make things happen.

Band lengths for Radio Suffolk

95.5 — Lowestoft

95.9 — South Coastal strip

103.9 — Ipswich

104.6 — Bury St Edmunds

The basic tenet of getting into the press is 'Do you have a story'? So, ask yourself the question

"What is it about what I do that makes it DIFFERENT?"

It could be that you work

- with a particular material
- in a particular place
- at a particular time
- with a particular group of people

Everyone's story is different. You have to think it through a bit, realise what the difference is – and then push that difference.

Ripples in the water

Radio Suffolk will have its own links with other stations, such as SGR and with printed press and local TV networks. It is also linked into London newsrooms.

This doesn't mean that one press release to Rachel is going to reach every broadcast journalist in the country, but it does mean that you stand a chance of big stories going beyond the county and reaching many different audiences.

How to get into the press

The most obvious, and expensive, is advertising.

Frankly, there's little need to pay the astronomical fees the papers charge, as

there's lots of other ways of getting your message across. For example —

- **Press releases** — for events about to happen.

If you can email, so much the better – it makes their job easier. And if you can email images, that's better still. Don't write pages and pages. Press releases need to address the following points

- WHAT
- WHEN
- WHY
- WHERE
- WHO
- HOW

FINISH WITH A CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER FOR MORE INFORMATION.

- **Reports** on what's just happened
It really helps if you can supply photos or if your story ties into another one running in local/national press.

For example, maybe the **national press** runs a story similar to something you're about to do/just did/thinking about doing/ know a person whose cat did something similar not so long ago.

Call the local press to let them. If the story runs in the national press for a few days, the local press will be looking for something with a local angle. And you'll be first in line.

- **Interviews**

As George Michael so eloquently put it, if you've got something to say, why don't you say it.

- **Letters page**

As an artist you may wish to respond to a particular point someone's made.

- **What's on pages & broadcasts**
Free listings for exhibitions, events etc.

- **Specialist columns**

Think sideways – maybe the local paper does a page on business skills for small businesses. As an artist you've got a view; share it.

- **Regular columns**

Again, offer an artistic slant on views expressed either in the printed press or over the wavelengths.

- **Advice pages/programmes**

Maybe you need a source of specialist paper for a special exhibition or even half a dozen strong people to help move a kiln. Radio Suffolk does a special phone in session, where volunteers offer everything from materials to their time in doing stuff. And you get two bites of the cherry, because you can always call back and thank them for their help.

- **phone-ins**

If you've got an exhibition coming up, get a pal to call in a **dedication**, making sure the time and address of the gallery get s mentioned.

When you get through to the press

- Be prepared

If you are about to do a radio broadcast, take a few minutes to list the things you really NEED to get across.

- Stay focused

Keep on track during the interview — try not to wander too far from the points you want to make.

- Enjoy

Imagine you're telling a friend, rather than an anonymous radio audience.

Use the press — they need you

There are thousands of broadcast hours to fill and acres of newspaper to print. They need your story — so make it easy for them to get it.

And remember, they know their audiences.

So if they end up cutting what you considered the most salient part of a radio interview or writing something you think you never said, remember they most probably have a reason - and that reason will be based on their knowledge of the audience.

LOCAL PRESS CONTACTS

EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES

For short listing details, contact either Juliet Garnham or Julian Read (Entertainments Editor) at Press House, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 1AN.
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