

RADIO NEWS PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

PREPARED BY MATUTE MENYOLI

CRTV SOUTH WEST

The topic the organizers of this seminar have asked me to discuss with you is a very challenging and vast one. We have been asked to talk about news preparation right up to delivery on air for public consumption.

While our emphasis will be on News gathering, writing for Radio news and Presentation, we will equally hastily talk about what news is and News worthiness.

What is News?

It is sometimes difficult to give a universal definition of the word News. As a working definition however, one can say that NEWS is a new piece of information about a significant and recent event that affects the listeners and is of interest to them. Simply put, News is information about events, people or issues that the public wants or needs to know.

Newsworthiness

When you judge and try to determine whether something is News, you're determining whether it's Newsworthy. And one way to do that is to ask yourself if it contains the characteristics of a story that makes it appeal to readers.

- Timeliness – it must be fresh
- Proximity – (Nearness)
- Human Interest: This has to do with people's lives and emotions.
- Conflicts – e.g. wars
- Prominence – prominent people, places or things make news.
- Development News, Government action and Sports.

After looking at what News is and what we can consider for News, let's now look at News Gathering – that is putting the material together.

B) **News Gathering:** A News story may be any where but it needs to be identified and the facts put together by the reporter. This is therefore the centre of News gathering which equally means finding stories and identifying and approaching the sources.

- To find good stories and sources, you have to be active, curious, imaginative and self-motivated. Look, listen and make sure you take notes wherever you go whatever you do.
- Be choosy about which sources you select together facts. Make sure they are up to date and have a reputation for accuracy. If you have any doubt about any information from a sources, double-check it with another sources

Types of sources:

- A primary sources is a person wit first hand information on a topic e.g an official report, an expert etc. you can use as many as possible.
- Secondary source – person or source that can offer reliable second hand information on a topic. Reference books and other media are common secondary sources, including people with informed opinion on a topic.
- Anonymous source – this is usually from somebody termed as an “insider” who can not be mentioned publicly

Hard and soft News

- **Hard News** – this is straight News that is strictly factual reporting of New that is current and important. For example inauguration of the Mungo bridge y the Prime Minister of the Republic.
- **Soft News:** This is mostly News that entertains as well as inform. It usually appeals to the emotions and is less current and important than hard News. An interview for example of a musician.

➤ **Tools for News Gathering:**

Here we will briefly talk about a few key issues that can easily set the stage for News Gathering.

- i) Editorial conference: Since news production is team work, most newsrooms hold regular meetings, preferably in the morning. It is aimed at evaluating and planning and it is presided at by the editor.
- ii) Other important tools include – the assignment sheet, contact book, personal contacts and original notes.

➤ **Interviews:** the Interview is quite essential to most stories and common way for reporters to get information. Infact most stories simply can't be reported without consulting sources.

➤ Information Interviews – Here reporters may conduct brief, information interviews with peoples they meet casually at events or with people offering on the spot information.

➤ Formal interview – here reporters usually scheduled time for a formal interview and prepare a list of questions to ask.

Note: Always make sure you prepare very well for an interview, carryout proper research of the topic or the personality to be interview. You then make sure you take a concrete date with the person to be interviewed and prepare well for it.

➤ Also make sure you put your material n place before the agreed time.

➤ Make sure you ask your questions straight and listen carefully so that you can take advantage of your interview answers to sometimes ask follow – up questions.

➤ Get accurate and complete information; interact in a polite but relaxed manner with your source.

➤ Ask questions that are simple, clear and get right to the point.

Types: By appointment, News conference, on the spot, Telephone, live and Vox Pop.

Writing for radio News: The most important thing you should bear in mind is that writing for radio is writing for the ear. Write as you would speak. Writing for radio is quite different from writing for the eye. Here the listener cannot go back to recheck a fact.

There are however five key principles you should remember about any radio programme especially News:

- It is spoken: it is only written literature, it is spoken.
- It's immediate: Radio is the now "medium".
- It's a person to person to person: Even if there are thousands of people listening at the same time each one is doing so on his own or in small groups.
- It's heard only once: the broadcast, once made is gone and the listener has no means of referring to what was said.
- It's sound only: Don't be vague or ambiguous. Remember that words are the bridge between the News writer and the listener.

Note: Keep therefore your sentences, crisp or in other words, write it tight!

- **How to structure a News Item:** The structure of a straight News item is an inverted pyramid. Here you will realize that the arrangement in News writing is the reverse of the literacy form.
- Journalistic writing focuses on reporting the facts of a News story – the who, what, when where why and how.

But remember the watch words of good writing – Accuracy and objectivity.

- The lead or climax of the story comes on top – what is the News?
- The second paragraph sets the scene. Who is the main actor, where did the event take place? Or on what occasion?
- Then other elements of the story like other important supporting facts.

- Background like why.
- To end the story makes sure that you repeat the main News elements but using different words and sentences.

Presentation:

- Radio can take listener to where the News is being made.
Nowadays, a large proportion of a major modern News bulletin is made up of audio material, other than the voice of the presenter.

Types of News Programmes:

- **Headline Newscast** – A brief News-cast that contains the top News development of that moment.
- **Minor Bulletins (News Brief):**
These are the News broadcast presented outside of the peak listening periods of the day. The length is usually about three minutes.
- **The News flash**” The flash is normally associated with extremely urgent and important information which cannot wait e.g a major accident, the death of an important figure etc.
- **Integrated News Broadcast:** this could be a half-hour broadcast once a day. It usually included straight stories, interviews and reports, commentary etc.
- **The Newsreel:** This format usually of fifteen minutes duration contains eye witness accounts, extract of speeches, reports of events, short talks and interviews.
- **Current Affairs Magazine:** Like the Newsreel, current affairs magazine expand on the News by explaining it. A current Affairs magazine aims to follow up the days News.
- **Discussion programme:** the current affairs producer might wish tot organize a discussion programme to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas.
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- **News documentary:** The documentary or feature is a creative radio form in which a single subject is treated, with emphasis on real events, real sounds and real people where possible, telling their own experiences.

The length of a news documentary is usually 15minutes to an hour.

- **Tape inserts:** these helps the caster to take the audience to the scene of the event.
- **Voice reports:** The voice reports is a report narrated by the journalists who has been covering a particular news story, the purpose being to supplement and add colour to the basic News.

Note that writing a voice report is different from writing straight News stories.

- **Running Order:** this is aimed at giving details of production. With a well prepared running order anybody can cue or play the tapes without any difficulty.
- Cue in ---
- Cue out ---
- Duration ---
- **Delivery:** The Newscaster is responsible for the success or failure of a News programme me. He is therefore the most important member of the News team. Punctuality is a must for a News caster.

He should be animated without being forced, the diction should be clear. Be relaxed, confident and convinced.