

It's time to take media training seriously

By [Tshepo Sefothelo](#)

10 Mar 2020

An interview by a political principal last month is a stark reminder of how some people, particularly leaders, don't see media training as necessary. Remember, the media are merely conduit so that the interviewee can engage with its audience, who could be a customer, constituent, partners, etc.



Screengrab from Youtube.

There are countless examples of leaders, whom we expect more of, who have gotten this completely wrong. One can point to the disastrous interview by Ford SA's CEO on eNCA *Checkpoint* on the Kuga fiasco or the Momentum CEO explaining why they repudiated a life cover claim, even though the clients passing has nothing to do with their reasons, as per policy wording. These are just a couple of countless examples where leaders have gotten it wrong.



Ford Kuga - how to get burned a second time on social media

Brendan Seery 26 Sep 2017



Tone and body language

But let me refer to last month's interview that trended, to the extent that no one even remembers the actual subject matter of the interview, but rather what went wrong. And the reputation of the individual has taken a knock. You can be sure memes have been created because, in the digital age, there is no escape from your self-inflicted blunders

The issue here is not the error of where a certain city in Europe is located (we all make mistakes), but how this was said; the tone and the body language, not forgetting the irritation at the anchor, who was asking questions that we all wanted to know when this particular story broke.

“ *The Minister Of Communications*

Says that she did not go to Switzerland with her husband but she took him to Geneva.

Hebana 🏳️🏳️🏳️🏳️🏳️

[@Stellarated pic.twitter.com/WuclVwCCjD](https://pic.twitter.com/WuclVwCCjD)— Madzenga (@NMadzenga) [February 19, 2020](#) ”

Why do leaders, particularly in the public space or anyone for that matter, not consider media training as a legitimate necessity to equip oneself, so that we avoid trending for all the wrong reasons.

Importance of media training

Media training addresses several elements that can go wrong in an interview, such as composure, body language, tone, remaining on message, deflecting a tough question that you don't or should not deal with, etc. Yet it seems people want to learn the hard way by crashing and sometimes burning.

“ If you cannot give a sound and credible interview when you are being given free publicity, you have failed to establish your share of voice in a narrative you should be driving as far as the brand you manage is concerned. You have missed the opportunity to state your position and market your brand. Most importantly you have failed to educate your audience on the facts so that we don't get them from a misinformed source. ”

I really hope in #20plenty we change our mindsets when it comes to media training, your reputation depends on it.

ABOUT TSHEPO SEFOTLHELO

Part of a dynamic reputation management team!
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