

Getting the Goods: Interviews that Work

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Poll Question #1

What are your primary purposes or goals when you do an interview?



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THE PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS

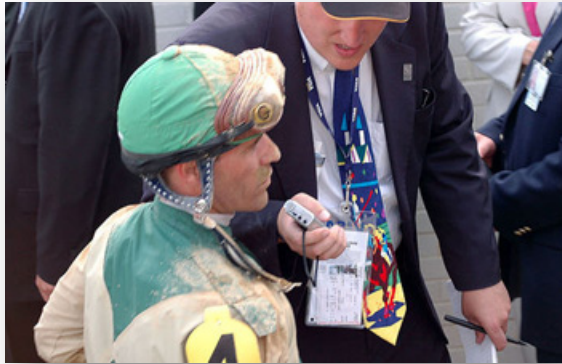


Photo by flickr user boboroshi

- Quotes
 - Information
 - Verification and confirmation
 - Accountability (putting it on the record)
 - Credibility, focus and relevance
 - Context or background
- (But wait!!! There's more...)*

PURPOSE (continued)

- Emotion
- Character
- Color
- Scene
- Reconstruction
- Other sources
- Other stories



MULTIPLE PLATFORMS and PRESSURES

- Investigative vs. intimacy
- Deadline vs. immersion
- Print vs. broadcast
- Live vs. scripted
- In person vs. phone
- Email (uck!!!!)



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PLAN, PREPARE, PROBLEM-SOLVE

- Most important part of an interview happens BEFORE the interview
- Purpose drives sourcing, strategy and approach
- Platform plays a role
- Problems need to be anticipated and addressed
- And then there's *personality*...
 - Yours
 - Your source/subject's



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stevendepolo

SOURCING FOR SUCCESS



Photo by flickr user Rafael Amado Deras

- Four primary techniques to plan and source stories for best success
 - 1. Two-plus-two planning
 - 2. Stakeholder wheel
 - 3. Four buckets
 - 4. Magic or guru sources

Let's get to work...

1. TWO-PLUS-TWO PLANNING

- Quickly identifies & prioritizes sources
- Identifies related enterprise or follow-up
- Two double-barreled lists:

What do you
need to know?

- How will you find out?

What do you
want to know?

- How will you find out?

SITUATION 1: DOWNTOWN PARK

- Tensions at a downtown park or plaza
 - Park with open area and rides
 - Put in by city to attract families, events, etc. as part of downtown revival
 - Has become popular spot for the homeless
 - Merchants are pushing for crackdowns



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ACTIVITY 1: Plan two-plus-two

What do you
need to know?

- How will you find out?

What do you
want to know?

- How will you find out?



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PLOTTING: Prioritize and Problem-solve



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- What are your priority needs in order?
 - Deadlines, platforms, audience
- What problems do you anticipate, and how can you solve?
 - Access, time, ethics, off-the-record
 - Source/subject mistrust

2. STAKEHOLDER or SOURCING WHEELS

- **Stakeholders**
 - Primary experts or most affected subjects
- **Story keepers**
 - Eyewitnesses
- **Readers/Audience**
 - Who they are and what they need/want to know
- **Other experts**
 - Background, context, perspective
 - Fresh insights or story angles

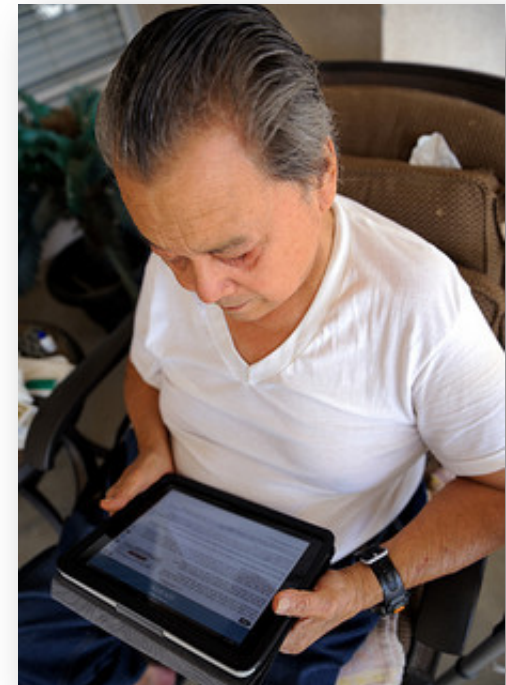


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Illusive Photography

STAKEHOLDER WHEEL

- Quick identification of everyone who is a source and subject
- Also identifies secondary sources & audiences for in-depth enterprise follow-ups

HUB = News

SPOKES = Primary stakeholders

RIM = Secondary stakeholders



By Flickr user dok1

SITUATION 2: GROCERY STORE

- Hip and popular up-market grocery store announces opening on edge of downtown
 - Area borders downtown with growing residential population, large college campus and poorest neighborhood in town
 - Three well-established, locally owned grocery chains already in market, along city edges



Photo by flickr user SodanieChea

ACTIVITY 2: Spoke the wheel



HUB = News

SPOKES = Primary stakeholders

RIM = Secondary stakeholders

- Who is most in-the-know?
- Who is most affected?
- Who has other connections or interests that might be overlooked?
- Who has valuable background or perspective?

3. FOUR BUCKETS

1. Primary stuff

News makers, necessary info and experts

2. Reactionary stuff

Those affected; needed comment or response

3. Contextual stuff

Background, history, broader view, relevance

4. Cool stuff

Color, description, scene, character



Photo by flickr user ross_hawkes

SITUATION 3: PEA-PATCH WARS

- Urban “Pea Patches” growing in popularity; tensions rise over use
 - Data shows recent changes in users and use
 - Follows gentrification in urban neighborhoods
 - Refugees and migrants pushed further out



Photo by flickr user Melissa Wall

- Land publicly owned but privately maintained
 - Safety issues cited
 - Use changing from food to scenery

ACTIVITY 3: Fill the buckets

1. Primary stuff

News makers, necessary info and experts

2. Reactionary stuff

Those affected; needed comment or response

3. Contextual stuff

Background, history, broader view, relevance

4. Cool stuff

Color, description, scene, character



Photo by flickr user ross_hawkes

4. MAGIC SOURCES: Masters, guides and gurus



Photo by flickr user
miss_millions

- **Back-pocket experts**
 - In the know, but not in the spotlight
- **Gurus and guides**
 - Help shape the right story, right sources, right approach, right questions
- **Brokers**
 - Ambassadors to sources and stories

SITUATION 4: PARKING-GARAGE COLLAPSE

- Construction accident at parking garage being built at airport
 - I-Beams collapsed suddenly
 - Seven workers fell; three killed
 - Worst industrial accident in your area in history
 - Construction company, port authority, federal investigators won't talk, citing open investigation



Photo by flickr user Sean-Franc

ACTIVITY 4: Find the magic



Photo by flickr user OC Always

- **Back-pocket experts**
 - In the know, but not in the spotlight
- **Gurus and guides**
 - Help shape the right story, right sources and right approach
- **Brokers**
 - Ambassadors to sources and stories

Tomorrow...

- SOURCE CATEGORIES: Access & Ethics
- QUESTIONS THAT WORK
 - Advanced methods:
 - Metzler: Plan and execution
 - Sawatsky: Effective questions
 - Wilkerson: “Accelerated Intimacy”
 - Beyond information to scene, character and story
 - Being present: Observation & senses
 - Not being present: Reconstruction
 - Storyteller questions

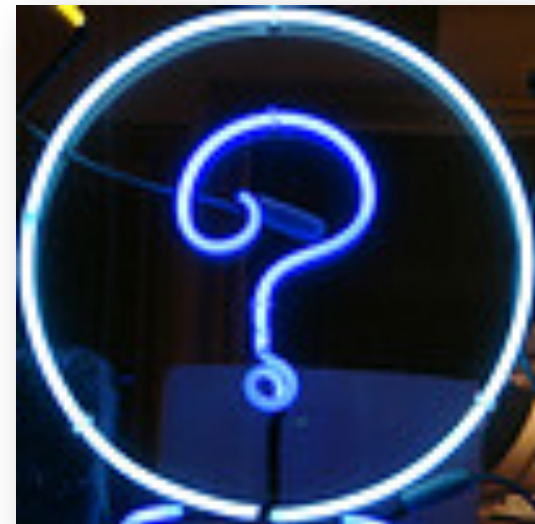


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