

HOW THESE ACADEMICS IMPROVED THEIR MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Some academics have an instinct for creating newsworthy stories and building good media relationships. Others succeed after working hard at it, while some simply cringe at the thought of having to do a media interview.

Here are some tips from five academics who have mastered the art:

Professor Rae Cooper of The University of Sydney Business School was ‘absolutely forced’ to do her first media interview when nobody else was available. She was also coerced into media training and hated the first three months of media interviews.

“Then I just realised it’s kind of like lecturing. So first semester is hell, you over-prepare and you are probably the best you ever are in terms of your performance in front of a class. Then you get how to do this.”

Julia Richardson of Curtin Business School had something of a ‘mid-life crisis’ when she questioned whether all her articles in academic journals really mattered.

‘I remember I slogged and slogged over this article to get it published. I think it took me two years of my life that I’ll never get back. ‘Then I looked at some stats on it and I realised that something like 180 people had read it.’

Professor Richardson saw that her public talks generated the most feedback and decided that was where she could have the most impact.

‘So it was at that point that I thought I’ve got to get more of those [Conversation](#) pieces’

Dr Louise Grimmer of UTAS Business School made her first foray into media with an opinion piece for her local newspaper in Hobart.

‘That started to get me thinking, you know, I can do this. I can write about the things that I’m researching and teaching,’ she says.

Dr Grimmer then wrote her first article for *The Conversation* with Gary Mortimer, Professor of Marketing and Consumer Behaviour at QUT. She believes the frequent publication of their articles shows they are of interest to the public.

Risk governance in financial institutions became a hot topic in the media a few years back, and the interest has not abated.

So, when **Professor Elizabeth Sheedy, a risk governance expert at Macquarie Business School**, found media beating a path to her office, she found it ‘a little nerve-wracking because the issues are so controversial’.

She decided to face the challenge as she had research findings that were relevant to the industry. She has now had media involvement for many years.

Dr Jason Pallant of Swinburne Business School has found that saying ‘yes’ and doing it quickly has brought journalists back to him.

‘If you want to be the go-to person, you’ve got to be willing to get a phone call at 7.45am because at 8.15am they need a spot on the radio filled and they want an immediate comment on that morning’s news. So you need to be quick at responding, quick at saying yes and formulating a view you can share.’

For more tips, visit <https://abdc.edu.au/abdc-communications/tips-to-improve-communication/>