

Addressing Press and Media Effectively

{ Exploring methods, means, and challenges of communication

Why cover this subject?

- Lajna are becoming **increasingly active** on social media, both personally and for jama'at work.
- **Regional Twitter** accounts have been implemented. Twitter guidelines can be found on the Lajna Ima'illah website under the Tabligh section, or can be requested from your Regional Tabligh Monitor
- Using Social Media for Tabligh is a shura recommendation for this year
- Recognise that **training is needed**; as such, local workshops and practical sessions are set to commence in 2017 as part of the national taleem and tarbiyyati classes.
- Media exposure is an excellent means to propagate the message; it's all about numbers and the new means of social engagement!

Social Media Users Statistics 2016



**JAN
2016**

GLOBAL DIGITAL SNAPSHOT

A SNAPSHOT OF THE WORLD'S KEY DIGITAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS



TOTAL
POPULATION



we
are
social

7.395
BILLION

INTERNET
USERS



we
are
social

3.419
BILLION

ACTIVE SOCIAL
MEDIA USERS



we
are
social

2.307
BILLION

UNIQUE
MOBILE USERS



we
are
social

3.790
BILLION

ACTIVE MOBILE
SOCIAL USERS



1.968
BILLION

Social Media Monitors



Housekeeping: In addition to the Regional Sadr, the Media Monitor should be the only one with access to the regional twitter account. Limiting widespread use of the account allows posted content to be carefully scrutinized for appropriateness.

Responsibility: The Media Monitors are also there to serve as your first point-of-call and are a valuable resource should you have any social-media related queries. Of course, they may refer to their National Tabligh Assistant if needed.

How to gain opportunities to engage with Media:

Build Relations with Media Contacts

- Find out who the correspondents/reporters are for your local paper along with who works in your local radio station
- Invite them to events (coffee mornings, interfaith events etc.), send them seasons greeting cards, write/email them directly

Contact your Local Media following an Event

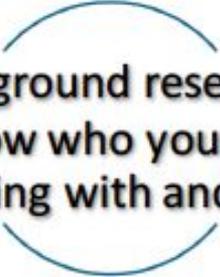
- This could be following a fundraising event/campaign, or any event in which you've engaged with the local community
- Send a short news blurb to your local paper summarising the event
- Send material at **every opportunity** and attach photographs (bearing in mind pardah) to maximise the chance of getting their attention
- Check if the paper or reporter interact with people on Twitter, and if so, their accounts can be tagged in a tweet.

Giving a Successful Interview to Radio/Television

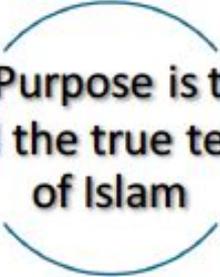
- It is essential that we always remain firm in our beliefs
- We follow Allah's law
- Ultimately, non-Muslims will respect us more if we stay firm to our principles rather than caving under societal pressure

<< Overriding Principle >>

Preparation...



Background research.
Know who you are
speaking with and why.



Your Purpose is to put
forward the true teachings
of Islam

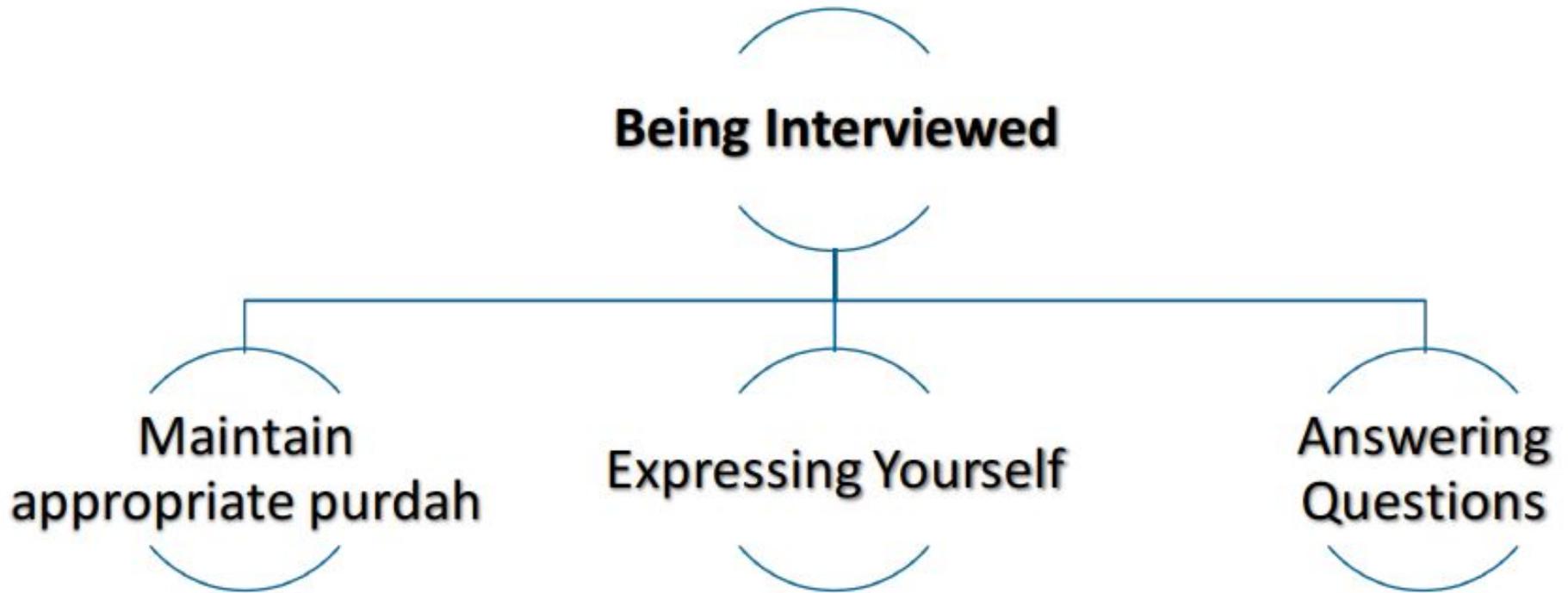


Communication
Objectives. Be clear about
what you are going to say

PREPARATION

- Key Message- Know your Purpose: concentrate on two- three points that you want to get across
- Support your points with facts or anecdotes from your experience
- Understand the programme's audience and tailor your message. Make sure you have an awareness of what else is leading the news agenda in case you are sprung with a topical question on an unrelated issue
- Ask who will be interviewing you and if you will be appearing with any other guests- research their backgrounds.

The Interview...



PRESENTATION

- **Pardah:** please strive to maintain the highest standard befitting of an Ahmadi Muslim Woman
- **Confidence-** in order to convince others, you must have a confident delivery of your message
- Consider your interview an 'enlarged conversation' and speak as naturally as you would to another person
- **Smile!** Wise words of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah strengthen his hand)

9 May, 2013

Meeting with University Students, Lajna
Los Angeles, California

In response to a question regarding external perceptions with respect to Ahmadi ladies being forced to wear the Hijab, His Holiness advised that it was up to Ahmadi women and girls to manage such public perceptions associated with the Hijab. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} enumerated that a woman's disposition whilst wearing the Hijab remained fundamental to tempering these perceptions—i.e., a woman who appears cheerful and contented portrays the Hijab as a positive externality whilst women appearing miserable and uncomfortable create an opposite effect leading to skewed perspectives being developed by society.

GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

- **Be assertive** - in a pleasant way - so that the conversation centres on subjects you want to talk about. One way to do this is to respond to a narrow question with a very broad answer that encompasses the facts or opinions you need to get across.
- **Listen carefully** to the question. If you consider it difficult, pause before you answer to give yourself time to formulate a response. If you don't understand a question, ask that it be repeated.
- **Use your time** to set the record straight or present facts. You might say, "This is a common misperception. Here's why..."

GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

- **Deflect questions** you do not wish to answer by introducing something else of interest. In this way, you may redirect the interview to the subject you wish to convey.
- **Don't try to answer hypothetical questions;** they tend to obscure your true position. Turn the tables by clearly stating your general position and then offering your own example.

GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

- Where appropriate, relate personal experiences or illustrations of your work to support your statements. Telling something about yourself will "humanize" you to the audience.
- If you use quotations, keep them short. If you can't recite the quotation verbatim, don't use it.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say, "I don't know, but I'll find out the answer and get back to you."

Answering Questions...

✓ STATE

State your answer. For example, *yes, no* or, *it's complicated*

✓ EXPLAIN

Explain why you think that in one or two sentences

✓ EXPAND

Move to your top-lines

✓ RESTATE

Restate your answer

Answering Questions: Strategies

Flagging lets you get to the point:

- “Let me explain why”
- “the most important issue/fact is”
- “what we really want to make clear is that:”

Bridging helps you to turn the question away from what you DON'T want to talk about to the point that you DO want to talk about

- “that’s a good question. The key issue here is:”
- “I think what you are really asking is:”

Blocking. Not answering questions you are not instructed on:

- It is not our policy to discuss “X” and then Bridge

Don'ts

- Lose your temper, guess, quote the Holy Quran incorrectly, don't make 'off the record' comments, **DO** correct mistakes

Writing Op-Eds/ Newspaper Articles



• The Point



• Persuasive



• Writing & Clarity

THE POINT:

Does the opinion piece have a point that is clearly expressed? The Point may be a recommendation for action or it may be to alert readers to a problem. The author should make a single point well. You, as the reader, should be able to explain the author's message in a sentence or two.

PERSUASIVE:

Does the piece persuade the reader? A good piece argues effectively for a particular point. Even though the reader may not ultimately agree with the author, the reader comes away from the piece willing to seriously consider the author's perspective.

→ **Tone**: Avoid **personal venting and over-emotional language**. The focus is on persuading the unbiased reader rather than voicing indignation or condemnation.

WRITING & CLARITY:

Hook and Structure: Does the opinion piece engage the reader right at the beginning? Does the author summarize the main point at the end?

Is the piece readily understandable to non-academic readers? General readers should find the piece easy and interesting to read. There should be few grammatical and spelling errors.



Fariha Khan



Ahmadi Muslim, GP, Writer in progress

Dear Rossignol

With all due respect who gave you the right to speak on my behalf when you said

There are women who choose [to wear headscarves], there were also American negroes who were for slavery



Madiha Walker



Mother, wife and educator. Interested in Islam and women in contemporary British society.

The statement “no women allowed” is something which is hurled at many Muslim women across the UK and world. And by guess whom? Men. Of course, not all men and Mosques impose this restriction, but far too many do!

<https://personalmusingsblog.wordpress.com/>

- Run by the Lajna Press and Media Team
- Can submit articles/op-eds to this platform first
- An excellent source of feedback and avenue through which you can become comfortable with writing

COMMON-SENSE SAFEGUARDS:

- Be professional on the internet - including Facebook, Twitter and any other social media networks.
- Remember that despite Twitter being used to post short messages, make sure to use correct spelling and grammar
- Don't post anything inappropriate, including comments or photos which might bring yourself or the jama'at into disrepute
- Remember, there is potential for anything you post online to be copied and distributed. Bear this in mind every time you post.
- Check – are you able to delete the content once you have posted it? How long will the material stay online? Consider your digital footprint.

REFERENCES

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