

Working with the European media

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About me

- 30+ years of experience in European journalism and media relations
- In Brussels and beyond
- Former journalist and former correspondent for
 - Dow Jones Newswires,
 - The International Herald Tribune and
 - The Wall Street Journal
 - in New York City, Frankfurt/Main and Brussels
- Former head of communications for
 - APCO Europe
 - First Solar and
 - Monsanto
- Experience doing media relations throughout Europe and in Asia
- Currently managing partner at Instinctif Partners in Brussels
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What we're going to cover today

01	Why engage with the media ?
02	Which media ?
03	What makes a story ?
04	Crafting your story
05	Pitching your story

06	Preparation, preparation, preparation
07	Delivering your story
08	Questions

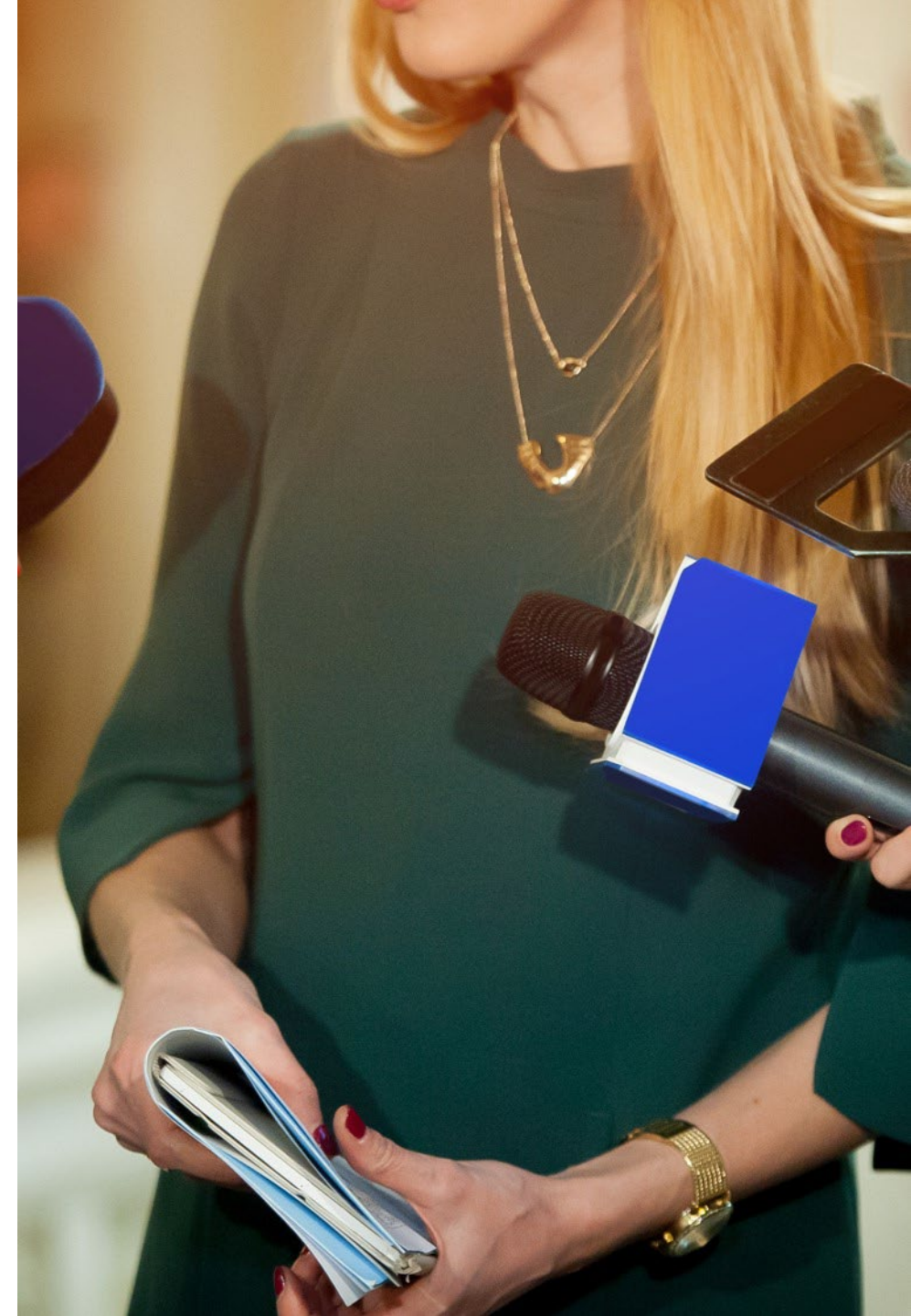
Theory



Why engage with the media?

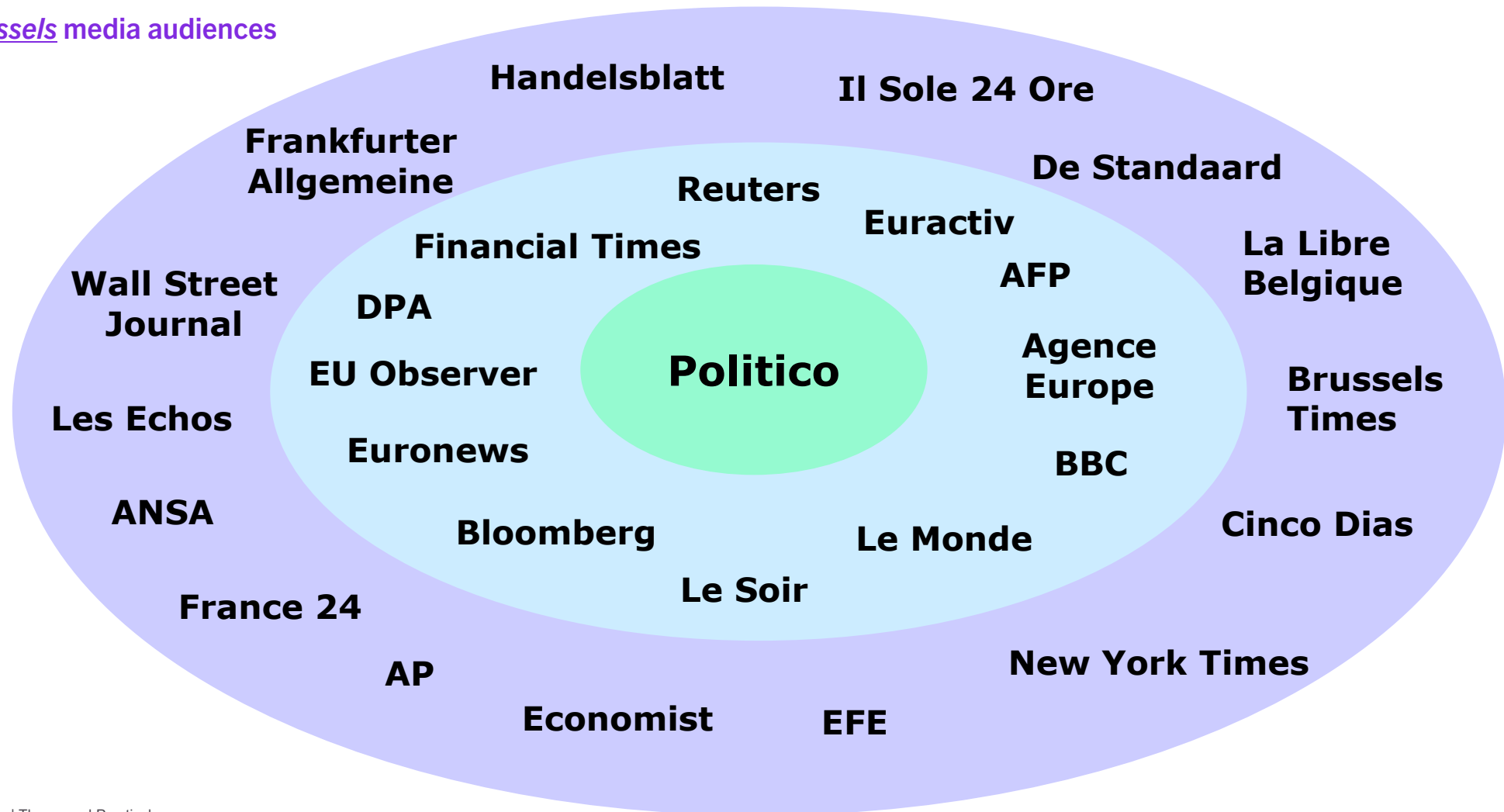
(a non-exhaustive list)

1. News coverage influences EU officials' perceptions—along with those of business partners and prospects
2. The media are often the first 'judge and jury' for your issue
– Sometimes they are the *only* judge and jury
3. The media play a prominent role – with or without you
4. They can help attract potential business partners—or drive them away
5. They influence community trust and support
6. They influence employee morale
7. They impact the bottom line
8. In short, it's all about reputation
9. Ideally: part of an integrated communications strategy



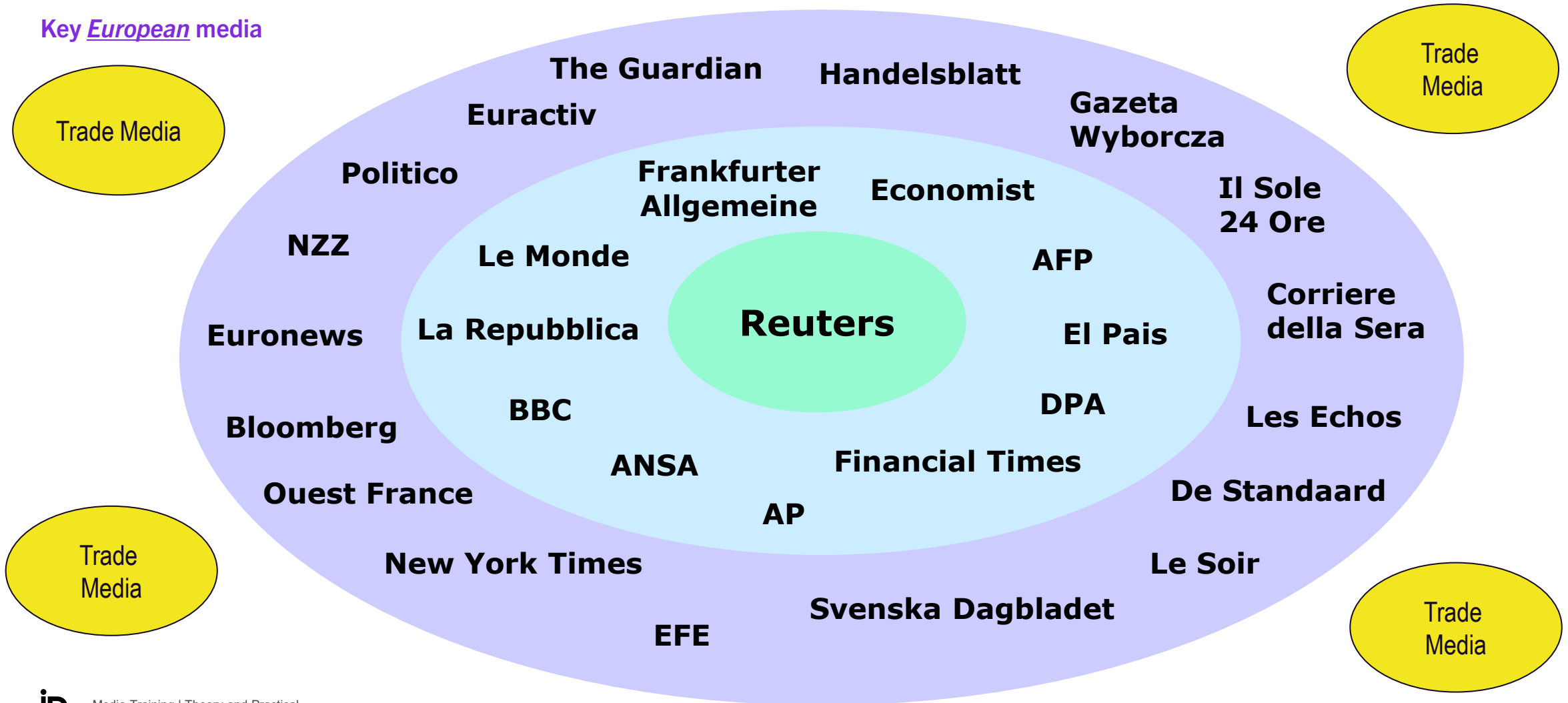
Which media?

Key EU/Brussels media audiences



Which media?

Key European media



What makes a story



Engaging people with knowledge and opinions

NEWS: new information, ideally an exclusive

Anecdotes that bring an unusual perspective

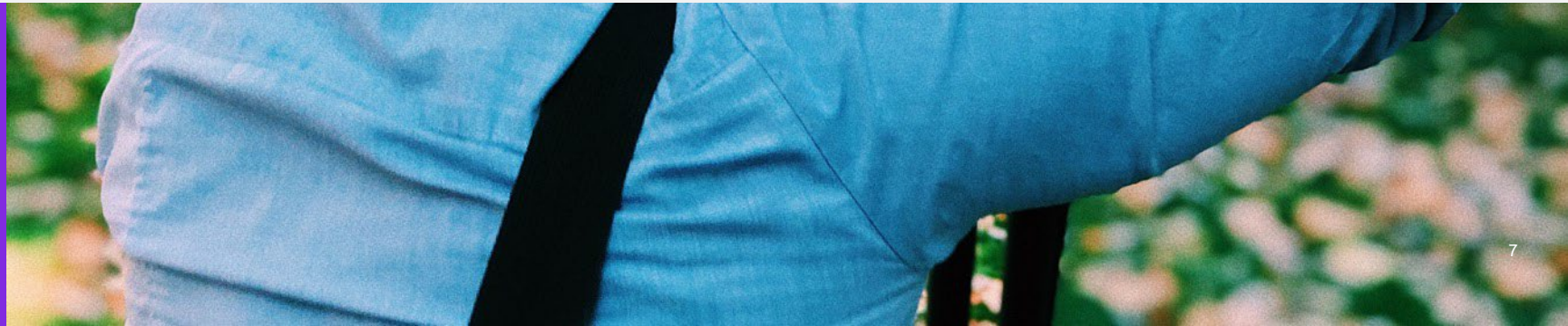
Conflicts or controversy

A human angle

Statistics, details and proof points

A reaction

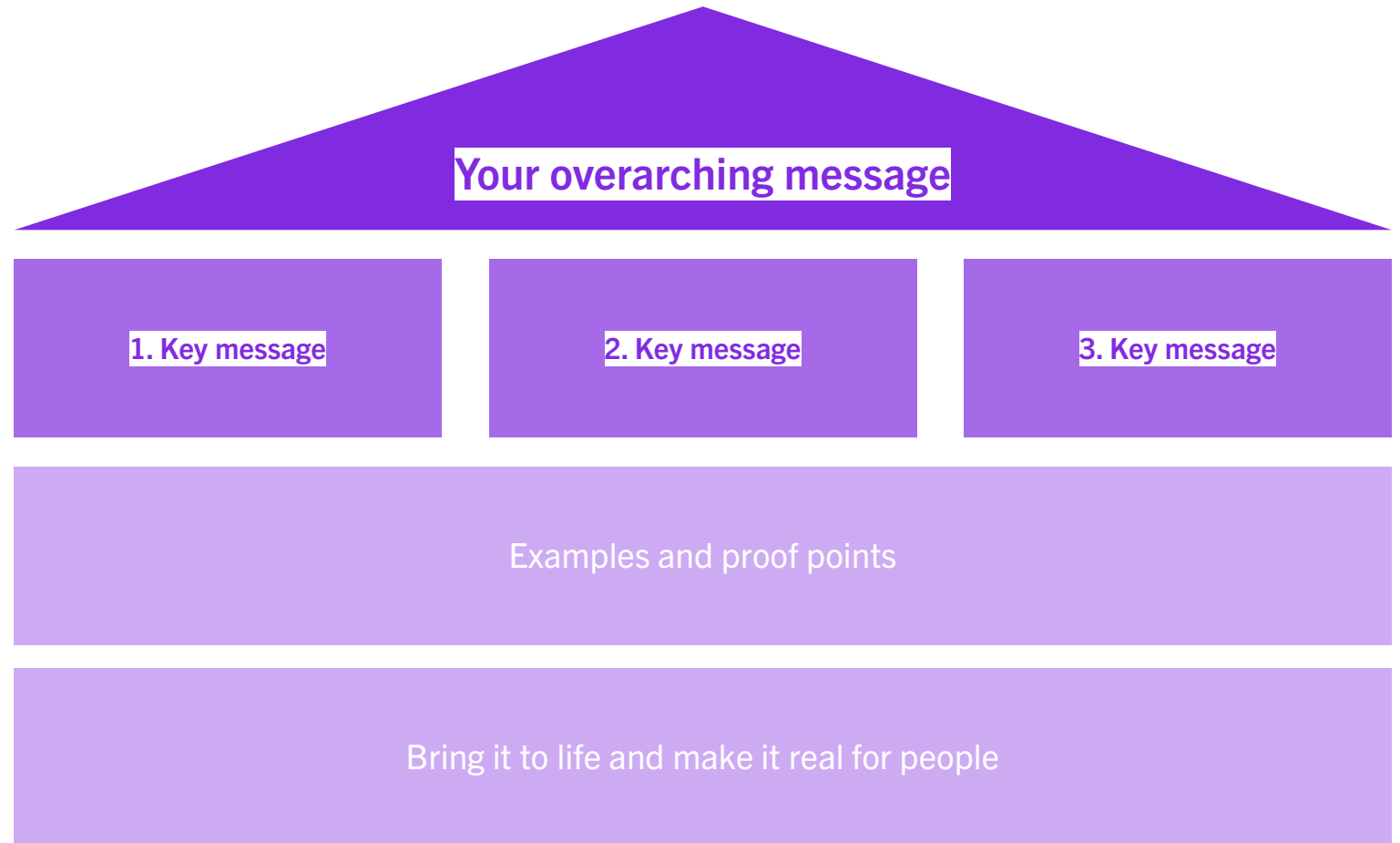
REMEMBER: Journalists like to simplify and always exaggerate!



Crafting your story

The message house

- Clear, concise messaging is essential
- Develop 3 key messages each with a relevant message, example and a people angle
- Helps focus your mind on your outcome
- Provides an anchor to bring your interview back to
- Acts as a safety net – if in doubt the key messages are what you should be saying
- Rehearse soundbites and quotes
- Prepare answers to likely questions
 - especially the difficult ones




Why three key messages?



Pitching your story

1. Know your customers
 - Make friends before you need them
 - Be realistic about which journalists might really care
2. One exclusive story is worth 100 press releases
 - Language exclusives
 - Embargoes
3. Be transparent about who you represent
 - And make sure you (and your client, if applicable) are already in the EU Transparency Register !
4. Put your pitch in context: Why should this matter to a busy journalist NOW ?
5. Be clear about what is on offer: An interview? An event? A background conversation?
6. Be prepared to answer the question: “Why should my editor’s mother care?”
7. Follow up by telephone if you don’t get an answer
8. Don’t push too hard !

A photograph of two men in a radio studio. The man on the left, wearing a dark t-shirt and earbuds, is looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk with a large microphone and looking at a computer monitor. The background is a red wall with a framed American flag. The image is overlaid with white geometric shapes: a circle in the top right, a large circle on the right side, and several rectangles of varying sizes. A purple text box is on the left side.

Delivering your story

Preparation, preparation, preparation — but fresh

Start with your audience — what do you want them to think, feel or do on hearing your interview?

How will you ensure the audience will be interested in, and understand, what you're saying?

Preparation is vital :

- Who is the journalist, what is their outlet and what's the format of the interview?
- Who else are they speaking to, what are they looking for from you and what angle are they looking to take?
- What are the ground rules? On the record, background, off-the-record, no attribution?

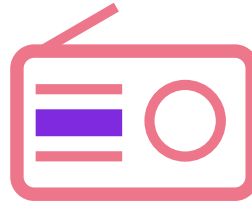
But you must be fresh too — not tired or straight from a management meeting.

Different media formats



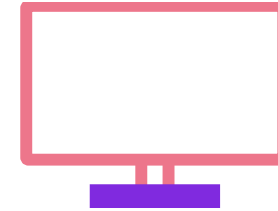
Press interview

- Longer and more informed discussions
- Harder to control and easy to be drawn off message
- Face to face or phone



Radio interview

- More conversational style and pace is fast
- Sound only so an upbeat, engaging delivery is important
- Pre-recorded or live



TV interview

- Short and to the point so create sound bites
- Be aware of body language/appearance if remote
- Pre-recorded or live

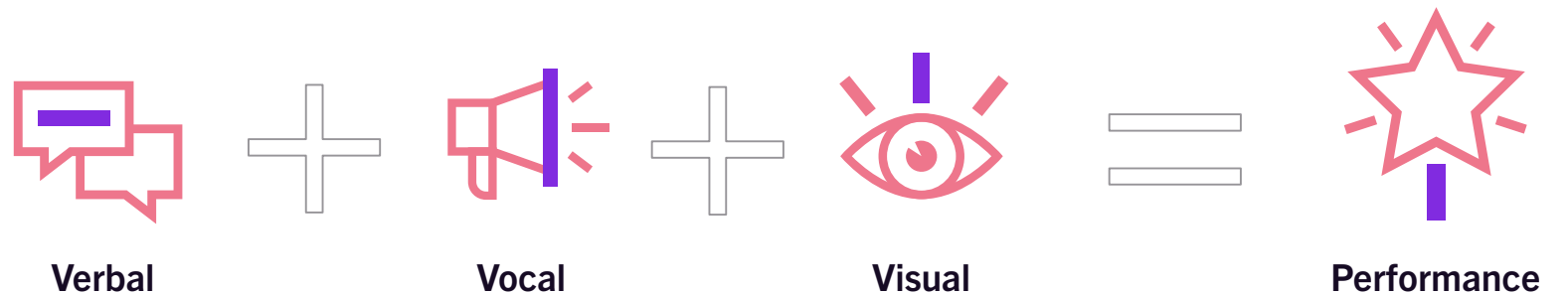
Be focused on your desired outcome

- What's the story you want to be told?
- What's the best possible headline and quote?
- What's the worst possible outcome?
- What questions do you least want to be asked?
- The importance of the first question
 - normally open-ended and easy, so deliver your best and longest answer



Your role as a spokesperson

- Important to know why you are here and what you're trying to achieve
- Be confident – you are the expert
- The journalist wants you to help make the story
- Your task is to be engaging and a trusted source of information
- You are representing your company and sharing its views and positions
- Remember: an interview is a message delivery device – it is not a conversation



Setting the agenda — clarity, consistency and confidence



Focus on simplicity and bring your audience with you — a measured pace, no jargon

Paint a picture and emphasise the human perspective

You know more than the journalist and the audience — speak calmly and deliberately with confidence

Know when to stop — know what you want to say, say it and don't improvise



ON AIR

Questions?

Thank you!

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