

# Top Ten Expanding your Audience

In this third webinar, we pose the following questions to our guests:

## **1. Why does it matter that media presenters represent the community?**

Media presenters have a responsibility to report the news in an unbiased and objective fashion. They also represent the face of an entire industry. Consequently, it has a responsibility to be seen to hear and tell the stories of all corners of our community. A representative diversity of faces telling those stories underlines the presenter's authenticity and credibility.

## **2. Why does it matter that the people and organisations (staff, PR agencies, Comms agencies) within the media sphere be drawn from diverse backgrounds?**

Telling stories, representing the nuances of issues, recruiting individuals or families for interviews and bringing new creativity and ideas to news requires expanded networks, different perspectives and this comes from diverse backgrounds.

## **3. What has been the experience of members of minority communities with the media?**

Responses to this question include having their words taken out of context, ethnicity or faith being highlighted even when it is not relevant to the story, lack of cultural sensitivity in how questions are asked or in the headlines used to promote a story. Journalists who build trust and work at growing their networks are valued and welcomed.

## **4. Is there such a thing as 'cultural sensitivity' when a journalist is seeking to be 'objective'?**

An awareness of the experiences and beliefs that inform an individual's, or community's, world view and personal approach is essential to objective journalism.

## **5. If the 'media' wanted to expand its audiences to more communities, what would it take?**

It is well researched that organisations need to look both internally and externally. Within themselves, they need to recruit more broadly, understand and implement a 'learning' approach and be seen to acknowledge and represent Australia's diversity. Externally, journalists and those in the media universe need to introduce themselves to new networks and communities before a story arises. Build their own relationships and therefore trust with others and step outside their comfort zones.

**6. We know that much of mainstream media is informed, or written by agencies, from a western perspective. Does the lack of broader international coverage or approach affect the interest or trust in their reporting?**

For many members of minority communities, they seek out news and entertainment from their home countries. In addition, they might seek out small local ethnic media channels produced by SBS or by members of their communities. The perceived lack of coverage by mainstream media of broader international coverage or the narrow coverage of US, UK and European news all suggests a hierarchy of importance and preference.

**7. If 50% of our population was born overseas or has a parent born overseas, is Australia denying the breadth of interests and knowledge in the Australian population?**

Media outlets have limited time and capacity for covering all the stories across the world. At the same time, we have an increasing number of vehicles for covering news stories that include the multiple free-to-air channels, podcasts, webinars, print media, pay-tv channels, ethnic media channels etc. We have the means to cover more stories and to engage with our population that appreciates its diverse interests and global connections.

**8. Many members of our communities seek their news from agencies in their home countries. Why do they seek them out?**

Our family and community connections are vitally important to our identity and to our sense of belonging. Seeking news, entertainment or familiarity from avenues that speak your language, have a similar sense of humour or story lines that relate to the stories you hear from the older generations is important. It is not a sign of divided loyalties but a seeking of affirmation and kinship.

**9. Although many other countries similarly do not have broad based, diverse media, is there something about Australia's commitment to multiculturalism that creates an expectation that our media should be representative, truly internationally informed and constantly striving for improvement?**

We are very proud of being home to individuals and families from over 160 different countries. Many of us have come from monocultural countries which have media that is similarly monocultural. Here in Australia, we create an expectation that we can build on our diversity to tell our stories and present the issues from multiple perspectives. If we got this right, we could show the world how to do it.

**10. We refer to mainstream media, social media, ethnic media, print media, broadcast media ..... Does this suggest diversity? Can smaller media channels influence those with much larger audiences?**

Small organisations are nimble, creative, can take risks and pilot innovations. They can help navigate new ways of story-telling and help to guide journalists to understand new audiences.