



Ewan Pearson

## Your Media Contract with the Fourth Estate

**Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd.**

**The Presentation & Business Development Specialists**

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



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By Ewan Pearson  
Ewan looks at the ‘deal’ between you and the Media.

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The Fourth Estate is well described as ‘that part of society that influences the whole of society but is not part of the political system’.

The significance of the Fourth Estate is rising and so, as a business person, your ‘deal’ with its members matters.

Most people ascribe the term to the mainstream media or the ‘Press’. That is now too narrow, as the estate now encompasses social media, and more widely still (as I will come back to later) the whole of society. When coaching clients for media interviews, we describe the relationship with the Fourth Estate as the “Media Contract”, to help clients to realise that it is simply a business deal, not some newfound friendship or PR team, nor because they are (currently) relevant or important.

Simply put, the “deal” is that you provide the content that the media needs to fill their empty minutes/pages/posts, and they provide you with rapid and almost free exposure to the markets you would otherwise have to pay a fortune to reach, but in a less effective way. It should be a deal that works well for both sides, but naïve, unskilled or low EI\* interviewees are all too easily taken for a ride with the result that what is published works for the media but is a disaster for the individual and entity they represent. I need go further than to type ‘Elon Musk’.



Journalists excel at getting stories out of people; they would otherwise quickly be out of a job. They are great at building rapport, asking probing questions and using their noses to sniff out something that could get broadcast and/or published. As most are self-employed, this is how they get paid.

But... a great story will always beat a great relationship. Thankfully most “push” stories (like yours or ours) are just bread and butter work to them. Sadly, critical stories are the more popular, although sometimes they will back something worthy or ethical. Most journalists need to be efficient and work quickly to deadlines, so you are either today’s content, or they will move on.

The principles and advice behind GPB’s Media Contract have not changed much since the advent of Social Media, as thankfully they carry over. But one new aspect of social media is the wild fire that can spread so quickly and widely now that everyone is connected to everyone, with opinions coming from the public about the stories they see, views becoming more extreme and the truth getting forgotten. Welcome to the post-truth era, where everyone is a member of the Fourth estate, however little they know or check their facts.

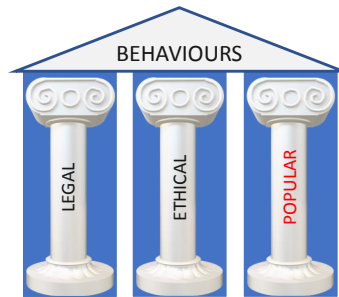
Public opinion now prevails: I read recently<sup>1</sup> that Rebecca Aston, the Head of Professional Standards of my professional body, the CISI, has challenged what she calls “the two pillars of goodness” in financial services.

*(Continued on page 2)*

\* EI: Emotional Intelligence.

# Your Media Contract with the Fourth Estate .... continued

These two pillars (behaviours) are well established: (a) legal (only doing what's allowed) and (b) ethical (doing what is right for society – e.g. public good and environmental impact). She adds a third, “*what society deems right to do*”, which I would label here *Populism*.. Disturbingly I think she's right.



*The three pillars of Financial Services?*

It's disturbing because it is based on decisions made by anonymous people who don't know the full (or any of the) story, who thoughtlessly tweet, text and message on a whim and often whilst doing something else, like walking or driving (Grrrh). It takes us back to the days of the Colosseum in Rome, where the crowd's chants helped to determine outcomes using thumbs up (they die) or down (lower your swords); moments later they've moved on, gratification was instantly satisfied.

One modern example is the public outcry at TSB's IT crash; another, from TV, is the audience in 'The X Factor'. Ms Aston uses the example of the treatment of the Australian cricket ball tamperers, to which I will add the knee-jerk reaction to Carlos Ramos's US Open umpiring of Serena Williams, WADA/Russia, and four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome, who was cleared just in time to race (and win) this year but was very poorly treated by the race spectators, and Social Media, and is still something of a public pariah. Such overreactions can only later get corrected, often only partially. This adds complexity. How do we think clients should behave and deal with that?

Well you can't withdraw, because as ever you need to put your side of the story. You don't (often) get interviewed

in social media and you can't just stay in the traditional media space either, because so many people (especially the younger ones) don't even engage with it; they get their news from their smartphones, from murky and diverse sources 'off the grid'. Distorting the truth has never been easier (see Trump/Russian election hackers).



*Just some of the Social Media...*

To win at Populism you must be popular. This is built methodically so that you create a large and resilient network of supporters to 'speak' (I really mean type texts or messages) on your behalf when the time comes for a social media attack. We are all now opinion formers, so it has become a battle of huge numbers. Those who wish to complain now take to social media, not the complaints department. So you have to have your supporters out there too, ready to act.

Building trust takes years, destroying it can take seconds. You may have a reputation as a great employer, but that goes quickly if there's an accusation of abuse/racism/sexism/inequality, unless the masses can speak in your defense. So look after mother ship.

Spikes in activity will still occur where the traditional media, having sniffed a story that may have come from social media, hold interviews with you, leaving you to go last and address the over-reactions. This format may soon become the norm. So, there is a place for the traditional media interview, but it's now only part of what's needed.

By Ewan Pearson

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<sup>1</sup> Source: CISI, The Review, Q3 2018, page 5, para 3.

# Podcasting, the voice and you



Podcasts are not new; they have been around for 15 or more years. Originally borrowing much from radio formats, they now have their own individual identities.

Pronounced dead by many in the new technology sector several years ago (I was never convinced), podcasting has recently enjoyed a major resurgence.

available Wi-Fi and attractive data bundles included in mobile contracts. Commuters can easily download and listen to their favourite podcasts travelling to and from work.



With a dizzying choice of genres - drama, comedy, factual, documentary or history shows - there's something for everyone. In the business podcasting niche, the Financial Times alone has 16 podcasts. And if you have a thirst for self-directed learning there's a 'how to' podcast on any subject you can imagine. The BBC has an impressive choice to suit all tastes. Even Spotify jumped on the bandwagon last month, launching its first podcast, 'Ebb & Flow', hosted by Jasmine Solano.

When YouTube burst on the scene with its shiny, bright videos on all manner of topics podcasting suffered a slump, but the latest figures from Rajar (Radio Joint Audience Research) indicate that 6m of us in the UK listen to a podcast each week, a major leap from 3.8m in 2016.

Such is podcasting's popularity in the UK that it was given its own award ceremony last year (the **British Podcast Awards**) and last month the **London Podcast Festival** was hosted in the capital for the third year running.

The most compelling recent research findings though are from Edison in the US. These show podcasting's high dwell time, with consumers spending an average of 20 minutes listening to a podcast episode. Startling compared to the average time we spend on a website - a few seconds!

There are many professional broadcasters and actors in this space, but there are also many experts in their field invited to be interviewed by the thousands of podcast hosts, some with huge audiences, others far smaller. Often guests will never have had any media training or, more importantly, specific vocal training.



There's no doubt that exponential growth of smartphone usage has played a big part in this increase, alongside freely

Because podcasting is an auditory medium, the focus on the voice is even more important than in a video or a live presentation. Working with a client to prepare them for interview with a high profile podcaster in their market niche, we will probably focus our time on reducing disfluencies and ensuring that pitch modulation is used for emphasis rather than volume.

Pitch Height is also important, although what we each find vocally attractive varies from person to person.

*(Continued on page 4)*



Lynda Russell-Whittaker

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



## Podcasting, the voice and you .... continued

For example, some men find a high-pitched woman's voice more appealing than a deeper-pitched one. Personally, I find high-pitched voices impossible to listen to for a prolonged period.



I am one who dislikes nasal resonance (whether male or female). This could be because I have a strong auditory preference (a musician and voice coach). Your preferences may be quite different!

To illustrate this, I spent some time analysing the vocal features of two well-known podcasters, using as my source material the interview done by Andrea Joy Wenburg of Amy Porterfield in Andrea's podcast 'Voice of Influence'.

*Basic scientific analysis of voices can be done using software freely available from the internet, such as Wasp and Praat.*

I found Andrea's voice hard to listen to, whereas Amy has several vocal qualities that appeal to my ear such as a deeper average pitch height (this often indicates higher dominance and therefore implied status), good pitch modulation (the amount and size of ups and down in our voice), and her moderate use of volume as a tool for emphasis.

By contrast, Andrea's average pitch height is high. Also, her voice is breathy with much nasal resonance. In addition she tends to use 'upspeak', going up in pitch on the last few syllables of each phrase, and this makes her statements sound like questions, or as if she's not quite sure. Taken all together, it's a pretty annoying sound!

Award-winning podcaster, John Lee Dumas, is one of the higher profile figures in US business podcasting,

launching **Entrepreneur on Fire** in 2012. Three years later he was featured in Forbes. He spotted a gap in the market for a certain type of business podcast, and now produces (with his wife) a hugely popular show, publishing an episode daily from his home in Puerto Rico.

Although his guests and content are impressive, I'm not a fan of his voice. He, like Andrea, has high average pitch height, overuses nasal resonance and speaks rapidly. But that doesn't seem to deter his massive fan base. JLD (as he calls himself) has attracted millions of regular listeners to his show since it started, and it seems that is mostly to do with the guests he has on: He has interviewed over 2,000 entrepreneurs, including Tony Robbins, Seth Godin, Barbara Corcoran and Tim Ferriss.

If you are invited to be interviewed on a business Podcast, here are some tips:

### Prior to the interview:

- Ask them to send the questions in advance... or at least the first one
- Spend time thinking about your answers and the points you want to make by the end of the interview.
- Record these, listen back and edit
- Do a mock interview with a colleague; record it and listen back
- Reduce disfluencies (umms/errs, fillers, hesitation pauses etc).

### Just before and during the interview:

- Warm up by humming
- Drink plenty of water
- Breathe deeply from the diaphragm
- Take your time to respond, using the power of the pause at the start and between phrases
- Think about using more pitch modulation
- Smile and enjoy!
- Podcasts are usually pre-recorded, and that thankfully means that mistakes can be edited.
- Relish the fact that someone may be devoting a fair amount of their time listening to you!

By Lynda Russell-Whittaker

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# Language Styles – the way we speak



The way we use words is a key part of presenting and persuading successfully. Great speakers and their speechwriters understand the power of words.

My first point is that the spoken words we use in every day dialogue are essentially *informal*. When we commit words to paper, the style and type of words we use changes, as the words usually become much more formal.

Sometimes presenters write - or type out their words - to be delivered verbally, and often the words are on PowerPoint slides. As a result the engaging conversational style vanishes.

Spoken English is characterised in a number of ways:

- *Simple language*. Following our Anglo-Saxon roots in preference to Latin
  - Use of verbal imagery, colloquial and oratorical and rhetorical tools
  - Talking in short *chunks* or *phrases*.
- Let's take a look at each:

## Simple Language – Anglo-Saxon v Latinate

First, here is a table of polysyllabic\* phrases and their simpler equivalents:

Latin (Mainly)	Anglo-Saxon
Ascertain	Find out
At this moment in time	Now!
Cognisant of	Know
Commence	Start or begin
Commensurate	Alike or equal
Elucidate	Explain
Endeavour to commence	Try to start
Envisage	See
Expedite/Accelerate	Speed up
Initiate	Start or begin
Prior to	Before
Subsequent to	After or since
Terminate	Stop or end
With regard to	About

The English language has many words covering a continuum from the most

formal to the most informal - the latest Oxford English Dictionary lists some 278,000 main entries. The 75 most commonly used words of the English language are all Anglo-Saxon. The 76<sup>th</sup> is the French-derived word 'Number'.

Melvin Bragg, in "*The adventure of English*" says that Anglo-Saxon language came across the channel in the fifth century with the German warrior tribes who came as mercenaries to prop up the departing Romans. At that time the locals spoke in Celtic with leftover Latin, but Anglo-Saxon morphed into Old English and prevailed in the main area of Britain. The Vikings also added to the pile - look at this modern day comparison:

Scottish: *The little bairn will go to the kirk in the morning.*

Norwegian: *Den lille bairn vil gå til kirk i morgen.*

1066 changed all that. French became the language of the rich, with an overlay of Latin. The peasants stuck with Anglo-Saxon but then a curious thing happened. The languages mingled and in 1399 King Richard's speech of abdication was delivered in English which we could recognise today; French dwindled as the primary tongue. The relevance here is that the Anglo-Saxon root is more commonly used in spoken language. The words are generally shorter and stronger. The Latin equivalent is more likely to be polysyllabic and can sound ponderous, pompous or even pretentious.

In one of Alistair Cooke's radio broadcasts, "Letter from America", he said that Americans are more likely to adopt a Latinate style than the British. He gave us two statements which are saying much the same thing:

*"The Directive was mandated and subsequently failed to be executed."* and *"The order was given but not much was done about it."*

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Alastair Grant

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\* Polysyllabic words have 3 or more syllables in them

# Language Styles – the way we speak ....continued

And we sometimes laugh at the formality of ponderous statements by the police:

*“The intoxicated person exited the building and was last seen proceeding down the street in a westerly direction. When apprehended he kicked out in a kicking motion and police dog Douglas attached himself to the lower end of his trousers”* (40 words, 16 polysyllabic).  
Or they could say: *“The drunk came out and ran off towards the west. My dog Douglas caught him and held on to his trousers in spite of being kicked”* (26 words, only 4 polysyllabic).

### Using Verbal Imagery

We are constantly advising our clients to avoid abstraction. The speaker knows the subject area well. They will claim that their audience also know the subject area well and do not want to be patronised. But it is highly probable that the audience don't know the subject to the same level of detail or complexity, so will struggle to keep up, especially if there is a dense deluge of PowerPoint slides.

Verbal imagery helps to anchor the audience by letting them contextualise, frame or visualise the main theme; they can then take on an extra load of detail that may also be complex. Imagery also helps them to remember the key points long after the event. And here it is time to introduce the concept the ladder of abstraction. This idea comes from Professor Hayakawa. He suggests there are several layers of abstraction.

Here is a real life example from Airbus:

*“Our challenge is to make our new aircraft as light as possible yet safe. Imagine you have a coke can in your hand. You can easily squeeze it in your hand. The skin of our aircraft in only 5 times as thick.*

*Now imagine you are driving your Volkswagen Golf and make a terrible mistake causing the car to plunge over a precipice into the valley below. The car is destroyed and you are dead.*

*No car manufacturer would design a*

*mass production car able to withstand that level of shock. It's the same for us as we cannot design our new aircraft to land at 300 Knots. There are just too many design constraints. Lets now look at some details, starting with the landing gear....”*

The paragraph above needs no PowerPoint picture of a coke can or Volkswagen Golf as the audience will generate those images in their minds. Words well used are more powerful than an actual picture, the listener will remember the analogy and so should also remember much of the more complex detail that might follow.



*You don't need to see these...*

### Short Chunks and Phrases

This is a simple point. In conversation we do not construct sentences the same way that we would with the written word: We often talk in short phrases or 'chunks'; sometimes verbs are left out, but it doesn't matter as long as our ideas are clear. Some sections of Tony Blair's speeches were a succession of adjectives and nouns: New Labour .....New Britain... the middle way, etc! Whatever you think of him, he was easy to understand.

John F Kennedy was one of many who said that Winston Churchill sent the English language into battle. Churchill knew how to use words. He apparently had a ratio of 4 Anglo-Saxon words for every Latin based one. I doubt that he calculated it, but he knew what he was doing. What he knew and we know is that outstanding presenters realise the power of well-chosen Anglo-Saxon words and visual imagery, and use them to produce highly effective spoken communications.

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# The brain in our decisions



Richard Keith

Current estimates in the scientific world suggest that less than 5% of our brain activity is conscious; some scientists put this figure as low as less than 1%.

Cognitive research indicates that we take many decisions, make judgements, and reason without any need for conscious involvement (McGilchrist 2012 p.187)<sup>1</sup>.

In 1983 a now famous experiment took place, conducted by Benjamin Libet. Libet asked people to make a deliberate movement of their fingers and recorded the brain activity they displayed. He found that there was recordable cerebral activity (*readiness potential*) that clearly *preceded* the recorded time of the conscious intention to act.

This phenomenon had been witnessed before, but what Libet's experiments showed was that the conscious preparation to move the finger occurred about 0.2 secs after the readiness potential had been recorded.

This experiment, along with subsequent others, cast doubt on the long-held belief that we have full volition over our actions. Yet the experiment showed that although the unconscious activity of the brain initiated the action, there is clearly still a role for the conscious part of the brain to play. Libet sums this up:

*"The role of conscious free will would be, then, not to initiate a voluntary act, but rather to control whether the act takes place. We may view the unconscious initiatives for voluntary actions as 'bubbling up' in the brain. The conscious will then selects which of these initiatives may go forward to an action or which ones to veto and abort, with no act appearing"* (Libet 1999 p.54)<sup>2</sup>

It is overstating things to conclude from this that we do not have any free will. Yet what we must guard against is the equally simplistic view that we make decisions based only – or even mostly? – on information of which we are conscious.

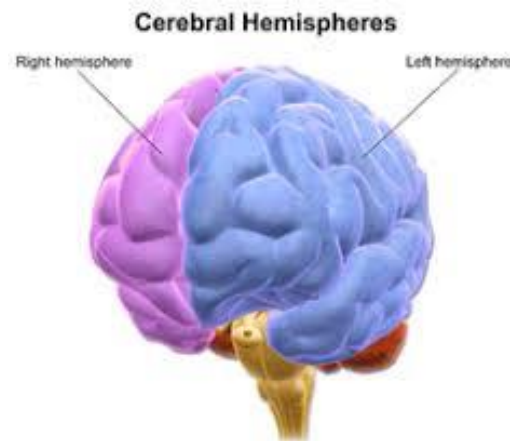
To use a simile, it's as if our subconscious has worked out possible destinations and

the corresponding airlines before our conscious brain even decides that we want to go on holiday.

There are a number of ways that this idea affects your presentations, pitches and business development. Let us look at one related part of this – *the Primacy of Affect*.

Primacy of Affect suggests that emotions (affect) can be processed more readily than (faster) actions. It influences whether or not we like something, which is exactly what your audience and/or clients decide when you present or pitch to them. A lot of this decision-making is performed in the subconscious.

In short, research has shown that the right hemisphere of the brain is the main location of our affective assessment of something as a whole; this judgement occurs *before* the left hemisphere performs most of the cognitive analysis of the various parts that make up that whole.



The left hemisphere then tells a particular story about how a decision has been made, suggesting that all the logical parts were the drivers of the choice.

This information is then backdated into how we appreciate the decision so we can rest easy at night believing we are the rational, sensible decision makers we have always been. Unfortunately this is rarely the case.

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



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# The brain in our decisions ....continued

## Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific voice, visual and content analysis reports, which are unique to GPB. We then provide voice and visual coaching, and content advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as:

- Voice, Visual and Content Analyses
- Prospect Relationship Management (PRM)
- the Information Iceberg,
- Clients' Rights Act
- Feature, Benefit Impact (FBI)
- Buyers' Criteria Analysis, (BCA), and
- Our Q&A Methodology.

Affect is a way of relating and attending to the world. It is important to understand that emotion is part of this, but not all of it. Emotion is more central to our being than cognition, although we would like to believe otherwise.

*"Feeling is not just an add on, a flavoured coating for thought: it is the heart of our being and reason emanates from that central core of emotions, in an attempt to limit and direct them, rather than the other way around"* (McGilchrist 2012 p.185)<sup>1</sup>

How someone feels about you, then, is a hugely important element to tap into when we want to persuade, as many scientists now believe it is the origin of reason: *"Feeling came, and comes, first, and reason emerged from it."* (McGilchrist 2012 p.185).

More recent research is exploring this. For example, Amy Cuddy has argued that although we are keen to demonstrate competence when we interact in the professional world, we should firstly focus on demonstrating our trustworthiness and warmth. From an evolutionary point of view this makes sense. Cuddy writes:

*"Why do we prioritise warmth over competence? Because from an evolutionary perspective, it is more crucial to our survival to know whether a person deserves our trust. .... We do value people who are competent, especially in circumstances where that trait is valued, but we only notice that after we've judged their trustworthiness"* (Cuddy 2015<sup>3</sup>)

It is probably not a surprise for you to read that how your audience/clients/investors feel about you is hugely important when they make decisions.

What may be more surprising is that most of their feelings are likely to be subconscious; their feeling about you is likely formed in the very early stages of any interactions and based on numerous factors that they are rarely fully aware of; and that whilst you may be desperate to

show how good you are at your job, they are likely prioritising other aspects of your personality such as whether they trust you and like you.

Whilst it's essential to be good at what you do and to be highly articulate about the value you add, if you neglect all the other cogs whirring deep within the brains of your counterparties, you may find yourself much less persuasive that you'd like to be.

Sources:

1. McGilchrist, Iain. 2012. *The Master and his Emissary: the Divided Brain and the making of the Western world* (Yale University Press: New Haven).
2. Libet, Benjamin. 1999. 'Do we have free will?', *Journal of consciousness studies*, 6: 47-57.
3. Cuddy, Amy. 2015. *Presence: Bringing your boldest self to your biggest challenges* (Hachette UK).

By Richard Keith

## News from GPB

We are delighted to announce the appointment of two new consultants, Ms. Hasnae Kerach and Mr. Desmond Harney. Hasnae joins us from News Corporation; before that she worked in Client Account Management for Immediate Media, and for a variety of British and Dutch firms. Desmond joins from several roles in interim management and before that various roles in Business Development including Energizer and Diageo.

They both started with us in October 2018 and we look forward to introducing them to the many active clients that we will be working with over the coming months. More details about each of them can be found on our website at [www.gpb.eu/about-us/our-team](http://www.gpb.eu/about-us/our-team).



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