

# Bissett Matheson Communications Ltd.

## Overview

The strength and success of Bissett Matheson Communications Ltd. is in its people.

**Duncan Matheson** had 20 years of media experience before switching to communications. He has spent the past 15 years involved in communications strategy, media relations and media training. He has taken advanced training at the Institute for Crisis Management in Kentucky and now offers training and counsel in this specialized field.

**Gina Wilkins** came to BMC directly from the University of New Brunswick Saint John, where she had been Director of Community Relations for close to 15 years. Her experience is in developing communications plans, organizing programs and events, and generating publicity for various companies and organizations. Like Duncan, Gina has also been to Kentucky for crisis communications training.

**Benoit Duguay** spent more than 28 years at the CBC-French network as a journalist, broadcaster and anchorman for TV-news and radio shows before he took early retirement. He also taught radio and TV journalism at the University of Moncton. He provides BMC services, including media training, in French.

**This strong, experienced team** is complemented by strategic alliances with associates in related communications disciplines, from research to graphic design, allowing us to deliver top quality results to any communications challenge.

The BMC team has the expertise to help clients get their story out, and get it noticed.

**Bissett Matheson** takes great pride in the fact that its client list has developed first and foremost from word of mouth, a testimony not only to the trust and respect this company has earned, but also to its ability to build productive, meaningful relationships with each and every client. The result is a mutually rewarding alliance that is win-win all the way.

If you're looking for a truly positive relationship with a communications consultant you can trust, call Bissett Matheson today.



- ◆ **Crisis Communications Planning and Management**
- ◆ **Media Training**
- ◆ **Communication Plans**
- ◆ **News Releases, Speeches, Briefs**
- ◆ **Media Analysis**
- ◆ **News Conferences (including counsel and logistics)**
- ◆ **Communication Audits**
- ◆ **Attitudinal Research (focus groups and surveys)**

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# Getting your story out

Someone wants to position his company favorably among competitors. Another wants to increase her profile. Someone else wants to introduce a new product or service.

An organization wants to build public support for a new policy or program. Another wants to set the record straight because the media is getting it wrong.

The question is: how do these people or organizations achieve their goals? What method or combination of methods is right for their, or your, situation?

At BMC, we have the communications and media experience to look at the challenge at hand and recommend the best way to meet it.

That means looking at the message you want to get out, determining who specifically needs to hear it, and how best to go about making that connection.

BMC communications strategies can be quite simple, or very complex, depending on what is required to reach the desired result.

## **BMC Expertise**

BMC's experience in "getting the word out" has helped a large cross-section of clients inform, educate and influence those they needed to reach.

◆ With an approach that relied on solid research, building strategic alliances, extensive media relations, and paid advertising, we developed the campaign that helped our client secure the government decision to refurbish Point Lepreau.

◆ With messages carefully crafted to focus on both the business case and the humanitarian side, we developed a media relations and grass roots campaign that helped our client persuade the government to make effective but expensive drugs available to people who desperately needed them.

◆ We implemented a campaign that resulted in another of our clients beating overwhelming odds to win the VLT referendum.

◆ Through a combination of media relations, Op-ed essays, briefs for presentation to the legislature's energy committee and developing a presentation for community groups, we helped a client educate decision makers and others on the down-side of energy deregulation.

If you have something to say, and want to effectively get those messages to the specific people who need to hear them, call Bissett Matheson today.



# Media Analysis

***Because it's not just what they say,  
but how it's interpreted.***

So you've subscribed to a media monitoring service, and now you have a mountain of clippings on your desk. What you need is media analysis to make sense of that mountain. What you need is BMC.

## ***Much more than just what was said***

Beyond the facts, BMC's media analysis looks at the important intangibles of news coverage – how your story or issue is being interpreted and how your side (as well as the other) is being accepted by the targeted audience. It tells you, in a concise and precise way:

- ◆ If your key messages are getting through
- ◆ What is being emphasized, and what is being ignored or misrepresented
- ◆ What aspects of the story are attracting the most attention
- ◆ How national media coverage differs from the local/regional
- ◆ How others are responding to your story
- ◆ How your story is being interpreted by the editorial writers and commentators, and specifically which ones are most sympathetic or critical

## ***Analysis YOU can use***

BMC's expert media analysis cuts right to the chase, revealing exactly what you need to know to take better control of the public agenda, to ensure your messages are on target, timely and effective, and to make responsible decisions about how you can use the media to get those messages across.

And since every client has different needs, different issues, different degrees of immediacy and different requirements, BMC tailors its analysis to each client's situation, with reports as frequently and as detailed as they need to be.

BMC provides media analysis on a full range of issues, including some of the biggest ongoing stories in the Atlantic region. No matter how big or small your story is, BMC will show you how the media is telling it.



# Communications Plans and Audits

***Because effective communications cannot be left to chance***

Effective communications is crucial to your success. Leaving this important function to chance is kind of like going to Vegas and putting your mortgage on Red 17. It might work, but don't bet on it.

There is a better way. A methodical, focused approach to effective communications. Two aspects of this approach are a Communications Audit, and a Communications Plan. Often these work together as a two-step approach, but just as often, you may not need both. But to get where you want to go, you should have a plan.

## ***Communications Audits***

A Communications Audit is a systematic examination of the current state of your communications, both internally and externally.

- ◆ It looks at how your messages are developed, and how effectively they get to the people they are intended to reach.
- ◆ It identifies any bottlenecks or roadblocks that are in the way of the messages getting to their intended destination.
- ◆ It identifies what in your communication system is and isn't working well.
- ◆ Internally, it looks at both top down and bottom up communications. You'll find out, for example, to what extent people in the field are getting your messages, and whether you are getting theirs.
- ◆ It will tell you whether your communications efforts are cost-effective, or whether and where you are wasting money.

Once complete, you will have a comprehensive Communications Audit report that will tell you where you stand. This can be the basis from which can be developed a customized Communications Plan.

## ***Communications Plans***

This is where you really take charge of your communications. Rather than any aspect of it being left to chance, you will have a blueprint designed to make the most of your communications efforts. The plan will include objectives, methods, timelines, and a system of evaluation to measure progress.

At BMC, we have extensive experience in developing communications plans, having done them for clients ranging from the forestry industry and professional associations to Crown corporations and the private sector, including small as well as large businesses.

Contact us today to talk about strategic communications for your company or organization. A Communications Plan really does make all the difference.



*“If an organization fails to prepare, it's preparing to fail”*

*– Ron Lindsay, Manager, British Airways*

## Crisis Services

### Imagine the worst case scenario.

Now ask yourself, is your organization prepared to handle such a crisis? A reputation that took years to build can crumble in an instant if crisis is not handled properly.

### When a crisis strikes, you'll have two priorities:

- ◆ Bringing the crisis under control
- ◆ Dealing with key stakeholders and intense media attention

Meeting this challenge requires expertise and experience. Bissett Matheson Communications has always worked in this specialized field, and now it has taken its crisis communications to a new level through a special affiliation with one of the most respected crisis communications organizations in the world.

### The Institute for Crisis Management & BMC – Strategic partnership with the best in the business

With a wealth of experience and training, BMC is an Eastern Canadian leader in crisis communications. BMC president Duncan Matheson has worked in crisis communications since day one, first as a journalist, then as a consultant. Senior Associate Gina Wilkins dealt with numerous institutional crises when working at UNB Saint John, including deaths of students, staff and faculty, the SARS scare and a “white powder” incident. Both Duncan and Gina have added to their crisis communications experience with training at the Kentucky-based Institute for Crisis Management (ICM), one of North America's foremost companies in the field.

### What does this ICM connection mean to BMC clients?

- ◆ First, it means that clients can be assured that when they turn to BMC, they will be dealing with people with expertise in crisis communications.
  - ◆ Second, it means that, should the need arise, BMC has the resources and counsel of the Institute of Crisis Management at its clients' disposal.
  - ◆ Third, BMC is the only firm in central or eastern Canada licensed to offer ICM's crisis management programs, including training.

Crises, whether big or small in the grand scheme of things, dramatically affect the company or group involved. The ability to rebound usually hinges on how well you communicate with shareholders, employees, customers or constituents, and with the media and the public at large. BMC crisis communications services begin with planning and include being there for our clients when the inevitable day arrives, with counsel, hands-on assistance, and whatever else it takes.



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# Focus Groups

***If you want to know how many, do a survey;  
if you want to know why, focus test.***

If you could eavesdrop on a cross-section of your target market, just to see what they really think of your product, service or organization, do you think what you hear would be valuable?

If you were preparing to introduce a new product, service or campaign, wouldn't it be handy to see what people think before you do a major unveiling?

If you need to get a handle on how people perceive your organization or institution, wouldn't some honest feedback be helpful?

That's what you get from a focus group – honest, sometimes painfully frank opinion.

Focus groups can often provide a depth of understanding that surveys simply cannot match. Focus group research examines why people respond as they do. In short, if you want to know how many, do a survey, but if you want to know why, focus test.

Our approach begins with careful recruiting, to ensure we get the proper mix of focus participants, based on specific criteria to be representative of your target market (i.e. age, education level, income, rural/urban, male/female, and anything specific to the subject matter). Then we develop moderator's notes to ensure all relevant areas are explored with the participants. The third step is the expertise of the moderators, whose approach is designed to ensure the best possible information is derived from the session.

Some of the topics on which Bissett Matheson Communications has recruited, prepared and moderated focus groups include:

- ◆ Senior's housing
  - ◆ Downtown shopping
  - ◆ Morale (within a specific policing sector)
- ◆ Employee incentive programs
- ◆ Funeral homes
- ◆ Nuclear power
- ◆ Video gaming
- ◆ Pay equity
- ◆ Workplace bullying



# Media Training

Media training is only as good as the facilitators who provide it, and BMC has two of the best.

**Duncan Matheson** – 20 years as a working journalist both in the private sector and with CBC radio and television. Former host of CBC Information Morning in Fredericton. Winner of five awards for journalistic excellence. Certification from the Institute for Crisis Management.

**Benoit Duguay** – more than 28 years at CBC Radio Canada as a journalist, broadcaster and anchor/host for TV-news and radio shows. Taught radio and TV journalism at the University of Moncton for two years. Benoit facilitates all BMC courses in French.

From this solid foundation, BMC has developed courses which have consistently scored more than 9 out of 10 in post-course evaluations. Their content ranges from day-to-day media relations to dealing with the media in times of crisis. Course timeframes range from one to two-and-a-half days.

- ◆ Every course is highly interactive and customized to match each participant's job responsibilities.
- ◆ Courses include both on and off camera interviews followed by constructive criticism.
- ◆ While the content is serious, courses are also fun and there's lots of laughter.

## Participants will learn:

- ◆ Insight into how the media works in and out of crises
- ◆ How to prepare for an interview
- ◆ 3 keys to a successful interview
- ◆ 10 commandments (for dealing with the media)
- ◆ How to handle the tough question
  - ◆ What to do and avoid doing when dealing with the media
  - ◆ What to do when the media gets it wrong

But more than this, participants leave BMC courses with a new confidence that allows them to see media encounters not as an intrusion to be avoided, but as an opportunity to effectively tell their story.

## BMC Media Training Courses include:

- ◆ Tipping the Scales (basic media training)
- ◆ Dealing with the Media in Times of Crisis (same fundamentals as above, but course is delivered in a crisis context, with added content specific to crisis)

The Tipping the Scales course is delivered in both one and two day formats, depending on clients' preferences. Dealing with the Media in Times of Crisis is offered in a two-and-a-half day format (two full days and an evening session).

While they shouldn't be confused with our media training, we do offer shorter, 2 to 3 hour workshops to accommodate conventions or others with tight schedules, or as refreshers.

See testimonials from past participants included in this package.



# What course participants say

In post-course evaluations, BMC Media Training consistently score better than 9 on a scale of 10.

Here's what some participants have said:



“ It was one of the best two-day workshops I have ever been involved in. ”

Doug Bobbitt, Principal, Sussex Middle School

“ Excellent. Duncan is an excellent facilitator, very knowledgeable, and the day flew by. ”

Kerry Atkinson, Wilson Insurance

“ Duncan's ability as both a presenter and a reporter is great. In role play situations he was as hard-nosed and persistent as ever. In presentations he was informative and sensitive to participants' needs. ”

Coleen Ramsay, School District 6 (Rothesay, NB)

“ I especially liked the relaxed interaction of the group. It was a very informative course. The communication level was bang on. ”

Sgt. Dan Goodwin, RCMP

“ The pace – information – video examples – all covered exactly what we were looking for. ”

Mary Arsenault, Queen's Health Region, Charlottetown, PEI

“ I now have confidence that I will get my message across as I intended and will not feel stumped by tough questions. I also now understand how the media works and how to build a relationship with them. ”

Judy Hache, SIDA/AIDS Moncton

“ It was informative, low stress for such a high stress task, and fun. ”

Angela MacDonald, PEI Teachers' Federation

“ The content is solid; Duncan's experience and relating of stories is invaluable. ”

Bob Manning, past chair, Saint John Board of Trade

“ Very informative, I highly recommend this workshop. ”

Miguel LeBlanc, RSW, Executive Director, New Brunswick Association of Social Workers

“ Really liked the role playing in front of a camera with tough interview questions, followed up by a review of individual performance. ”

Tim Vickers, Exec. Dir. ACAP Saint John

“ Excellent preparation for interacting with the media. The skills learned are definitely transferable to other settings. ”

Tina Kennah, Administrative Director, River Valley Health

“ Duncan had excellent knowledge as a reporter and brought a real life experience to the workshop. ”

Jeff Squires, PEI Teachers' Federation

“ This workshop melds theory and practice very well and the presenter was able to use his vast experience to bring this topic to life. ”

Gary Hall, Leadership Development Program, School District 6 (Rothesay)

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# BMC Workshops

Aside from the Media Training and Crisis Communications courses which BMC has been delivering since the early 90s, the firm has had great success with several other workshops it has developed over the years.



- ◆ **Writing news releases** – The place of the news release in generating publicity has shifted in recent years. It remains a fundamental vehicle in dealing with the media but it is no longer the best choice in every circumstance. It's more important than ever that they are written properly, so in BMC's Writing effective news releases, you'll learn an excellent step-by-step approach to doing that. And you'll learn why, when and how to issue a news release, but also how to tell when a different approach would be a better idea, what that approach should be, and how to do it. His workshop really is about much more than writing.
- ◆ **Effective lobbying** – Over the years lobbying has developed a tainted or sleazy reputation. The way some practise it, it may be less than honourable, but that's not the norm. Lobbying is a legitimate function within our democratic system. In our Effective Lobbying workshop, you'll learn that lobbying is serious business not partisan politics. You will learn the four tracks of lobbying, the most common mistake made in lobbying, and the 11 steps to a solid, strategic lobbying effort.
- ◆ **Improving your corporate image** – Do you envy those people or companies that seem to get all the attention as if they are the only people who are good at what they do? Did you ever consider that this isn't just good luck on their part? In BMC's Improving your corporate image workshop, you'll learn the importance and benefits of a positive corporate image, the steps to developing and nurturing a positive image, how to position yourself in the media, and the benefits of adopting a proactive media policy. In short, we'll show you how to get your share of that positive attention.
- ◆ **Making Effective Presentations** – Making presentations regardless of the topic, and regardless of whether it is a PowerPoint presentation or a speech, is a performance and has to be approached and presented as one. In this workshop you'll learn the eight steps to preparing an effective presentation, and tips on everything from body language to gaining buy-in from the audience. Note that this is a workshop on content and presentation skills, not on the use of presentations technology.
- ◆ **Communication, Social Interaction and Interviewing** – This is a specialized course we offer with the assistance of Cpl. Mark Lord of the Fredericton Police Force and one of the foremost experts in the skill of interviewing for the purposes of determining whether the subject is being truthful. Mark has lectured all over the world on this topic and has used his special skills to help agencies ranging from the FBI and the Canadian, U.S. and Australian Military, to police forces throughout North America and Europe and the Canadian Bar Association. This workshop will be of particular interest to clients who have a particular interest in knowing whether people they talk to are being truthful.

**Call BMC today for further information on any of these interactive workshops.**

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# Our Clients

Bissett Matheson Communications has provided quality service to these clients, among others:

- ◆ UPM North America
- ◆ Greater Fredericton Airport Authority
- ◆ Co-Op Atlantic
- ◆ J Division RCMP
- ◆ Irving Oil Ltd.
- ◆ Prelam Enterprises
- ◆ Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation
- ◆ New Brunswick Multicultural Council
- ◆ Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- ◆ Paramedic Association of New Brunswick
- ◆ New Brunswick Association of Social Workers
- ◆ Moncton Farmer's Market Cooperative
- ◆ Moncton Fire Department
- ◆ Fredericton Police Force
- ◆ Saint John Police Force
- ◆ New Brunswick Teachers' Association
  - ◆ New Brunswick School District 6
  - ◆ PEI Teachers Federation
  - ◆ University of New Brunswick
  - ◆ Université de Moncton
    - ◆ Canadian Forces Base Gagetown – Combat Arms School, Armoured, and Artillery
- ◆ River Valley Health
- ◆ New Brunswick Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ New Brunswick Business Council
- ◆ New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- ◆ New Brunswick Association for Community Living
- ◆ New Brunswick Building and Construction Trades Council
- ◆ Nature Conservancy of Canada
- ◆ Association des enseignantes et enseignants francophones du NB
- ◆ Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission
- ◆ Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick

*\* plus a number of sector clients whom we help on a confidential basis*

