

# Professional reportage at conferences adds value to event



By [Owen Watkins](#)

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Professional reportage at conferences is essential service, for clients and delegates alike.



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Delegates attending conferences that run over two days or more expect to receive a summary of the event, with the important conclusions or decisions, to enable them to maximise the value of their attendance.

There are many ways of doing this but still the most effective is a written report that presents sound bites of the speakers and the days in an easily digestible format that looks good.

Often conference organisers offer a video or sound recording of the full event, which is then captured on disk but the reality is that few people will sit through hours of recordings to remember and analyse the results. Another method is the loading of all the PowerPoint presentations to a website or memory stick for attendees to take away with them. However, often the best part of the conference is not the presentation but the live debate and conversation it sparked.

A team of expert journalists or freelance writers that can both capture all that is said and then summarise it into useful précis can best manage such reportage. This skill is particularly valuable during the Q&A sessions, often characterised by mumbling, repetition and vague responses, which experienced reporters are able to manage.

When calling for quotes, conference organisers must remember that each session requires a reporter, if there are split sessions. It is not always necessary for the entire team to attend the conference, if there are many plenary or combined sessions, but relying on inexperienced scribes to fill the gaps usually ends poorly, as the combination of speed, accurate note-taking and selection of information is not a general skill.

Requesting post-conference transcribing services, based on audio, not only carries an excess charge but also is often highly inaccurate. The transcriber, not having attended the conference, will often misunderstand technical or industry-specific terms and will have to deal with many audience members operating in a second language.

The best solution is a highly experienced reportage team that captures the tone of the conference in a summarised version that is easily read and assimilated.

## ABOUT GWEN WATKINS

Gwen Watkins is a freelance writer, editor, subeditor and author. Almost 40 years of experience across industrial and commercial writing, as a reporter and PR consultant, has given her expert grounding in brand communication and native advertising. A Master NLP Practitioner, she uses these skills within the creation of copywriting, annual reports, brochures and website copy.

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