MAIJA ILMONIEMI

Executive Communications Advisor and Coach
Media Trainer | Executive Coach | Keynote and Pitch Coach

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Helsinki, Finland · Relocating to Dubai, UAE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Twenty years ago, I sat across a microphone at Finland's national broadcaster and learned something no textbook teaches: what it feels like when the stakes are high, the camera is live, and the wrong word costs everything. I have spent 20 years putting that knowledge to work, training senior leaders to speak with precision under pressure, hold a hostile interview, land a keynote that moves an audience, and close the deals that matter.

90+ executives coached one-to-one. 500+ participants trained. 900+ live interviews conducted. 3,300+ hours on national radio. The numbers are not a credential flex: they represent 20 years of real-time feedback on what works when the pressure is real. I have coached a Chief People Officer through a global layoffs announcement that kept every headline fair. I have prepared a Chief Sales Officer for a pitch that closed a six-figure deal. I have ghostwritten board-level books that opened doors their authors could not have opened alone.

Now I am bringing this to Dubai. The GCC is one of the world's most active markets for leadership communications, high-stakes media, and premium executive coaching. The demand is significant. The supply of practitioners who combine genuine broadcast journalism, agency experience, ICF-certified coaching, and a native command of the English language is exceptionally small. That gap is where I operate. Available immediately for senior in-house, agency, or consulting roles across Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

CAREER IMPACT

3,300+
hours live on national radio

900+
live interviews on air and on stage

90+
executives coached one-to-one

90%
return and referral rate

500+
participants trained online

100+
events hosted, audiences up to 2,000

70%
growth in corporate donors as foundation CEO

50
agency clients, built from zero and sold

TOP FIVE CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

01 **20 years across communications, media and executive coaching**

Broadcast journalist. Agency founder. ICF-certified coach. 20 years, six sectors, two countries. Most communications practitioners own one of those areas. I have operated at the top of all three. That combination does not exist in volume anywhere, and in the GCC it barely exists at all.

02 **3,300+ hours live on national radio**

Daily live broadcasting to audiences of up to 954,000. Unrehearsed. Unedited. No second take. 3,300 hours of that builds composure no training course can simulate. When I coach a leader for a live media moment, I am not guessing what it feels like. I have done it thousands of times.

03 **900+ interviews conducted on air and on stage**

Heads of state. CEOs. Crisis-hit executives. Athletes. 900+ live interviews, no script, no edit. I know exactly what a skilled interviewer is hunting for and what costs a leader the headline. That is what I hand to every client before they face one.

04 **90+ executives coached, 90% return and referral rate**

90+ leaders coached. 9 in 10 come back. 9 in 10 new clients arrive by referral. No marketing budget. No cold outreach. Results leaders notice, and trust strong enough that they send their peers. In a region where reputation travels fast, that number says everything.

05 **Agency founder, 50 clients, six-figure pitch closed**

Built an agency from zero to 50 clients, then sold my share. Grew a foundation's corporate donor base by 70% as CEO. Coached a CSO through a pitch that closed a six-figure contract. These are not soft-skills wins. They are revenue, growth and commercial results hiring committees in this region recognise immediately.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder, Executive Communications Advisor and Coach

Independent Practice 2020 to present

Advisory, coaching and event hosting for C-suite and senior leaders. Creator of the Speaking Power method.

EXECUTIVE COACHING AND MEDIA TRAINING

- **One-to-one executive coaching:** Coached 60+ executives across technology, energy, financial services and consumer sectors for high-stakes media interviews, keynote presentations and pitches. 90% of clients return for further work. 90% of new clients arrive by referral.
- **Crisis communications:** Coached the Chief People Officer of a global battery-technology company through a large-scale layoffs announcement and five live media interviews. All coverage stayed fair and on message, protecting both the executive and the brand.
- **Pitch and board presentation coaching:** Coached the Chief Sales Officer of an energy company for a major sales pitch. The presentation closed a six-figure deal. Typical client outcome: clearer structure, higher confidence, stronger close rates.
- **Online training programmes:** Designed and delivered media and keynote training for 500+ participants online, covering message development, body language, vocal delivery and real-time interview technique at scale.

EXECUTIVE WRITING AND CONTENT

- **Ghostwriting:** Ghostwrote two books for board chairmen and investors. The published book generated 10+ media interviews and speaking invitations for its author. The second is near completion.
- **Speaking Power method:** Created the Speaking Power coaching method, grounded in the behavioural science of presence. Author of Yksinäinen (2020) and Uuden yrittäjän käsikirja (2009), books published in Finland.
- **Event hosting:** Hosted 50+ events as MC, from international galas and

CORE COMPETENCIES

Media and spokesperson training

Media training, spokesperson preparation, message development, interview preparation, on-camera coaching, broadcast interview technique

Crisis communications

Crisis coaching and simulation, crisis announcement preparation, live media crisis handling, reputation protection strategy, stakeholder messaging under pressure

Executive coaching

Keynote and presentation coaching, pitch coaching, executive presence, behavioural communication science, ICF-certified coaching (Level 1 and 2), Speaking Power method

Agency and client counsel

Client retainer management, new business pitching, strategic communication counsel, media relations, integrated communications planning, agency leadership

Executive writing and ghostwriting

Speechwriting, ghostwriting of books and articles, thought leadership content, sales messaging, executive narrative development

Broadcasting and events

Live radio presenting, on-air and on-stage interviewing, MC and event hosting, television production, online and hybrid event hosting

corporate seminars to online and hybrid events, with audiences of up to 2,000.

Radio Presenter

Radio Nova 2022 to present

National commercial station. Daily audience 385,000. Held alongside the independent practice.

- **Live national broadcasting:** Presented a weekly four-hour live show, accumulating 800+ hours of live national broadcasting since 2022. Sole presenter, responsible for pace, tone and live guest management.
- **Live interviewing:** Conducted 100+ on-air interviews. This front-of-camera experience directly informs coaching: I know exactly what a host is listening for, what sounds evasive, and what earns trust.

Chief Executive Officer

Tukikummit Foundation 2023 to 2024

National foundation, Finland. Founded on the initiative of a former President of Finland. Held alongside the independent practice.

- **Fundraising and stakeholder relations:** Negotiated and personally closed four new corporate donor agreements, growing the foundation's corporate donor base by 70%. Led a cross-channel donor campaign that grew individual donors by 20%.
- **Communications and leadership:** Led all communications, fundraising and stakeholder relations for the foundation, representing it publicly and to government stakeholders.

Presenter and Producer

YLE Radio Suomi 2017 to 2020

Finland's national public broadcaster. Daily audience 954,000.

- **Live national broadcasting:** Presented five live four-hour shows per week to a daily audience of 954,000. 2,500+ hours of live national broadcasting, covering breaking news, major events and long-form interviews.
- **Live interviewing:** Conducted 700+ live interviews with guests from politics, business, culture, sport and civil society. That volume of live, unscripted conversation is the foundation of everything I teach: how to listen fast, redirect cleanly, and keep the story on track when it tries to go sideways.
- **Editorial leadership:** Promoted from presenter to presenter-producer. Took editorial charge of topic selection, guest booking and running order, and led the show team.

Television Production Credits

National television, Finland 2015 to 2023

Multiple formats across four productions.

- **The Voice of Finland (2020 to 2023):** Coached the celebrity coaches across four seasons on their on-camera performance, delivery and authenticity.
- **Dragon's Den Finland (2017):** Screened 300 company applications, cast the 50 founders who pitched across 12 episodes, and conducted all on-camera interviews with pitching founders.
- **I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here! Finland (2021):** Managed celebrity

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Master of Social Sciences
University of Helsinki
Major: Communication. Minors: Education Science and Leadership. Thesis: Managerial Communication Competence (Fortum Oyj).

Certified Professional Coach, ICF Level 1 and Level 2
Coaching Company Finland
200+ hours of ICF-accredited coach education covering executive, leadership and group coaching, mentor coaching and PCC-level assessment. Level 2 completing 2026.

Acting Studies, 30 ECTS
Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki
Embodied presence and real-time audience connection.

PUBLICATIONS

- Yksinäinen (Lonely, 2020), author
- Uuden yrittäjän käsikirja (2009), author
- Two ghostwritten books for board chairmen, one published and one near completion

LANGUAGES

English	Native
Finnish	Native
Swedish	Working proficiency
French	Intermediate
German	Basic

AVAILABILITY

Available immediately. Based in Helsinki, Finland, relocating to Dubai. Open to senior in-house, agency and consulting roles across Dubai and Abu Dhabi. References available on request.

participants on location in Argentina, handling logistics, communication and participant welfare.

- **Gogglebox Finland (2015 to 2017):** Led social media strategy and content creation across four seasons.

Independent Communications Consultant, Coach and Event Host

Independent practice 2012 to 2017

Executive coaching, embedded communications assignments and MC work.

- **Executive coaching:** Coached around 30 executives one-to-one in media and keynote preparation. Example: prepared a real estate CEO for a keynote to 700 people. The talk directly generated new business for the company.
- **Embedded communications management:** Served as embedded communications manager for three client organisations, including a year-long assignment in executive education, producing newsletters, website copy, course materials and marketing.
- **Event hosting:** Hosted 50+ events as MC, with audiences of up to 1,000 people.

Founder and CEO

Paraply Oy 2007 to 2012

Communications agency for technology companies, Helsinki. Founded, scaled and sold.

- **Agency growth:** Founded Paraply as a solo practice, grew it to a five-person communications agency with one co-owner serving 50 corporate clients, and sold my share in 2012.
- **Retainer model:** Created and sold an outsourced communications-manager service. Around 30 technology companies signed monthly retainers, providing predictable revenue and long-term client relationships.
- **Client portfolio:** Served 50 corporate clients across technology, start-ups and industrial sectors in strategic communication, brand, media relations and sales message development.
- **Publication:** Wrote and published Uuden yrittäjän käsikirja (The New Entrepreneur's Handbook, 2009) while leading the agency.

Communications Consultant

AC-Sanafor Oy, Weber Shandwick affiliate 2005 to 2007

PR and communications agency, Helsinki, Finland.

- **Crisis communications:** Ran crisis communication coaching and live crisis simulations for a major international pharmaceutical company.
- **Client communications:** Delivered communications consulting, media relations and content for corporate clients across technology and industrial sectors.

Earlier Career

- **Course Author and Teacher, Valmennustiimi Eximia (2003 to 2006):** Wrote preparation course materials used by 1,000 applicants and taught around 100 students.
- **Group Communications, Fortum Oyj (2003 to 2005):** Internal communications at a major listed energy company, supporting interim reports.