

Making the Most of Your Media Interview

Red faces, stuttering, the shakes. Everyone gets nervous before they have to go on camera or do an interview with the press, whether they have done it a thousand times before or never at all. Being interviewed doesn't just mean answering a reporter's questions; it is an opportunity for you to get your message out there. Being prepared for an interview will make you less nervous and more confident, and with confidence comes increased credibility. Follow these tips to seem like an interview pro.

1. **Practice:** If possible, ask the interviewer for the questions ahead of time so that you can prepare answers. Get a friend or a colleague to ask you these questions- and any other questions you feel the reporter may ask. This allows you to get over any rough patches or places you may stumble in your answers.
2. **Be honest:** If you don't believe in what you are saying, why should you expect others to? "I don't know" is an acceptable answer. Be sure to tell the reporter the steps that you are taking to get the answer. Don't be afraid to ask if what you are saying is clear.
3. **Don't assume:** Don't assume that the reporter knows what you are talking about and avoid jargon. Sometimes terms we use every day at work are lost on the general public. This can lead to misinterpreting and things being taken out of context.
4. **Get your message out there:** The interview is about you. Make sure that your messages are clear, quotable and of interest to the reporter. Just because something is important to you, doesn't mean that the reporter – or public – will care.
5. **So you are going to be on camera:** Check your appearance right before you go on. Wear solid colours, but not black or white because you will look like you are disappearing – a navy suit is always a good option. While being interviewed, relax and smile – people can tell if you are uptight and nervous. Don't rock back and forth or shift the weight of your legs.

6. **Interviews by phone:** Use a landline; cell phones are more likely to cut out. Eliminate all distractions – turn off the TV and Computer and put a Do Not Disturb sign on your door. Keep your notes nearby and organized so that you aren't shuffling for answers. If on the radio, remember to smile – people can hear it in your voice!

Remember, this is your interview. You may not be able to control the questions, but you can control how they are answered. Being prepared can make interviews seem a lot less daunting.

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