



**Preparing for an Interview**  
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**Keys to a good interview**

- Talk in lay terms. Tell stories and anecdotes that illustrate the point & give examples
- Keep the Answers short
- Think about what you want to say beforehand. Define 2-3 key points that you would like to make
- Speak in complete thoughts
- Never say anything you don't want to read in print/internet, hear on the radio or see on television
- Be confident – you are the expert

**Preparing before the interview**

- If asked to do an interview, respond quickly. TV and radio producers do many stories each day, and you should take advantage of the opportunity.
- Talk to the interviewer beforehand. Provide them with questions/summary of your work. They may follow your guide exactly, and they will be grateful that you have made their job easier.
- Prepare a single communication objective with 2-3 key points
- Anticipate the questions, especially the hard ones. What are your key messages?
- Answer difficult questions as briefly as possible then BRIDGE to your message
- Don't hesitate to put the issue into perspective, even if reporter doesn't ask (people affected, when did the issue arise, etc.)
- If doing a radio interview, find a quiet location. Turn off your computer if possible (turn off the volume)
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early for interview. If TV, make sure to look in the mirror first.

**Presentation**

- Dark clothes look best on TV. Avoid checkers, stripes, plaids, or other patterns. Avoid large, jangling, or reflective jewelry.
- Stand comfortably and alert with your hands at your sides. If seated, sit forward and erect. If you are sitting at a desk, keep your hands above the desk. If sitting on a couch or in a casual chair, don't clasp your hands in your lap. Don't tap the table or chair with your hands.
- When being interviewed on television, look at the reporter, not the camera. The only exception is in a satellite interview, when the reporter or anchor may not be on location. If you're uncertain where to look, ask. Don't shift your eyes when answering because it connotes that you are trying to avoid an issue and are untrustworthy. Use natural gestures.
- Pay attention to nodding your head. If you nod your head when answering a question, it may convey your agreement.
- Talk clearly in short phrases. Try to keep your answers brief. A typical sound bite is 8-15 seconds. A long radio story is 45 seconds.
- Typical TV stories run about 80 seconds. Be concise and to the point. Of the 80 seconds, your sound bite will be 10-15 seconds. Keep in mind that even if you are asked lots of questions, most will not be used. And reporters will try to ask a question over and over to get a different (more interesting) response. Stick to your message. Answer each question as if it is the only answer that will make it to the air.
- Try not to talk too fast.

## **During the Interview**

- State the most important first, then provide background.
- Keep responses brief, but long enough for quotes.
- Stick to main points, don't allow yourself to get drawn off onto tangents.
- Mention the subject by name several times, do not use "it" or "they."
- Make eye contact with reporter.
- Don't overestimate reporter's knowledge. If reporter bases questions on incorrect information don't hesitate to set the record straight.
- Differentiate between fact and your opinion.
- If you don't understand a question ask for clarification.
- If unprepared for a question, tell reporter you will get back to them.
- Never say "no comment". Instead explain briefly.
- Avoid saying "off the record". Reporter may not honor this.
- Be honest.
- Don't joke
- Don't worry about silence
- Make final comment clear and concise – reemphasize your main point