



So, The Media Wants You to Do an Interview

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I am a media consultant in my community and have had to learn a number of things in order to become better at doing interviews. The fact is that reporters are under very short timelines and they need to get information very quickly in order to meet the deadlines that are set out for them. Because of this, you need to think fast and be prepared for a call that could come at any time.

Here are some things that you can do in order to give an excellent interview:

1. Reply to the request at the earliest possible moment. If you do not call within a couple of hours, you are likely too late.
2. Ask questions about the topic that is being featured so that you understand the issues that are being covered.
3. Don't say "off the record". There is no "off the record". Only say the things that you would be comfortable having the reporter use.
4. Take a moment to think about your answer before you offer it. You might even ask if you could have a couple of minutes to draw an outline on paper to help you structure the information you have to offer.
5. Reporters usually want you to begin by talking about some of the difficulties that people face, or the problems associated with the topic.
6. You will need to offer a few tips or strategies that could help those who are experiencing this problem (Three is a good number).
7. Make sure that the reporter has the proper spelling of your name and knows your credentials, so you are introduced in an accurate manner.
8. If you are meeting with the reporter personally, offer a business card, brochure or handout that could help with the topic.
9. Thank the reporter for choosing you to be part of their media story.
10. Invite them to contact you again in the future for other interviews.

If you are being interviewed for newspaper, try to keep humour out of your sentences. This does not usually work well because the readers cannot see you and they may interpret your joke as truth or even feel offended.

If the interview is for radio, keep the energy in your voice up so that your enthusiasm will catch the attention of the listeners.

Before television interviews, take a few minutes to check your appearance. A quick hair brushing and straightening of your clothing can make a huge difference. And, of course, there is really nothing better than a broad smile to warm up your audience!