

How to Give a Good Interview

- An interview presents one of the best media opportunities. It is your five-minute chance to tell the world what you want to say.
- As an interviewee, you can influence, design, and even lead the interview. The basic rule: Never go to an interview before knowing why you go there and what you want to achieve.
- Decide what is your message. Your objective is to send a strong message using a few simple words. If you use too many complicated terms viewers'and listeners' attention will drop and your message will not reach them.
- The message should consist of three points that you want to make: A, B, C – that will keep it focused.
- A good way of crafting the message is to think of the headline you would like to appear in the newspapers the day after your interview.

Questions to ask before the interview:

- If possible, get the questions in advance, if not, find out about the topic of the interview. Talk with the reporter who will interview you. Find out what he/she knows about the topic. If possible, brief the reporter.
- Find out about the context: are you interviewed alone or in a group? Who else is on the show? Information about other participants can be crucial for you to prepare properly.
- Find out about the show in which you will participate. What is the format– a Q&A, profile, reportage, news program or something else?
- What is the profile of the viewers/listeners? If You can adopt and fine-tune your message to their language and interests.
- At what time is the show broadcasted?
- Research on previous reporting on the subject. Do the show/reporter have a particular stance on it?
- Is the reporter friendly or difficult?
- Find out how long the interview will be.
- Will the interview be recorded and edited, or it will go live on air?
- If it goes on air, will the viewers/listeners ask questions?
- Get prepared:
- Decide on the three points.
- Get ready for the subject; find examples, facts, stories, and anecdotes for each point.
- Exercise in front of the mirror.
- Be prepared for surprises. Think what could be controversial and difficult questions? Answers?

- Prepare briefing for the reporter – send backgrounders and fact sheets on the topic ahead of the interview.

During the interview:

- Lead the interview. Direct discussion towards your three points.
- Be short and concise. TV and radio do not like long sentences and in-depth analysis.
- Use sound bites. Short, pithy statements on your three points, easy to understand and remember.
- Use straight and simple language: not —owing to the fact that‖ but —because‖. Not—the fact that he had not succeeded‖ but —his failure‖. Do not use professional jargon, but simple terms.
- Avoid —fillers‖. They are the words and sounds that we make while thinking about what to say next. They can be —well‖, —like‖, or —hmmmm‖, —ahhhhh‖ and similar.
- In order to avoid fillers, you need to know that you are using them. Tape yourself or have someone listening while you practice.
- Do not be afraid of silence. Long silence in the program is reporter’s responsibility, not yours. Think before you answer.
- Repeat occasionally your three points: A, B, C, so the message gets across. But do it so that it sounds logical and good –changing angles, examples and even language. Relate all the questions to the three points.
- First give conclusions then back up with facts. Learn to talk in this —upside-down‖ fashion. Go straight to the point first, explanations leave for later.
- Bridging: In case of a question that you don’t want to answer, try to —bridge‖ it, transition it to your three points. Example: —I like Fairuz, but let me tell you, Majida El Roumi is even better.‖ Be careful though when you use bridging, it can be counterproductive.
- Bridging Phrases. Bridging is used not only to avoid undesired, but also to stay focused. Useful bridges: —Yes, and in addition to that.‖ —I would like to add that.‖ —The most important point to remember is‖, —Let me clarify‖, —This reminds me of‖, —Let me emphasise that‖, etc.
- Stay positive. If you are asked a bad question, answer the best you can, but do not antagonize with the reporter. Keep a friendly relationship with reporter.
- Use facts. Use facts and figures to substantiate your message. Be careful though – TV and radio do not like too many numbers, viewers cannot remember them. Instead of nine-hundred-fifty-eight thousand‖ say —almost million‖.
- Taking out of context. However difficult it is, you should try to avoid statements that can be taken out of context and used against you. For example, do not repeat false statements about you. Not —it is not true that our activities are

damaging environment, but —I can assure you that it is not true.
Truth. Always tell the truth. Do not be afraid to admit if you don't know answer to a question. Promise to be back with it once you find it and do so.

After the interview:

- Add the name of reporter to your media list
- Analyse - what went wrong, what was good. Lessons learned.
- If during the interview you promised additional information to the reporter, act immediately
- Ask for tape with interview and save it
- If the interview was published in print media, collect the press clipping and store it in press clipping archive. If it was very good, use it as a part of your press kit, for further publicity.