

Interview Tips & Techniques

Before the Interview

Ask a lot of questions when the reporter first contacts you:

- What outlet?
- What format?
- What topics will be discussed?
- Are there other guests/interviewees?

During that first contact:

- Get as much information as you can.
- Arrange for a call-back for the actual interview.

In preparing your message points, ask yourself:

- What is the main takeaway message I want to communicate on this subject, i.e., the headline?
- What are the three most critical supporting message points for this take-away message?

Create your message points:

- Write them out.
- Practice delivering them.

During the Interview

Consider these guidelines:

- **Deliver** the headline first, i.e., the most salient, important, brief take-away message.
- **Be succinct:** The average media quote is now seven to nine words!
- **Use bridges and flags.**
- **Use the reporter's questions** as entry points into the interview—bridge to your message points.

Keep these suggestions in mind:

- **Do not fill** in the “silences” during the interview. Communicate your message point and stop. (Any used quotes will be brief by necessity; you need to be succinct to give the reporter a quotable phrase.)
- **Repeat** your main message points.
- **Correct** any misinformation or false premises.

Suggested bridges:

- “What’s important here is...”
- “The bottom line is...”
- “I understand your question, but I think the real issue is...”
- “Let’s get back to the data...”
- “I don’t know the answer to that question, but what I do know is...”

Suggested flags:

- “Here’s the most important finding...”
- “This is what the public needs to understand...”
- “The real issue is...”

