



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEDIA INTERVIEW PART 3

PERSONAL PREPARATION



Being interviewed as an expert in your field is a great way of getting your name out to the public, and gives you the opportunity to educate the public on topics that you are passionate about. Interviews are really fun, but they are extremely time-consuming. These tips will help you get your ducks in a row before you begin this process so you don't waste energy.

1. Know Your Topic Inside and Out

If you have an hour or a day of training material on the topic or you have read a few books, or written an article on it, you probably do not have the depth or breadth of knowledge for an unscripted interview. Avoid being surprised by questions you are asked. Be confident and quick, because you are prepared.

2. Be Familiar With All the Current Books, Research and Media Buzz on Your Topic

Go to Amazon.com or another on-line book source at least once a month and find out what is out there on your topic and read it. If you are asked — as you often may be — if you have read a certain book or a book related to your topic, you can say “yes” and have an opinion on it. Get any periodicals related to your topic so you know what is hot. This is particularly helpful in finding additional angles that enable you to create winning press releases. Go to your favorite search engines at least once a week, put in your key words and see what comes up. This will also let you know who the other experts on your topic are. Perhaps you'll want to write together or quote each other.

3. Get in Touch With Other Experts Who are Being Interviewed

Develop an expert network to share information. I e-mailed my group when I got a particularly thorny question from *US Magazine* about how head size is related to charisma and success in movie stars. I received some great information, and we all had a few laughs. When *Cosmopolitan* gave me some information from another expert about body language and dating, I told them I

held a different opinion, but then I offered the name of a researcher who would agree with that information. Imagine how impressed they were when I cited the very researcher who had given them the initial information. Naturally, we both sounded more credible.

4. Answer the Following Questions to get Clarity About Your Image and Your Business Goals:

- Why are you doing interviews?
- What are your goals?
- What image do you want to project?
- How do you want to be perceived by the media?
- How do you want to be perceived by your audience?
- How do you want your information used by the media?
- How do you want it used by your audience?

5. Decide What You Will and Will Not Talk About, and What Types of Shows You Will and Won't Participate In

You may find that certain shows are (in your view) morally ambiguous, strange or distasteful. For example, I was asked to do a radio show on which they were interviewing a 19-year-old multi-million-dollar corporation president. I discovered on the air that the intent of the show was to make him look bad. Asking questions up-front about the show will give you the opportunity to decide if you wish to participate. I am sometimes asked to analyze the body language of the parents of missing children or the spouses or family members of people accused of crimes. I let it be known I have a policy of not reading the body language of victims or non-public figures. If you've determined the answers to the previous questions, you know how you want your information used and how you want to be perceived; which makes choosing whether or not to participate on a show simple.

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