



Interview Prep for TV

10 Tips for Success

- 1. Bring in a coach.** A professional media trainer can infuse the training sessions with realism and toughness, which should help keep you off the firing line. It's advised to spend an hour of prep time for every minute of air time. If it's a 3-7 minute standup, that means up to seven hours of prep time.
- 2. Practice on camera.** That unblinking eye catches each stumble, mumble, facial expression, hand gesture, and gaze aversion (sideways glance). Fix the problems when your audience is a dozen, not a million.
- 3. Control unspoken cues.** Look down when a tough question is asked, and what you say next won't matter. Research has shown that nonverbal cues can influence the perception of the message and the speaker, both positively and negatively. A spokesperson must have the control of an actor.
- 4. Inject key messages.** When developing your responses, use "command messages" (aka talking points) — statements that you work into responses that explain your position and be consistent with them. Be ready to support them with examples and statistics.
- 5. Know what the reporter is after.** It's acceptable to ask up front what the story is about and how the reporter or producer sees you fitting in.
- 6. Take command of your answer.** This is a corollary to injecting key messages. You can't control the questions, but you can learn to gracefully "bridge" from the question asked to the topic you'd rather discuss. Don't speculate.
- 7. Have a conversation.** In most situations look at the interviewer, not the camera. Try to relax and speak in a conversational tone. Remember, it's an interview, not a speech. If possible, try to meet your interviewer briefly prior to the segment so you can establish a rapport.
- 8. Be ready with sound bites.** For TV especially, time is short. Develop brief, pithy statements that present your messages vividly. Practice getting through the statement without pausing to prevent a partial statement becoming a sound bite of its own.
- 9. Think past the camera to the audience.** How do viewers' interests mesh with the interests of your company or client? Use the interview as a way to make that connection. Think of the reporter as a channel to the audience.
- 10. Dress for success.** Whites look too bright under TV lights and stripes can shimmer distractingly, so wear muted jewel tones, blue or beige solids. Don't let what you're wearing distract from the message. And, never let them see you sweat.

BOTTOM LINE:

Some reporters will ask to go "off the record" or continue questioning after the interview seems to be finished. But watch out. Even in such unguarded moments, your answers are still official.

CONTACT US

For a free consultation, or to find out more about Burrelles media relations planning, monitoring and measurement services, please [contact us online](#) or at: Burrelles.com | [800.631.1160](tel:800.631.1160)