

The Hodges Partnership's Guide to Great Media Interviews

Are you preparing for an upcoming interview with a journalist?
Here are our best practices to help you feel confident and ready.

GETTING READY FOR THE INTERVIEW:

- Understand the story's focus
- Review background about the reporter
- Know and practice your key messages

COMMON INTERVIEW FORMATS:

Phone Interviews

- Find a quiet place without distractions
- Use your notes, but don't read verbatim
- Stand up for confidence
- Use a headset or speakerphone so you can take notes
- Beware long pauses between questions (don't fill them up)

Phone (Live)

- Use a landline, if available
- You'll call-in before the show to connect with the producer (don't play the radio in the background)
- Keep your answers to 30 seconds or less

TV (On Location)

- Look at the reporter, not the camera
- Suggest backgrounds to reporters
- Share a fact sheet and/or give reporter background before recording begins

TV (Zoom)

- Find a quiet place without distractions
- Turn off all computer notifications
- Keep background in mind (avoid blur feature)
- Maintain eye contact with the camera
- Beware of eyes straying to notes

TV (In-Studio)

- Arrive early
- Look at the host, not the camera
- Maintain good posture
- Turn off your smartphone
- The mic will pickup anything you say before, during and after the interview
- Stay in your seat after the interview (the station may be showing guests as they go to commercial)

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Bridging: Transitioning to a Key Message

- *"What I can tell you is ..."*
- *"While I appreciate your interest in this question, I'm here to talk about ____"*
- *"In my experience ..."*
- *"It's important to remember that ..."*

Flagging: Highlighting Important Information to the Audience and Reporter

- *"What's important to remember is that ..."*
- *"The bottom line is ..."*
- *"The main thing we're focusing on is ..."*

Avoiding "No Comment:" Sometimes You Can't Answer or Don't Have the Answer

- *"I cannot speak to that directly, however..."*
- *"I don't have all the facts to answer that right now, but what I can tell you is..."*

DELIVERING KEY MESSAGES

- Prepare with three key messages for an interview
- 30 words or less; Keep sentences simple and use no more than two commas; use short words
- Keep TV and radio soundbites to 20-30 seconds
- Use everyday words; Remove technical jargon
- Use contractions (Don't, won't, they're, etc.)
- Beware of adding more than one statistic
- Include a call to action

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