



Ten Tips to Remember for Media Interviews

- 1) Before the interview, identify three key messages you want the publication's audience to know. Regardless of the reporter's questions, be sure to eventually work in your three points, using transitional phrases such as, "What's important to understand here is ..." or "and let me just add ..."
- 2) Speak naturally and be friendly and enthusiastic, allowing your personality to show without looking rehearsed. It is perfectly acceptable to consult notes during the interview to remind yourself of key messages or to check a statistic.
- 3) Keep your answers short, rarely exceeding 60 seconds. Being concise allows the reporter to ask follow-up questions, leading to a more balanced and worthwhile interview for both parties.
- 4) Don't overestimate a reporter's knowledge of your subject. Talk in layman's terms, using as little technical jargon as possible while avoiding abbreviations and acronyms. For example, "an item about the PDC in PSJ" should be stated as "an item about the Professional Development Conference in our Professional Safety Journal."
- 5) Don't think of the reporter as an adversary. Reporters typically want you to look good and will choose quotes from you that sound professional. So relax, but stay mentally alert.
- 6) If you misspeak or are simply unhappy with the way you phrased an answer, stop and begin your answer again (unless the interview is live radio or television). It is acceptable to pause after being asked a question in order to think through the appropriate response.
- 7) Feel comfortable repeating the same answer if the reporter rephrases the question. Sometimes reporters use that tactic to get you to say more than you want to say. Politely stick to your original answer as many times as it takes. Don't talk to fill silence.
- 8) Never ask to speak off the record. Assume that everything you say will be reported, whether it's before, during or after the interview.
- 9) Avoid giving out financial figures. Only those numbers in a published report can be released to the media.
- 10) Never specifically talk about a competitor or discuss competitively sensitive or proprietary information. You should politely respond that the information requested is confidential.