



So, you want to do a media interview?

10 TIPS FOR THE MEDIA SPOKESPERSON

1. Am I the right person for the job?

Make sure you are the right person to be doing the interview. If you're not, always make a suggestion as to who would be the appropriate person, so the journalist isn't left without any options.

2. Prepare

Don't be rushed by the media. Sometimes the media will want a response from you 'on the spot'. You have a right to ask for however long you need to prepare. But at the same time, be considerate of the media's deadlines. Preparation is also about preparing a media release and ensuring the media have it prior to the interview. You then need to work from the same information. If you don't have a release, at least spend the time providing some background to the story.

3. Prioritise

As with preparation, prioritising your message is critical to maintaining control over what it is you want your target audience to take away.

4. Know what type of interview you are doing and with whom

Again, this is part of the preparation and critical to how much information you prepare. There is nothing worse than preparing pages of notes for a 30 second news grab.

5. Get comfortable

Wear comfortable clothing, get a drink of water if you think your throat may become dry, and adjust your chair so you feel comfortable.

6. Speak with authority

If you have made the decision that you are the right person for the interview, then sound like it. If you have prepared and prioritised your message, and you have your notes in front of you as a reference, there is no excuse not to sound like you know what you're talking about. Don't read your notes though, as this will undermine your authority.

7. Pause occasionally

Planned pauses can add extra emphasis to your message. It is also an effective way of reducing the number of "umms" and "ahhs". Replace these unintelligent noises with a brief pause and you will give yourself time to think, control your breathing and give added emphasis to your message.

8. Don't generalise

It's very easy to sensationalise general statements. The other hazard of generalising is that depending on what you say, it may be defamatory. Be careful and discuss any potential defamatory information with the interviewer BEFORE the interview starts.

9. Don't use jargon

Never assume the journalist you are speaking to or your target audience understand the jargon used within your industry. The worst are acronyms for industry organisations and government departments, which have a habit of regularly changing names.

10. "I like to move it, move it...I like to move it, move it..."

Repetition of your key information reinforces the 'take-home' message for your audience, and the journalist. Prepare and prioritise - know what the most important message is in your story. Repeat it. Keep it short and simple. This is particularly effective in broadcast mediums.

For more information refer to the fact sheets on *Media strategy*, *How to write a media release*, and *Media risk management* located at oranaarts.com under Resources.

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