

The interview

THE MEDIA ATTITUDE

Be cooperative!

Reporters need your comments for stories. If you make yourself available to answer their questions, they will appreciate it because it makes them look more professional.

Know your audience!

Who are they? What's their level of knowledge and expertise? What do you want them to know or do?

Know your message!

Have a single key point; repeat, reinforce, personalize, be definitive. Avoid "I think," "I feel," "I believe." Do not stray away from your subject.

Anticipate all questions!

Consider issues and determine answers before you speak; concentrate on your answers to their questions. Do not be caught off guard.

Avoid Jargon!

Avoid words or phrases that may be confusing or that your audience will not understand. Keep the message simple. Be careful of acronyms, clichés and technical terms.

Use physical animation!

Voice and body work together. Use physical movement to enhance your vocal delivery. Scan the room, maintain high energy.

Do not repeat negative phrases!

Rephrase questions to reinforce what your university or organization is doing to improve the situation in and out of the work place.

Keep your cool!

Respond rationally to emotion. Don't get flustered or defensive.

Speak only for organization!

Don't talk about other companies or rival firms or organizations' policies or philosophies. Concentrate on your own position.

Avoid "no comment" and "off the record"!

Be careful of phrases like "between you and me" or "I shouldn't be saying this but...". If you say it, expect that it will be printed, broadcast or reproduced somewhere. It will also influence subsequent on the record questions.

Tell the truth!

Honesty ultimately enhances believability.

Don't be defensive!

Attitude is everything. Stay calm, remain in control in all situations.

Think before you answer!

Reporters are often in a hurry because of deadline pressures. Don't feel rushed or goaded into giving quick answers. Speak clearly with the proper rhythm. Avoid clichés.

Don't trash the opposition!

Or anybody else, for that matter.

Listen to the question carefully!

Make sure you understand the question before you answer. If you don't understand, ask for clarification or have them interviewer repeat the entire question.

If you don't know, say so!

Talk about what you DO know, don't talk about what you DON'T know. That is better than giving incorrect, misleading or damaging information.

Personal appearance counts!

Maintain good eye contact with reporters-- don't worry about the camera. Keep your voice strong/ animated.

Personalize!

In one-on-one interviews, use the reporters' first name whenever possible. It helps you take control and makes you sound more confident and conversational.

Say "Thanks"!

Your final actions in the interview may leave the strongest impression with the reporter. Make every encounter a memorable one--chances are you'll get more favourable stories in the future?

(source Polakoff Communications, Aug. 03)