

Preparing for press, TV and radio interviews

1. Be Prepared

- a. Who is doing the interview?
- b. Is it going to be pre-recorded or live on air?
- c. What the interview is about?
- d. What is likely to be asked?
- e. What is the programme?
- f. Who is your audience?
- g. Is anyone else being interviewed?

2. Make your points

Think of **two or three very concise points** you most want the audience to hear. Write them down. Make sure you use them

3. Keep it simple

Few people sit down and listen to the radio! They're always doing something else at the same time so complicated sentences and facts get lost. The simpler you can keep it the better.

4. Keep it natural

You are talking to ordinary people in their homes. Avoid jargon and keep it friendly.

5. Use your imagination.

Most interviews are short. Painting pictures in people's minds mean they remember what you say. Use examples or statistics if you can, but do not use people's names without permission.

6. Prepare to smile (or frown) but use your voice to convey your message.

It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it.

7. Impressions

What you look like and the general impression you create have much more impact on most people than anything you say. So look good, even for radio and especially for television.

8. Don't be intimidated.

You will usually know far more about the topic than the person asking the questions. The interviewer's only role is to draw you out to help you tell your story. You are the expert. Be prepared for the occasional personal question.

9. Avoid interrupting

Cutting in is unattractive but if you decide it's necessary do it decisively or don't do it at all.

10. Opportunity

Use the opportunity for maximum benefit. Whatever questions are asked ensure that you make the points you want to. Never get angry.

Doing TV and radio interviews

If the reporter visits you...

Go somewhere quiet – a small room or inside a car is good.

Try to ignore the microphone – it will be held about 12” away from you.

Television interview

What you look like, unfortunately can matter. Make-up in moderation and a relaxed but professional style are best. No white tops, zigzag patterns or herringbone fabric. If sitting down, to avoid the “bunching up” of your jacket, sit on the back of your jacket.

Studio interview

Take your notes with your three points clearly written on a small card. There will be a table and a microphone (position yourself about 12” away from it).

Concentrate on the interviewer – treat it as a conversation.

Don't rustle your papers.

Remote studio

You operate the equipment yourself. Don't worry about how to do this. It will be clear when you arrive. You can't see the interviewer, so listen hard.

Answer when it's your turn; butt in confidently if necessary.

Treat it like a telephone conversation.

Phone in

You'll have headphones on in order to hear callers. Their questions may irritate you but remain civil.

Treat it like a discussion and respond positively: “That's a good point, but the real issue here is ...”.