

Tips for Print Interviews

- Before the interview, find out the
 - Nature of the interview—Is it in person or by phone? In the case of radio/TV, is it live or taped?
 - Reporter's deadline.
 - Interviewer's name and phone number (check credentials, if not sure).
 - Nature of the publication, website, or radio/TV program. Google it. Find out what they cover, who they appeal to, and if there is any obvious bias.
- Never “wing it.” Don't agree to an interview right at the moment a reporter cold calls you. Say “you caught me at a bad time. Can I call you back in 15 (or whatever seems appropriate) minutes?” Ask the pertinent questions (see above) before you hang up, but then use the time to research the publication and gather your thoughts.
- Don't agree to an interview if you don't have expertise on the subject.
- Avoid using jargon or terminology that your audience may not understand
- Correct the reporter if something mentioned is not true.
- If you're asked you a question you cannot answer, say you will get back to them with the information.
- If a reporter asks a detailed, multi-part question, focus on answering the one question that leads you back to your key messages.
- Consider "off the record" out of the question—avoid saying anything you wouldn't want attributed to you.
- Have three messages prepared for the topic and do your best to use them. These would be the three most important, relevant things you want the readers or listeners to remember, within the context of what the reporter is asking.
- Remember that you don't have to answer “leading” questions that may be off-track. Bridge back to your messages with a statement like, “The single most important thing to remember is...”
- After the interview, find out when the piece will be published and request a link to the online version.
- Print out your notes, but don't read them over the phone (most print interviews are held by phone). It will drain all the energy out of your voice.
- Stand, even for phone interviews, in order to convey maximum energy and command of the interview through your voice. An “open face” does the same thing. Many successful sales people have a mirror on their desk so they can be sure they have the open facial expression. Like standing, it communicates confidence.