



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

Research the Topic and Guests

- No amount of style or personality can compensate for a lack of knowledge
- Rehearse out loud, what reads well may not speak well

Listen Carefully and React with Interest

- Ask appropriate follow-up questions to important statements
- Use written questions as a guide, not an absolute path
- Planning is great, but also remain flexible

Make the Guests Comfortable

- Introduce them to the studio and other staff
- Offer them water
- Give them an idea of how the show will happen

Should Questions be Submitted in Advance or Not?

- YES: 1st timers, officials and anyone who requests them
- NO: Anytime you need spontaneity or do not want rehearsed answers
- JUDGEMENT CALL: If questions are submitted in advance, remember follow-up

Introduce Guests Properly to the Audience

- Establish their background and credentials
- Allows audience to assess statements in a meaningful way

Re-establish Guest's Name and Title Before and After a Break

- Also utilize graphics to identify guests

Do Not Interrupt with Meaningless Comments

- Vocal reinforcement such as "I see" and "Uh huh" adds nothing to an interview
- Very important if interview will be edited as interrupting may cause you to lose a sound bite

Do Not Patronize Guests, but Do Treat Them with Respect

- You are not coddling or cross-examining
- Bullying guests will make you look ugly

Remember: The Guest is the Focus

- Show some knowledge, but let the guest shine
- Stay engaged in whose speaking (other guests should too)
- The guest is the expert on the subject at hand
- BUT . . . be careful and keep control

Keep Control of the Interview

- If a guest becomes long-winded, wait for a pause, then interject with a new question or re-direct the conversation
- Do not let a guest use your show for their own purpose
- “Prep” guests on the general length of answers you are looking for

Never Have the Guest Address the Camera

- You want the illusion that the camera is eavesdropping

Keep Cool

- If you fail to remain calm, you will only rattle your already nervous guests

Always Have Your Next Question Ready

- Think ahead without tuning out the present (remember follow-up!)
- A host without a questions is a very pathetic sight

Ask Effective Questions

- Avoid “yes or no” questions (most of the time)
- Establish a “flow” (ask questions a layperson would ask, then ask questions a lay person would not think of)
- Avoid obvious or predictable questions

Do Not Answer a Question As You Ask It

- NO: “So, you have given this referendum your full support?”
- YES: “What is your stance on this referendum?”

Do Not Ask More Than One Question at a Time

- A good interview is like a tennis match: back and forth
- Following this tip makes your program clearer to the audience

Question Jargon Unless You Are Sure the Audience Understands It

- GUEST: “Well, we arrived at the scene and used an AED to revive the unconscious victim.”
- HOST: “What is an AED?”
- GUEST: “An automatic external defibrillator. We use it to restart a victim’s heart or correct an irregular heartbeat.”

Before Ending an Interview, Ask Guest If He or She Has Anything to Add

- Enables a guest to express something important that was missed
- If you have time, this is a very courteous gesture

When It Is Time to Wrap . . . Wrap!

- Of course, use common sense
- Do not cut the guest off unless they will not stop talking
- “Prep” your guest on show and segment time

Be Flexible

- Guests cancel, sometimes on the day of the shoot
- Be a problem solver . . . nothing in life goes according to plan