

Media Training for Scientists

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How to use television, radio, and newspaper media to get your message across effectively

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So you are going to be on TV!

- Lights, Camera, Action . . .
INTIMIDATION!
- Hey! What is that little flashing thingie . . . ?

Distraction is Your Primary Foe

- Fears of the unknown
- Suspicion of interviewer's motives
- Resignation and wanting it over
- A feeling of loss-of-control

- **You need to get back into WORK MODE**

How to Get Into WORK MODE?

- Prepare in advance, Practice out loud
- Form quotable quotes in advance
- Take control of the content
- Repeat 3 key points
- Expect to be nervous (everyone is)

About Reporters

- It really is just a job to them - You are not special
- If you don't seize initiative they will have to; they prefer you to lead
- They need newsworthy material
- Don't usually have a strong agenda and tend to fish around on topics

Absolutes in Interviews

- Tell the truth - always!
- Truth is 100% defensible - always!
- Tell the truth even when it hurts.
- Events pass but damage to a reputation may live forever

Do NOT:

- tell reporters how to do their job or set up the interview
- ask reporters to let you edit an article or preview a video clip
- go "Off the record".
- Say something you don't want to see it in the news.

Six Types of Questions – Know these

1. We know the answer- **Answer**
2. We don't know the answer - **IDK**
3. Not sure - **Admit it, promise to get info to them**
4. Someone else's question- **Refer them**
5. We know but can't answer –
tell them why you can't answer
6. Quantifiable answer -
give numbers, round up, do the calculations

Things to Practice:

- Pre-interview the reporter on topic
- Talk about audience's interests
- Plain language; no jargon
- Volunteer key points
- Bridge phrases - "It is crucial that . . ."
- Use silence - its their problem to edit

Television Tips – Own the Setting

- Chat with interviewer in advance, get connected and watch the program in advance
- Study the reporter's style & approach
- Get to studio early and watch the stage and camera setup;

Appearances Count

- Sit down interviews - business clothes, solid colors, plain ties
- Avoid heavy jewelry, sheer, black, striped shirts, cleavage, bangles
- Booger-tie-strap check
- Extra makeup for women
- Hanky for sweat (hot lights)

Standup Appearances

- Less formal, may wear field clothes
- Don't sway, jingle keys, flap clothes
- Watch sweat on face and pits
- Keep glasses on, cell phones off

Where do I Look?

- Ignore the camera
- Talk to the interviewer
- Use natural hand, eye and head motions
- Be yourself, Personal appeal is wonderful
- Show some enthusiasm

Be Concise

- TV time is valuable, don't waste it
- Audience only wants your highlights
- Know when to stop talking. Dead air time is their problem, they fix it

Taking Control Appropriately

- Always be polite, positive and friendly, never argue
- Tough questions just a prodding technique, don't take it personally
- Use long pauses to collect your wits

Loaded Words

- We have been trained to repeat
- Don't reincorporate "Disaster" "Catastrophe" or "horror" into your answer. Select your own words.
- The interviewer's questions will be edited out.

Embrace the Media

Remember!

- Your audience wants you to succeed.
- Your reporter looks good when you look good.