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Top Training Tips

1 Be prepared

When a media request comes in, ask who the journalist is representing. What is their audience? What broad area do they want to cover? Is it a live or recorded interview? Speak to your communications team to ensure you are ready.

2 Focus on 3 key points

Write them down, rehearse them if you have time - and have them to hand if possible.

3 Keep it simple & explain why

Assume the interviewer knows little or nothing about your area of expertise. Make sure your answers are directed at their readers, listeners or viewers, not fellow experts. Explain WHY your work matters to people's lives.



4 Use examples and statistics

Back up broad comments with specific, relevant and tailored examples - and have two or three strong statistics to hand.

5 Remember, you are the expert

Guide the conversation where you want it to go. Don't be drawn down blind alleys.

6 Always ask to repeat an answer if you feel you haven't got it right

(unless it's a live interview!)

7 Pause before answering - and during interviews

Breathe and say 'OK', 'Sure' or 'That's a good question' to give yourself time to compose your answer, and to avoid diving in too quickly. Take pauses during your answers too - this makes it easier to extract 'clean' clips, and allows you to think where your answer is going.

8 Be aware of your body language

Try to sit still and not move your head or hands too much in an interview - this can be very distracting. Often, you will be unaware of your movements - so it's worth watching an interview back to check.

9 Avoid jargon - it's a turn-off

Don't use acronyms, business jargon or complex language that can make a viewer or listener 'stop' and lose the thread of what you are saying. Unless you are speaking to a specialist publication, use clear and easily-understood language.

10 Don't repeat negative language back to the interviewer (pink elephants)

Don't be tempted to repeat back a negative statement from a question that might stick in people's minds. Focus on positive content based on your key points.

11 Repeat your key points

Keep mentioning your key points - in the same interview, and across multiple interviews. Don't get bored - stick to those key messages. Repetition increases the chances of key points being used when interviews are edited.

12 Always mention your organisation

Try to mention your organisation by name at least twice in any interview. If you do this, and follow the other tips, journalists are more likely to come back to you, and your colleagues, for future interviews.