

Tips and Tricks for a Successful Broadcast Interview

Dress:

- Dress conservatively. For men, a dark suit and blue shirt is best. Avoid loud ties or ties with small patterns. For women, wear a dark-colored outfit in solid colors.
- Don't wear white. It casts unflattering light on the face and causes problems for TV cameras.
- Men should unbutton their suit jacket while seated, button it when standing. Sitting on the back of the suit jacket will help create a wrinkle-free line.
- Most studios are cold until the lights are turned on, and then become quite warm. Mid-weight clothing is the most comfortable choice.
- Don't wear large, shiny or noisy jewelry.
- If you have contact lenses, wear them instead of your glasses. If you wear glasses, non-reflective lenses are preferable. Don't wear light-sensitive glasses.
- If offered makeup, accept it. The host or reporter will have it on; you should, too. Men should consider shaving close to airtime, as even the hint of a beard shows up on television. Women should apply a matte finish to avoid a shiny face, with blush and eye makeup only slightly heavier than normally worn.

Before the Interview:

- If the interview takes place on location, arriving early will allow you to participate in lighting and sound checks.
- Typically, a "pre-interview" precedes the on-camera interview. It may last 30 seconds or five minutes. This is a chance for you to "check out" the personality and demeanor of the interviewer, and to mention the topic(s) you would like to discuss during the interview. Often the pre-interview can help set the tone for the actual interview.
- A technician may clip a small lavalier microphone to your jacket, tie or shirt, and possibly run the cord under your jacket or other clothing. Speak naturally, and avoid brushing your hand or clothing against the microphone during the interview. Women should remove necklaces likely to swing against the microphone. Be sure the microphone is removed before leaving the interview site.
- If a technician asks you to test the sound level by speaking, speak at your normal level and say something innocuous (e.g., talk about the weather, recite a poem). Don't try to be funny, or say anything off-color or controversial.

Body Language:

- If seated, sit erect but not ramrod-straight, and slightly forward or toward the interviewer.
- If you are standing, do so with arms at the side or one hand in a pocket. Planting one foot slightly in front of the other will help you avoid swaying.
- Should you gesture, do so naturally, not expansively. Keep gestures small and in front of you, and avoid sudden body movement.
- Make your expression match your words. Smile if it is appropriate. Keep a mildly pleasant expression at all times; an expression that looks neutral off camera looks unhappy or angry on camera, so a pleasant face may feel unnaturally "smiley" at first. Practice in a mirror.
- Lean forward slightly and modulate your voice to bring attention to key points.
- Avoid obvious signs of discomfort or nervousness, e.g., foot tapping, clenched fists, shifting back and forth.
- Don't nod your head to indicate that you understand or are ready to answer the question. Inadvertently, this may convey agreement with the questioner's premise when you don't mean to do so. Remain neutral and become animated only when you begin to speak.
- Test yourself on the above points by reviewing your training tape with the sound off. Ask yourself: Do I look interested? Do I appear animated and excited? Would I "tune into" this person if I were flipping channels?

During the Interview:

- Remember, make your statements punchy and concise. Put your most important message up front.
- Whether it's an in-studio talk show format or a stand-up interview, talk to the interviewer or other guests, not the camera. Breaking eye contact by staring off into space or looking at the ground will make you appear "shifty." Stay attentive even when others are speaking.
- If it is a remote interview—in which the reporter is at another location and asks you questions through an ear piece—look directly at the camera at all times.
- Try to avoid being distracted by activity around you in the studio or by the camera crew. Keep focused on the interviewer.
- Don't overlap the reporter's questions. Wait until the question is finished to begin your answer.
- Hold your "interview attitude" until the interview is completely over and the camera is off.