

Introduction: Media engagement

Talking to the media is never an easy ride, so we've compiled our top tips and tricks to get you through the process.

Effective media engagement can provide your business with a multitude of opportunities. However, this is best achieved when you have an understanding of how the media works and what they actually do. What exactly do journalists do? To put it simply, they create news to sell newspaper, magazine or TV advertising. They look to 'uncover' stories which they believe to be of interest or importance. Journalists (at least the vast majority) do not wish to simply re tell your story to their readers or viewers. They want stories that haven't been told yet, the real nitty gritty or the hidden truth..

Source: kristin <http://www.kristinaustin.com/blog-articles/10-tips-to-avoid-media-interview-pain/>

Interview Tips

- 1. Always, always, always prepare your key messages.** Typed, handwritten, points on post-its – whatever. Put down the three most important points you want to get across about your business, your product or the issue at hand.
- 2. Find a story or two that illustrates your key messages.** Think of it as proving you can do what you say you can do.
- 3. Be up to date on what's going on in the papers/the magazine that's interviewing you.** Know their style of story. If they like to 'dig' for an interesting angle (ie: potential dirt) you'll be a step ahead.
- 4. Practice delivering your key messages.** This is the critical piece here. You don't want to sound like you're reading them. Put them into your daily conversation as often as you can. Have someone fire (hard) questions at you and practice turning the question into the answer you want to give.
- 5. You don't have to 'answer' the journalist's question.** You have the right to choose the statements you give them. It's up to you to steer the conversation where you want it to go. If you want to watch great media technique in action, watch the major party Federal politicians. They're usually prepped and trained to within an inch of their lives. Regardless of what you thought of John Howard as a PM, he was incredibly media savvy and rarely 'off-message'.

Interview Tips (cont)

- 6. Be quiet – when you've given the answer you want to give, stop speaking.** Journalists know if they're quiet, the interviewee will generally 'fill' the space and that's where they get the 'good stuff'.
- 7. If you're asked a question that makes your blood boil, stop, breathe and have a sip of water.** Collect your thoughts. Journos are trained to 'find' the story. Don't take the bait.
- 8. Nothing is ever "off the record".** Never assume that what you say before or after the interview won't be used. Take it as a given anything you say during your time together can and will be used.

Media Interview



Tips continued

- 9. Don't have an expectation that a journalist is there to help you or your company.** They're not. They're there to do their job which is to tell interesting enough stories to 'sell' their readers to advertisers.
- **10. Once it's out there, don't attempt to get it back.**** Unless what's been printed is factually incorrect, you're unlikely to have them return your call. Even if there's a fact correction, you're unlikely to get more than a tiny retraction somewhere buried on page 113. So think hard about whether it's worth annoying the journalist – if you're difficult to deal with, they'll look to give a story to someone else (unless of course, you've got news they really want, but prepare for some pain!).

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The Art of the Media Interview

- 1. Why speak with the media?** While speaking with the media can be daunting, it is an invaluable way to share your knowledge and expertise across your industry.
- 2. What is a media interview?** A media interview is a call or meeting with a reporter or editor for print, online, radio or television news. These calls can focus on a range of topics, including company strategy, industry trends or topics that the reporter is covering. Most reporters are looking for information that no one else has published, so it pays to do your homework.
- 3. Understand your audience.** Research the reporter. Prepare to discuss your story. Gather supporting elements.
- 4. Know your message.** Stick with two or three key talking points. Stay concise.
- 5. On or off the record, be cautious of what you tell a reporter.** Never say anything you would not want to see in print.
- 6. Editors may ask you to review a quote for accuracy but never ask to review the complete article.** That's a big no no.
- 7. An interview should be a two-way conversation.** Do not cut off a reporter, and make sure she can digest everything you have said.
- 8. Stop for a few seconds to think before continuing.** Keep your speech at an even rate. Take a breather.
- 9. Mastering the art of a media interview isn't difficult, but it does require practice.** Follow these tips and join the ranks of interview rockstars.

Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/MetisComm/the-art-of-the-media-interview>



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