

➤ INTERVIEW TIPS FOR RADIO TALK SHOWS

When interviewing for radio, you're relying on your voice to set the tone and your words to paint visual pictures for your audience. Compared to TV and print, radio talk shows allow you to convey the most information directly to your audience—so be ready to share anecdotes and stories that support your main points.

◆ **Bring notes.** You can have a sheet of paper in front of you for reference. Keep your notes to one page so you don't have to rustle through papers. Have three main points ready to share, along with key facts and notes on anecdotes that will illustrate your main points. Also have your organization's phone number and website written down so you can share this information at the end of the show.

◆ **Be dramatic.** Speak slower and with more emphasis than normal. Vary your tone, and sound excited, passionate, and inspiring. A dynamic tone is just as important as strategic soundbites when interviewing on radio.

◆ **Eliminate distracting noises.** Don't tap your pen or move around too much in your chair. And don't forget to turn off your cell phone!

◆ **Acknowledge and correct mistakes.** If you're on live radio, correct a mistake or mispronounced word by saying, "I'm sorry, I meant to say..." Be lighthearted about it—everyone makes mistakes and your audience will identify with you if you acknowledge a mistake and correct it. If you're on taped radio say, "Can we do that part over again?" then count down 3-2-1, and start your statement again.

◆ **Greet and thank hosts.** At the beginning of the show give your host a warm on-air hello and thank you after they introduce you. At the end, thank them again.

➤ INTERVIEW TIPS FOR TELEVISION NEWS

When interviewing for TV, you're relying on your body language to set the tone and a sharp, strategic soundbite to tell your audience why they should care about your issue and what action they should take. Compared to radio and print, TV news allows you to convey the least information directly to your audience, so be prepared with one point and repeat it a few times.

◆ **Set the scene.** Guide the cameraperson so that s/he sets up the camera to capture the best scene is behind you. You want banners, visuals, and crowds as your backdrop.

◆ **Focus your gaze.** Look at the reporter, not the camera. Fix your gaze and don't look around. Looking around or looking up to think makes you look shifty and uncomfortable on camera.

◆ **Be open and confident.** Keep your body language natural, open, and strong. Move your hands for emphasis but don't move your shoulders or your head too much. If you're wearing sunglasses or a hat that might cover your eyes, take them off.

◆ **Wear your message.** Wear a hat, t-shirt, sticker, or button that carries your campaign message.

◆ **Control the interview.** Stick to your soundbite and repeat, repeat, repeat. End the interview once you've delivered the message. Remember that interview segments on TV news will be, at most, 10 to 15 seconds long. The more you talk, the more likely something you don't want to appear on the news will be aired. Once you've delivered your message a few times say, "Thank you very much," and wait for the cameraperson to stop recording. Once you're off tape you can share more background information if you feel it's necessary.

➔ INTERVIEW TIPS FOR PRINT NEWS & FEATURES

When interviewing for print, you may have to provide background information as well as quotes, so be prepared with resources to refer the reporter to, and provide additional sources to the reporter if necessary. Print reporters may interview you for a long time, but remember that no matter how much you tell them you will get one or two quotes at most in the story, so provide background information as necessary, but always come back to your soundbites.

◆ **Establish the timeline.** Ask the reporter if he or she is on deadline. If s/he is, stick to your soundbites. If not, you have time to provide some background info to preface your soundbites.

◆ **Outline the interview.** You can tell the reporter what is background info and what s/he can quote. You can say, “I’ll start with some background, then answer any other questions you have.” Preface background information with, “So just for background....” Then answer all questions with your soundbites.

◆ **Don’t say anything you don’t want to see in print.** Nothing is “off the record.” Stick to your soundbites and stories that back up your message and campaign goals.

◆ **Defer or refer questions you don’t know the answer to.** If you don’t have an answer to a question but can find it quickly, tell the reporter you’ll get back to them immediately with the answer after the interview is over. If you don’t have the answer to a question but know someone who does say, “I know someone who can answer that question better,” then give the reporter that person’s name and contact information. If you don’t know, simply say, “I don’t have any information on that.”

◆ **Tell reporters about additional sources.** Mention allies *and* opponents reporters could speak with to fill out their story. Provide contact information if reporters need it. If you don’t have someone’s information, offer to find it and email it to the reporter. This establishes your credibility and sets you up as a resource for the reporter.

◆ **Take advantage of email.** Sometimes reporters will offer you the option of responding to questions over email. It’s a good idea to take advantage of this opportunity. Responding via email allows you to tightly control your message and minimizes the chances of being misquoted.