

Tips: News Media Interviews

Before the Interview

❖ **Work with your communications team to understand:**

- Reporter interview style and previous coverage of the topic
- Current story angle and likely questions
- Other sources/interviewees the reporter has talked to
- Interview setting – print, video, recorded, live?



❖ **Know your story**

- Tailor 3 key messages that will resonate with your target audience
- Gather proof points, facts, examples, data to support the key messages
- Practice via Q&A role playing
- Prepare bridges and flags to help you avoid pitfalls and deliver your story

❖ **Video Calls - Test your camera and microphone**

- Use the video call app's video and audio testing feature; do a test call
- Adjust the camera so you appear centered but with the camera just above eye level.
- Lean forward slightly. Viewers should easily see facial features and gestures
- Lighting – ensure face is well lit, light source directly in front of you, no shadows
- Audio – turn up speaker volume, but mute phone and desktop alerts or other noises

❖ **Video Calls - Create a pleasing visual background for the camera**

- Choose a quiet space with a lockable door and ask not to be interrupted
- Remove anything distracting or highly reflective from the background
- Decorate your background to be aligned with your brand, but avoid clutter
- Avoid digital backgrounds that are distracting or feature moving elements

During the Interview

- ❖ **Join early** – join the video call 5-10 minutes early.
- ❖ **Dress appropriately** – avoid distracting clothing or flashy, noisy jewelry
- ❖ **Microphone** – avoid tapping, clicking pens, press mute if you cough
- ❖ **Facial gestures** – SMILE but avoid negative expressions like eye rolls
- ❖ **Energy level** – Appearing on screen flattens you; increase energy level in volume, inflection and appropriate facial gestures to compensate

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During the Interview

❖ **Stay in control**

- Reply to each question with key messages, succinctly, repeat again and again
- Don't depend on the reporter to ask "good" questions

❖ **Bridge from tough Q's to positive A's**

- Reply with a short answer then bridge to your key messages/story
- Flag or call attention to your most important messages/quotes
- Sprinkle in proof points, data, statistics to support key messages



❖ **Avoid pitfalls**

- Don't take challenging questions personally or defensively
- Don't accept built-in assumptions – reframe the question, then answer
- Don't repeat negative phrases or language in your answers
- Don't let incorrect or misleading statements go uncorrected
- Never say, "No comment." Explain why you can't answer then bridge to a key message
- Never lie, misrepresent the truth, or speculate. Say, "I don't know, but what I can tell you is..."

❖ **Remember...**

- You are always on the record, stay on message
- Project positive energy and enthusiasm – smile!
- Tell your story with confidence and no apologies
- Repeat your key messages and quotes again and again
- Be yourself, be authentic

❖ **More video call tips:**

- [5 Ways to Look Your Best on Your Next Zoom Meeting](#) – *Forbes*
- [Six Tips for Looking Great in a Zoom Meeting](#) – *USA Today*
- [How to Look Better on Zoom](#) – *YouTube, Gia Goodrich*