

# Guide to conducting media interviews

## Part 2. Conducting media interviews

### 4. Tips for managing radio interviews

Radio is a very intimate medium – listeners often have personal relationships with programmes and presenters.

#### Before you agree to the Interview

Find out about the programme or news item to which you have been invited to contribute:

- Will it be live or recorded?
- Who is the potential audience?
- Who else is being interviewed?
- Are they planning to run a whole interview or just take a clip/soundbite for a news item?
- Where will the interview take place? In a studio? By phone? In your office or workplace?

#### Preparation

- Decide key messages to match the likely audience
- Think of anecdotes and soundbites to illustrate your messages. Rehearse them
- You may have notes with you - short bullet points to prompt key messages or statistics - but never read from them!
- Make sure you are not wearing clothes which rustle, jewellery which clinks and empty your pockets of loose change

Speak slowly and clearly, using simple language. Use examples to illustrate what you are saying. This will make it easier for the listener to relate to the point you are making.


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#### General interview delivery

- Don't go too fast – be positive and authoritative
- Remember to smile, if appropriate to the subject
- Be energetic and enthusiastic
- Remember you're speaking to one person (the listener), not a crowd
- Listen out for the words "and finally" which an interviewer often uses before the last question. This is your final chance to get your message across again
- Don't get up to leave straight away – the microphone may still be on
- Don't say anything inappropriate immediately following the interview, such as, "Phew, I'm glad that's over!" – the microphone may still be on
- Don't suddenly move into or back from the microphone - sound levels will vary
- Don't be concerned if the interviewer is looking around the studio and not at you
- Don't rustle papers, tap pens or drum fingers



Keep your answers concise and put your key messages at the start of your answer. Don't worry if you repeat a point to ensure it is understood and remembered

#### To help overcome nerves

- If you feel your mouth is going dry, bite the tongue to encourage saliva flow
- Stretch and breathe deeply to relieve tension
- Test your voice by speaking a few words to someone – or yourself – before you go on air
- Ask for a glass of water – but keep sipping quiet

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#### Face-to-face at a radio station

This type of interview will normally be broadcast live, but may be recorded for later broadcast.

You will be talking directly to the programme presenter in their studio. You will be wearing headphones and there will be a microphone to speak into. The sound engineer will test for sound before the broadcast goes live, but there may be very little time between you going into the studio and going live on air, so make sure you have all your thoughts in place.

If it is a commercial station, or the programme mixes music with interviews, your piece may be interspersed between advertisements or playing music. This can feel disruptive and you may be cut off from completing what you have to say.

If your interview is going to be recorded it can be a lot longer than what is eventually broadcast. The presenter will be looking for soundbites. Taking edited sections of what you have said could distort your intended meaning. Use stand-alone sentences where possible.



If you are speaking on a regional radio station, try and include a local fact or figure, if you can

#### Interviews with regional and local radio stations 'down the line' in a studio

When you have a campaign or you are launching something of interest to the general public, you may be offered the opportunity to take part in a series of 'down the line' interviews with regional and local radio programmes. These will generally have an interest in health issues and are normally set up by a specialist company for a fee, and will take place in a studio owned by the company.

The interviews will be scheduled over a two to four hour period. Some will be broadcast live and others recorded for future broadcast.

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#### Interviews from other locations

Interviews can also be conducted live or recorded from other locations. These can include:

- Via telephone in your office or home
  - Standing up during a telephone interview can make you feel more alert/ in control
- The journalist may record an interview with you using a recording device – this could be conducted anywhere where there is a quiet space
  - Remember that if the interview is being recorded and you make a mistake, you can ask to start that answer again
- In a separate studio – for example, an interview with a national radio station could be recorded in the studio of a local station close to you, or in a mobile studio
- From an outside broadcast van