

Interview Survival Tips

by
Dr. C.

Interview questions:

- Don't ask two-part questions
- Don't ask questions that can be answered yes or no
- Pay careful attention to what the interviewee is saying so you can ask good follow-up questions. Remember hearing is not the same as listening.
- Try to have the interview seem more like a conversation than questions and answers (but remember your voice will be edited out, so don't overlap voices)

Tips for eliciting good answers:

- Maintain eye contact and give non verbal feedback (nodding head)
- Don't give verbal feedback or it will end up on the tape and have to be edited out of an answer (requiring a cutaway to cover the edit)
- Remember the pregnant pause
- Try to repeat back what the person said if you want to elicit additional information
- Make sure the interviewee restates the question in the response
- Before turning off the camera ask if there was anything you missed, or if there was something the person wanted to add.
- If there is noise or a visual distraction, stop the questioning and re-ask the question to get a complete, uninterrupted response.

Tips for interview videography:

- Find a location that reflects the subject matter of the interview or says something about the interviewee. Avoid offices at all costs – way too generic
- Make sure the setting provides context but enhances the framing without being distracting.
- Set the camera right next to the interviewer near eye level
- Don't have the interviewee look into the camera; have her look at the interviewer
- Do a sound check
- If using a hand held, do not let the interviewee hold it.
- Have a lavalier mic run up under clothing
- If using the camera mic, put the camera as close as possible to interviewee and zoom out.
- Pay attention to key light source (placed to the opposite side of camera). Move lights around if you need to.
- White balance cameras every time the light source changes (including the angle of the sun)
- Think about the type of shot you would like, typically an MCU

- ✓ **Interviewer's job** – Help interviewee to feel relaxed. Ask good relevant questions and follow-up questions. Pay careful attention!
- ✓ **Videographer's job** - Good shot composition, steady camerawork and make mental or written notes about potential B-Roll based on the interview
- ✓ After the interview: immediately talk about and write down the kinds of B-roll you want to get to cover the interviewers comments while the comments are still fresh in your mind.
- ✓ Check your footage as soon as possible to insure you have a usable recording.