



Sending the Right Message When You Meet the Press

Guidelines for Success

Eye Focus

Focus your eyes on the interviewer. It's the key to fast and efficient thinking under pressure. When you're focused, you'll appear more respectful and sincere, and you'll help the interviewer focus his attention on you and your answer.

Phone Facts

If a reporter calls, turn away from your windows, stand up and focus on something in the room. Have a cheat sheet of key messages. Refer to it when answering, but don't read it. Your responses should sound real, not rehearsed.

Be All Ears

Listen to the entire question before you answer. Don't assume that you know what someone else is going to say. Listen to each word, and listen to the emotion behind each word. It's important to answer the question, but it's also important to address those underlying aspects of questions as well.

Don't Play Beat the Clock

If you interrupt the interviewer, you're cheating yourself out of valuable thinking time. The fastest answer doesn't win. The best answer wins. Control non-verbal interrupters (nodding your head, opening your mouth to speak, etc.).

Body Language Talks!

Posture counts in a live interview. If you're sitting, rest your hands comfortably on your knees. Avoid resting your elbows on the arms of the chair: it will appear slouched and lethargic. Even small facial reactions to questions can communicate before you answer. Keep your entire body upright and open.

Keep Your Answers Short

Only a small segment of what you say will be used. The rest may be edited out and forgotten. To avoid being misquoted and giving up control of the interview, give crisp answers and repeat them as many times as necessary.

If You Draw a Blank...

If you don't have an answer, say so. But also say something that will further your point of view. If it's appropriate, let the interviewer know that you will find the answer and get it for him.

Stick to Your Point

Don't allow yourself to be pulled into a personal discussion over issues not relative to the subject matter. If an interviewer tries to pull you off your agenda, bridge your comments back to your point.



Don't Open a Carton of Worms

You know so much more than the interviewer about the issue. Reporters generally have only a small shred of information. They count on people to go on and on when they answer. Don't explain or educate reporters about your thinking process. Simply stick to the messages you want the public to hear.

Always:

- Provide direct, real and genuine responses
- Keep in mind the objective behind your messages during the interview
- Don't speculate unless it will forward your position
- Communicate your key messages at every opportunity