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Tips for Television and Radio Interviews

Television and radio interviews are somewhat different from newspaper or magazine interviews. The following are some tips for being effective in broadcast situations.

Television Tips

1. **Develop your message in simple, succinct phrases.** Most times a reporter will choose about 15 seconds out of your taped interview to use in the actual broadcast.
2. **Watch "urns" and "ahs."** They are deadly, especially on live television.
3. **Don't stare into the camera lens** - just talk with the reporter and ignore the technology (unless you have been given special instructions under different circumstances). The camera/cameras will find you.
4. **Don't wear white or busy prints.** White causes a terrible glare. Busy prints make the screen jump. If you are doing a live studio interview, don't wear shades of green, because you may fade away.
5. **Understand that first impressions are critical.** Start any appearance or presentation with a friendly smile and warm "thank: you" to the person who introduced you, addressing that person by first name. You'll share that person's aura of credibility and establish your likeability.

Radio Tips

1. **In advance, prepare brief, concise answers to questions you anticipate will be asked.** Be familiar with who, what, when, where, why, and then how. You can always use notes for radio interviews-whether in-studio or from your office or home.
2. **Develop your message in simple, succinct phrases.**
3. **Don't launch into an ad campaign** for ___ CSD, but be sure to identify yourself as speaking for the company. Periodically in the interview, as appropriate, bring up the company, e.g., "We at the ___ CSD ..." or "___ CSD's approach..."
4. **Speak clearly and briskly, but not too fast.** Practice with a tape recorder.
5. **For news segments (as opposed to longer talk shows), keep your answers between 10 and 20 seconds.**
6. **Watch "urns" and "ahs."**

7. **Don't monopolize the discussion.** Allow for some give and take.
8. **Turn off the air conditioner or any other "noise makers" in your office.** Cut off all other phone calls and close the door.
9. **Increase your energy level.** Sit forward in the chair and sound alert, better yet stand. Stay focused on the conversation; don't try to do two things at once.
10. Don't raise your voice. Speak in normal tones over the telephone mouthpiece, not directly into it. Hold the mouthpiece far enough away from you mouth to avoid "popping" or "hissing."
11. **When questions are broad and general, use the opportunity to re-state your key points.**
12. **Tell the truth.** Nothing will destroy an individual's or an organization's credibility quicker than to be caught in a lie.
13. **Never speculate or guess.** If you don't know the answer to a question, simply admit it. If appropriate, agree to call the reporter back with the information. Then be sure to do so to meet the reporter's deadline.
14. **Avoid excessive or complicated terminology.** The more easily the reporter is able to understand you, the greater the chance you will not be misunderstood or misquoted.
15. Avoid discussing hypothetical situations. Be wary of if a reporter starts a question with "What if" or "Let's suppose."
16. **Be consistent.** Try not to contradict yourself or anyone else in the interview process.
17. **Avoid commenting on subjects outside your area of expertise.** If you are not an expert on the subject, find the expert.
18. **Be articulate and helpful.** Reporters will return to sources that are accessible, articulate and helpful.
19. **Never assume you will see or hear the reporter's story before it is broadcast.** As a professional, the reporter is under no obligation to show you a copy or tapes. If complex budgeting concepts or laws are involved, you might suggest that the reporter check the facts for accuracy.