

## Handling interview requests

Unless you've proactively suggested a story idea, responding to a request for a media interview can be unnerving for many people. The reasons are understandable:

- They haven't had time to prepare for the media encounter.
- They don't know what the reporter's agenda is.
- They are afraid of saying something inaccurate or being made to look foolish.

Relax. Most interview situations you encounter will be pleasant and with a few tips you'll be able to handle the more challenging situations.

The cardinal rule in media relations is always return a reporter's phone call right away. If you avoid a reporter, he/she is bound to think you're inaccessible, unfriendly or that you have something to hide.

When it's interview time, the key to successful reactive media relations is to take an active role in the interview process. Before the interview, write down 3-5 main messages that you want to convey. Don't wait passively to see what questions the reporter throws your way. Move the interview in the direction you want to go and create opportunities to get your message across. The perfect question that showcases your organization seldom comes from the reporter – it's up to you to create it.

*Source: Western Economic Diversification Canada's Promotions Toolbox*