

Interview do's and don'ts

Do:

1. Be prepared.
2. Always ask why the interview is being requested if the media contacts you.
3. Respect the privacy of others, especially your clients. Don't discuss a client's involvement with your office or situation without their permission.
4. Discuss subjects in your area of technical or geographic responsibility and refer questions outside of that realm to others.
5. Say you need to look into the matter before you comment if you don't have an answer. Follow up promptly with a response.
6. Start the interview with a smile, even if it's a phone interview.
7. Assume the conversation is being recorded.
8. Speak slowly and with enthusiasm.
9. Be clear and to the point. Say it in 20-30 seconds clips in a TV or radio interview.
10. Repeat your key message often.
11. Use analogies and examples where possible to illustrate key points.
12. Look directly at the interviewer and not at the camera.
13. Be pleasant, but avoid humour. What's funny to you may be offensive to someone else.
14. Ask an interviewer to clarify his or her questions if you are unsure of the meaning.
15. Relax!

Don't:

1. Say "no comment". That suggests an unwillingness to respond. If you must defer, say you can't comment and give a logical reason.
2. Get angry. Emotions are magnified on television.
3. Grip the microphone when it's held toward you for response.
4. Comment "off the record". Nothing's off the record.
5. Let a reporter put words in your mouth. Form your own answers.
6. Be afraid to repeat your key message.
7. Delay on promises to provide further information. Follow up.
8. Address issues that affect an area broader than your own community or project.
9. Answer call waiting when conducting telephone interviews.
10. Never mention someone's name unless you have his or her permission.
11. Never give out information over the telephone during informal discussions. Anything you say can be used as part of the interview, even if you weren't aware.

Source: Western Economic Diversification Canada's Promotions Toolbox