

Topic 1: How to Interview Like A Journalist

A) Preparation

1. Choose the right format

Sometimes a face-to-face interview is good. Sometimes, a phone interview works best.



2. Get face to face

For a feature about an individual, do several face-to-face [interviews](#). The first is really a get-to-know session without notes and off the record. Finally, a follow-up interview.

3. Consider phone interviews

Talking on the phone makes interviews much easier to schedule as most people can find 20 or 30 minutes in their diary. Cut out the travelling time.

4. Avoid email interviews

The results can be unnatural, and you miss out on important things like [tone of voice](#).

5. Have a backup

For face-to-face interviews, use two recorders or one recorder and hand written notes.

6. Don't give questions in advance

7. Avoid group interviews

8. Prepare and research in advance

9. Confirm the time and date in advance and send reminders

People sometimes don't turn up for interviews. Send an email reminder the day before.

B) The interview itself



1. Introduce yourself

Introduce yourself at the start of every interview. Say who you are and who you are writing for.

2. How to record interviews

Use a headset, recorder and take notes during the interview.

3. Be yourself

Be natural.

4. Be enthusiastic

People like people who like them. Be sincere. Be interested in your subject.

5. Shut up

You should be talking about 10-20 percent of the time at most.

6. Listen hard

Concentrate on what your subject is saying. Focus on what you need.

7. Say “Thank you”

Say thank you afterwards. If you can provide a copy of the final article, do so.

C) Useful Interview Questions

- How did your product/service first come about?
- How has your product/service changed over the years?
- What have been some of your biggest challenges?
- What have been some of your biggest successes?
- How do you deal with complaints about your product/service?
- What are the most common complaints about your product/service?
- How does X topic relate to your latest offer?
- What is your opinion on X law/legislation and how it affects your business?
- What one piece of advice would you give yourself (if you could) at the beginning of your journey?
- What is your 5/10/15 year goal for the business?
- If you had a crystal ball - what do you think will be the biggest change/disruption in your industry this year?

