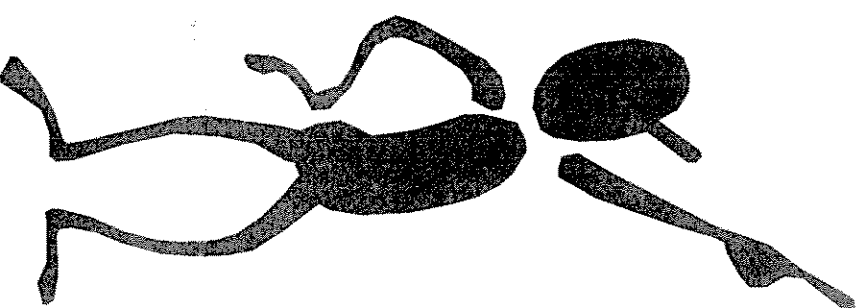


Broadcast Interview Tips

2. Message

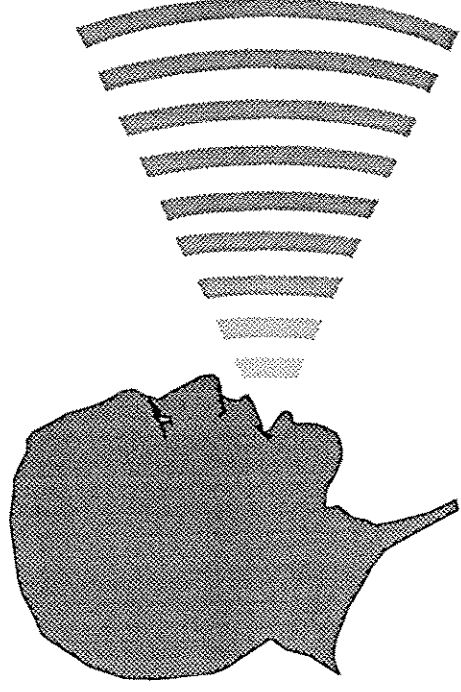
- Take control of the interview-- focus on your message
- Have stories, stats, soundbites ready
- Use “bridging” to get to your message or key points
- Don't be a know-it-all; It's Ok to say “I don't know”



Broadcast interview tips

1. Delivery

- Be enthusiastic
- Sit on front of chair
- Look at /talk to interviewer by name
- Beware distracting clothing & jewelry (no dark glasses!)
- Remain friendly, even when disagreeing



Media Techniques

There are two techniques that are particularly effective when dealing with the media or any communication situation. These are bridging and flagging.

Bridging

If you are asked a question that is not on your agenda, bridging is the effective way to respond.

When you bridge, you first answer the question, but answer it briefly and then move, or bridge, to what you want to discuss. These are some very simple bridges to use:

- "Don't know" to "do know" - *"I don't know the answer to that question. What I do know is ..."*
- Time - *"Historically, that was the case. Today, what's happened is ... and it's made us have to"*
- Importance - *"That used to be important. But what's changed is ... and we're having to respond by ..."*
- *"No, let me explain ..."*

Flagging

Flagging is a way of helping someone remember what you would like them to remember. It is a way of underscoring what is important by saying something like: "The most exciting thing about this program is ..." or "The bottom line is ..."

You "plant a flag" or highlight a point by stressing that point with your voice, using superlative expressions like "the key point to remember" or simply by repetition of a point throughout the interview.

Sound Bites

Here are at least nine characteristics of sound bites:

1. **Avoid Rhetoric.** Give specific examples.
2. **Use Analogies.** The more homespun, the better, especially on the complex issues.
3. **Use "The Three Cs"** — Colorful words, Cliches, and Contemporary references (popular culture).
4. **Use One-liners.** Not the Henny Youngman-type of one liners. Make yours well crafted. You have to practice them. Be prepared.
5. **Absolutes, Superlatives, and Summary Lines.** Reporters and editors love "The best..." "The First..." "The Only..." "The Greatest..."
6. **Use Proportionate Numbers, or approximate numbers.** If a reporter wants to know the exact numbers, he or she will have to ask. Besides, these numbers are easier for you to remember.
7. **Be Personal** — use "I" statements. These are anecdotal, reaffirm your authority and, best of all, no reporter can challenge you on it. They don't know if you were there or not, or whether you felt that way.
8. **Quote Your Enemies,** especially if they agree with you. Your friends will always be on your side. If your enemy agrees with you, then you've got a story.
9. **Include a Second-Person Perspective.** Let the reader know what will happen to him or to her. Let the people in Milwaukee know what will happen to them. Let the state of California know what will happen to it.

Michael Sheehan Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C.



Twelve Tips for Broadcast Interviews

1. **Define Your Message:** What's the issue and what do you want to have happen?
2. **Know the Interviewer and your Audience:** Who is going to see and hear you; what's the most effective way to communicate your message to them?
3. **Simplify:** Keep it simple and clear, in both concept and context. Hold on to one theme and two or three central, reinforcing points.
4. **Practice the 3 R's: Rehearse, Roleplay and Revise** (and then Repeat this step!)
5. **You are the Message:** Focus your words, voice tone, facial expressions and body language. Emote without shrill attacks.
6. **Control the Interview:** Stay on target with your message. Use "Bridging" and other techniques.
7. **Being Nervous is Normal:** "Reframe" the fear into excitement and enthusiasm. Use breathing, centering and other relaxation techniques that you know work for you.
8. **Create a Relationship with the Interviewer and the Audience:** Use interviewer's first name, anecdotes and succinct, colorful sound bites to connect with them.
9. **It's OK not to be the "Know-It-All":** Say "I don't know" in a way that adds to your credibility instead of detracting from it.
10. **Be Prepared:** Repeat Step #4.
11. **Anticipate:** Be ready for hostile questions and questioners
12. **Remember:** Your point of view is the most important thing at the moment. You are being interviewed because what you know and think is of value. Stay centered and stay focused.

1990 Safe Energy Communication Council, Washington, D.C.