

GOOD INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Write out a list of basic questions so that you have at least an idea of the things you want to have answered.
2. Always ask the person you are interviewing to say and spell their name so you can pronounce it on air, or spell it correctly in print.
3. Make your interviewee feel at ease. If you believe the person you are about to interview is nervous, talk about other things first. Use questions that aren't relevant to your interview - Did you do anything interesting this weekend? Have you seen any good movies, lately?
4. Be sure you ask questions. Do not make statements that leave your interview subject wondering what to answer.
5. Ask open-ended questions. Those are questions that elicit a thoughtful, longer response and usually begin with why, how and what.
6. Try to avoid asking closed-ended questions, unless you need short confirmation or clarification. Closed-ended questions typically elicit a one-word answer, such as yes or no. Remember, you want your interview subjects to give you more information than yes or no.
7. Don't ask long, rambling questions. That could confuse your subject.
8. Avoid asking double-barreled questions. Double-barreled questions are two questions posed at the same time, such as "Tell me about your time working with your last company? And what did you like most about it?"
9. Make sure, especially with a controversial issue, to get at least two sides. Remember, there is always another side to every issue. So, if your interview subject represents one side, find someone who represents the other.
10. Pay attention to your interview subject. Listen, listen, listen carefully. An answer your subject gives can springboard another question you may not have thought of on your own.
11. Once you have asked a question, let the interview subject answer fully. If you have to interrupt, do so when there is a natural pause.
12. If you don't understand something, it's OK to ask for clarification. You can say, "I'm not sure I understand, could you explain..."
13. Don't use the jargon of your interview subject. If your subject uses specialized terms for his or her industry, you or your readers and viewers might not get the full meaning of what your interview subject is trying to say. Have them use terms the average person uses in conversation, or ask them to explain the terms they are using.
14. Keep your opinions to yourself. It's important to remain unbiased.
15. Do not listen out loud. For example, "Don't say, "OK," "Uh-huh," or any other thing while the subject is speaking, unless the person you are interviewing asks you for confirmation that you understand.
16. Be sure to ask questions your readers and viewers would want to know.
17. Finish up your interview by asking the subject if there's anything else he or she would like people to know about the topic you are discussing. Often, interviewees prepared for the one question they weren't asked. Or, they have something important to say that you didn't know to ask. This tactic allows them to feel confident that they got their point across during the interview.