



Interview tips

If a reporter or editor is interested in a story about your Kiwanis club, he or she may want to interview you in person or over the phone. Interviews are a perfect opportunity to share your messages with the public, so make sure you're prepared.

Before the interview

- 1) **Get as much information as possible about the interview.** Most reporters will share what they hope the article will discuss—and what they hope you will bring to the story.
- 2) **Know your key messages.** The better acquainted you are with the messages you want to deliver, the more easily your story will flow. Don't memorize a script, but try to make the words your own. Practice answering questions in a quiet space at home or even in front of a mirror. The more you speak your key messages out loud, the more comfortable you will be when it's time to answer questions.
- 3) **Rehearse with a fellow club member, friend or coworker.** This may sound silly, but practice with another person helps you get comfortable using the message points when you're asked questions during the actual interview.

During the interview

- 1) **Pace yourself.** If the interview is for a television or radio station, ask whether the interview will be live or taped. Live interviews normally last only two or three minutes, and there is no opportunity for editing. A taped interview might last 5 or 10 minutes, because the reporter will have time to edit the story before it airs.
- 2) **Think of the interview as a conversation.** You can even think of the reporter as a potential new friend—but be aware that the reporter's main objective is an interesting story. Don't share anything you don't want to see in print or on television. That said, relax—the reporter isn't an enemy. He or she knows you are a volunteer and promoting your club, and might want to help spread the word.
- 3) **Remember, the media like to tell stories in personal terms.** Think about the number of people your project or event is helping, or share a story of someone who inspired you.
- 4) **Weave key messages into your story.** You can make your points most effectively when you can use your personal experiences as examples.
- 5) **Relax and be yourself.** You don't need to pretend you have information or expertise that you really don't. If you don't know an answer, just say so.



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After the interview

- 1) Ask the reporter whether there are **other facts or information** he or she will need to complete the story.
- 2) Find out **when the story will run**—or for the reporter's estimation.
- 3) **Make mental notes about the interview**—how it went and what you will do differently the next time.
- 4) **Reward yourself** for a job well done!

****ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR TELEVISION INTERVIEWS****

- Know what you want to communicate, and don't be afraid to repeat yourself. Live by your key messages.
- Short answers are better than long ones. Stop talking when you're done making your point.
- This is not a confrontational interview. Why not smile while you're talking? You'll sound more enthusiastic.
- Don't overlap the interviewer's question. Begin your answer when he or she is finished.
- Speak in complete sentences.
- Avoid jargon, abbreviations and acronyms (e.g., SLP, ICON, etc.). Speak simply.
- Don't repeat a negative. For example: If asked, "Aren't you an alien?" don't reply with, "I'm not an alien." You might say, "Actually, I'm from Cleveland."
- Keep your hands free, open and animated. Gesture as you normally would.
- Plan what to say if asked, "Is there anything else you'd like to say?" You should recap each of your message points as a response.
- Always assume the camera is on.
- Resist the urge to lean into or grab the microphone.
- Television is an intimate medium. Speak in personal, anecdotal terms. Use analogies to illustrate your point. Don't be afraid to tell "your story."
- Body language is important for television. Practice by talking in front of a mirror. People will remember how they felt about you more than they'll remember what you said.
- Mention your contact information and the website where people can go for more information.
- Remember, there is no such thing as "off the record."