

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN INTERVIEWEE

You have the right to know what kind of programme it is

You have the right to know who else is taking part

You have the right to know in what context your interview will be used

You have the right to ask how long the interview will be

You have the right to ask how much of the interview is likely to be used

You have the right to ask who the interviewer is

You have the right to ask about what items precede and follow yours

You have the right to ask what subject areas will be covered

You have the right to ask what the first question will be

You have the right to say 'No' to taking part

You have the right to correct the interviewer if he/she is wrong

You have the right to put your point of view

You have the right to be heard

You have the right to a fair interview

DECIDING TO TAKE PART

Before you agree, ask some questions:

- Why are they doing the item?
- Why have they asked you in particular?
- How long will it take?
- At what time and location do they want you?

You now need some thinking time, so say "Can I phone you back?"

If you are interested in doing the interview, phone back and ask more questions:

- Who else is taking part in the programme?
- Who will do the interview?
- Will it be live or recorded?
- Will it be edited?
- How long will the finished item be?
- What film or other material will be used to illustrate the issue?

If you are happy, then go ahead.

PREPARING YOUR MESSAGE

- Do your homework beforehand
- Be clear about the specific points you want to make
- Prepare a 'three point plan' – three clear, concise, memorable points
- Have supporting arguments ready
- Prepare for difficult questions which might come up
- Find short interesting stories to illustrate your answers
- Use statistics sparingly
- Practise what you want to say

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Remember, the ABC approach will get you out of trouble.

For example:

ACKNOWLEDGE: "That's a very important issue..."

BRIDGE: "...however, a really important aspect of our work..."

CONTROL: "There are now more than 200 projects in the UK..."

Then carry on with your agenda.

You can, of course, come clean and say "I'm sorry, I don't know". Humility can be very refreshing. If you don't know, always add: "But I'll find out".

It is never productive to get angry or try to belittle the interviewer. Often the interviewer is something of a local or national celebrity and you may risk alienating your audience if you rise to the bait.

PREPARING YOURSELF

Controlling your Nerves

- Practise deep breathing – this calms your nerves and improves voice quality
- Use relaxation techniques
- Practise sitting in a chair and remember BBC
- Look alert and enthusiastic

Remember that experienced speakers get nervous and adrenalin can be good for you.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Clothes and body language can add authority to your message. Dress appropriately.

Using positive body language

- Make good eye contact with the interviewer
- Speak to him or her directly
- Ignore the cameras, monitors and technicians
- Avoid distracting mannerisms
- Sit comfortably in the chair and lean slightly forward. Slouching or swivelling in the chair makes you look shifty.
- Drop your chin down slightly to look more relaxed

Remember 'BBC' – sit well back into the chair with your back supported by the upright. Make sure your feet are in contact with the floor and try to keep them still. This will give you more confidence.

USING YOUR VOICE

A good voice is interesting and full of energy. It has a mix of confidence, vitality and ease, and makes the listener feel comfortable.

- It is audible
- It is flexible and lively
- It is clear and unforced
- It uses a range of sound, pitch and volume
- It encourages people to listen to what you're saying

Use a webcam or microphone to record yourself. Listen to your voice and experiment with ways of making it more interesting.

If you have an accent, don't try to change it. Regional accents are attractive.

A good voice does not drone, mumble, whine, rush or whisper. A good voice will help to communicate your message more effectively in every situation.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITY

When the day arrives you should be well prepared:

- You've done your homework
- You're determined to avoid jargon and use clear and concise words
- You've decided on a smart and comfortable outfit
- You've reminded yourself about body language

You're ready. Try to relax. Feel confident that you're well prepared.

In the studio

- Don't be put off by the technology, monitors, lights or people
- Remember to ask "What is the first question?"
- Look alert during the introduction – you could be on air
- Stick to your point and don't get side-tracked in your answers
- Don't get angry, but do challenge statements which are incorrect
- When you've finished your point, stop. Don't feel obliged to fill silences

Try to be enthusiastic. If you think your message is interesting, then your audience is more likely to think so too.