

Be Prepared: Develop three to five main points you want to get across in an interview. Role-play with others to practice answering questions. Compile a list of the most difficult questions you could face and how you would respond.

Create Sound Bites: Use short, punchy statements to make your point quickly and ensure that it gets quoted. Examples, comparisons or analogies may be useful. Avoid jargon.

Get Right to the Point: Keep your main objective in mind, and state your conclusion up front. Provide examples to support your assertion. Don't wait for the perfect question; seize any opportunity to state your message.

Project Confidence: Make eye contact with the interviewer and smile to project confidence and credibility. Don't smile if the subject is truly grave, but otherwise, smile as he or she asks questions, and also, when appropriate, during your response and when you finish.

Relax and Take Your Time: Speak in a concise but conversational style that conveys your expertise. Pause when needed to gather your thoughts. Let the interviewer finish each question before responding.

Avoid Saying, "No Comment:" It suggests guilt or concealment. Even a few words are better than none, if only to explain why you can't discuss the subject. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" and offer to seek out the answer.

Stick to Your Subject: No matter what you are asked, don't let the interviewer derail you. When necessary, respond first, then make a transition back to your main message.

Don't Speculate: Steer clear of hypotheticals or possible scenarios unless they truly emphasize a positive message that you are trying to convey. Don't feel obligated to answer a question that should more correctly be asked of someone else. At the same time, correct a false premise or incorrect information, especially if it undermines your main message.

Don't Be Contentious or Hostile: Journalists have the last word when it comes to editing the interview, so it is best not to get into an angry debate. Better to simply reaffirm your main message no matter what is asked or said.

Provide Visuals for TV: Television dominates the news. Prepare or suggest visuals for television interviews. Reporters usually need help with pictures as much as they need your words. Choose visuals carefully for maximum impact.