



FALK COMMUNICATIONS
AND RESEARCH

TEN FAST TIPS TO MAXIMIZE A MEDIA INTERVIEW

Every executive should plan to be in the news. Whether promoting a service or sharing industry or professional insights, articles in magazines and local newspapers can shine a positive light on a business and client successes.

Let's consider that a phone interview has been arranged with a reporter at a business or trade newsletter. Here are ten tips to maximize that discussion.

1. A reporter is NOT your friend. ANYTHING you say can be used in print and recordings. If you do not want to see it in the news or hear it on TV or the radio, do not say it. Any discussion of *off the record*, *on background* or *not for attribution* must be agreed to at the outset of the interview.
2. PREPARE. Make a list of THREE important points. Print it in **16 point** font. This list will keep you focused and define the topic under discussion. Remember, it is a phone interview, so the reporter cannot see you looking at your notes.
3. Develop memorable examples for each of the three points. Acronym, analogy, anecdote, alliteration (see the words in that series all begin with the letter A), rhyme, visual imagery, word play and reference to popular culture keep the reporter's (and reader's) interest. Take something familiar; be creative and give it a twist to make it relevant to your point and you will become quotable.
4. Answer the difficult question as briefly as possible and STOP TALKING.
5. When a reporter tries to put words in your mouth, close your lips and swallow. A question may have language that is insulting, inflammatory, defamatory, derogatory or nasty. Do NOT repeat those negative words in your answer.
6. Plan for an escape. If you see the conversation is going down the wrong path, politely excuse yourself and helpfully offer to talk later and resume the interview.

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7. Get the REPORTER'S PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS, so you can easily follow-up with: any materials you offered; additional details that were clarified later; or thoughts that escaped you in the heat of the moment

8. Do NOT ask for, nor expect to receive, an advance look at the article or your quote. Do you like it when someone hovers over your shoulder as you write? Instead, offer to be available for follow-up questions in case anything you discussed is unclear.

9. DO ask when the article will be published. Then you can promote it on your social media activity and website, leading more people to see and read the article.

10. Be prepared for the unexpected call. You may think the reporter is calling about one situation, but it may be a new and different development that you are not prepared to talk about. It may be something that you know nothing about or are not authorized to speak about yet. Politely DELAY for 30 minutes so you may contact someone who *does* know what happened. Together, prepare your THREE points and examples. Then call the reporter back.

BONUS: Sometimes the reporter will ask "Is there anything you'd like to add?" Use the opportunity to mention any of the three points that did not get discussed and to clarify anything that might be technical or complex.

EXTRA BONUS: Plan NOW to promote the news article on your website, in your social media activity and in your newsletter, so you can move quickly when it is published.

Want to practice? Need more tips? Contact me at Janet@JanetLFalk.com or 212/677-5770.

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