

# Interview Skills

Interviews are an integral part of radio, they may be live, in studio or on an outside broadcast, they may be pre-recorded as part of a programme or a full documentary. They may be live after a match or a vox pop recorded a week ago. How they are presented depends on the amount of work and production time spent on them. Sometimes you can get lucky with a great interviewee, where all you have to do is press record, sit back and listen, but most times you need to do a little bit of work. Below are a few tips which should help you out....

Remember the four types of interview techniques

- Information- who what where when why
- Conversational - needs lots of research to be interesting
- Emotional - how you feel/ very delicate
- Documentary - draws all these types together



## 1. Preparation

Research will let you know which type of interview this is going to be. It will also decide where and with whom you should conduct this interview.

Make sure that you are well prepared with equipment and research. Know the names, places and pronunciations - checking before the interview is better than getting it wrong during.

Make sure that you know what you want to ask before you ask it. Consider what the point of the interview is, what do you want to ask. Will you be including (all) your questions in the final broadcast?

Explain the process to your interviewee, try and get time to talk to them before the mic rolls (if appropriate) Making sure that your interviewee is comfortable will aid the overall interview! Style is dictated by the type of interview and the content. If pre-recorded don't be afraid of rambling interviewees, but watch out for the time in the edit suite later!

## 2. Equipment

- Check your equipment is working, where are you recording?
- Should you go there a day before the actual interview?
- Surrounding noises, Sound FX or a hindrance?
- Do you need to book equipment/ Studio/ Engineer?
- Do you know how to work the equipment?
- Will you need help editing?

ie PLAN!!

### 3. During the interview:

Avoid asking Questions which are:

Open/ Multiple/ Leading/ Confused/ Lengthy / Rhetorical

Not only will these questions confuse the interviewee, they may also lose you a listener!

Sometimes you may have to play Devils Advocate/ Take a stance you don't agree with privately...Its important to be able to do this in a realistic way...it won't happen unless you have truly researched your interview/ subject matter.

Good questions to ask are

1. Who? Asks for a fact. Answer - a person.
2. When ? Asks for a fact. Answer - a time.
3. Where? Asks for a fact. Answer - a place.
4. What? Asks for a fact or an interpretation of facts.
5. How? Asks for a fact or an interpretation of facts.
6. Which? Asks for a choice from a range of options.
7. Why? Asks for an opinion or reason for a course of action.

Do not write out exact questions - Know what key areas you want to cover.

Don't ask twenty questions for a five-minute interview/ Record an hour for a 3 min. slot!  
Or could this be the start of a documentary?? Remember the time you will spend editing!

Concentrate on what is being said. If answers become vague or too technical then try to clarify them by asking for a practical example. Be aware of what it is you want from the Interview and keep your questions focused on this. Also avoid using a lot of numbers and percentages etc. It will only cloud your question for your listener.

While the interview is proceeding keep a close eye on sound levels and that the interview is being recorded.

At the end, do not sum up what your interviewee has said. You will either hear a good out cue or else ask a final question and signal that you are doing so, and do not leap in afterwards with something else you wanted to know but had forgotten to ask. End the interview by thanking your guest.

### 4. After the Interview

Make sure you check that interview has been recorded and that the levels are correct. If you think a point has not been covered clearly then ask the question again but using different phrasing. It can be edited into the interview. Let your guest know when the interview is scheduled to be broadcast but do not commit yourself absolutely, reiterate the frequency of the station and accompany them out of the studio to the main entrance of the building.

Remember the purpose of your interview, it might be appropriate to let the person listen to the interview, it might not. You may want to offer the person a chance to record the full interview or get a copy of the broadcast interview.

Always keep their details and a note of the interview and how it went, in your contacts book. It could prove very useful later on.