

# Getting Ready for a Media Interview

By June Campbell

If you're in business, especially if you are doing business on the Internet, the day will come when you are invited to do a media interview. Perhaps someone has read your online articles and is impressed, or perhaps your local newspaper or television station is profiling interesting Internet entrepreneurs in their community. Whatever the reason, you are being given an excellent opportunity to promote your business. To get the most mileage from your interview, consider the following tips:

1. Before the interview, **practice your answers to the typical questions** of Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. That is, be prepared to state your name, your business, where you are located, what you do, when you started, why you started your business, and how you do things. Prepare and practice so your statements will flow smoothly.
2. Before the interview takes place, consider the **main message** that you want the audience to receive. Make a list of three major points, and practice saying these three points to yourself until you can speak them smoothly and confidently, without stumbling.
3. During the interview, try to include **these three main points as much as possible**. Your interview is likely to be edited prior to publishing or broadcasting. By repeating your main points, you reduce the possibility that your preferred message will be edited out.
4. Be prepared to tell **brief anecdotes and short stories**. Think of a time when you solved a problem for a customer, or relate a success story or two. Find a way to mix one or more of your three main marketing messages into each anecdote.
5. **Use humor with caution**. If you are telling a humorous anecdote, be sure that "the joke is on yourself" and explain what you learned from the experience. Avoid giving people the idea that you laugh at your customers behind their backs.
6. Similarly, resist the temptations to tell negative stories. If your interviewer asks you to explain "the dumbest question you were ever asked," for example, be very careful to **portray your customers in a positive light**. You might answer something like, "There really are no dumb questions. Our clients have business needs and we do all we can do address those needs."
7. Consider writing a **list of suggested questions or topics to cover**. Send this list to the journalist prior to the interview. If used, your list will direct the interview in the way you hope. Naturally, prepare your answers to these questions in advance, and be prepared to speak easily on each topic.

8. Be prepared to **offer your audience some sort of report**, gift or other item -- on autoresponder, faxback or web site. Remember, the simpler the instructions, the more likely your audience will be to remember it.

9. If your interview will be televised, ask in advance for tips regarding **clothing, makeup and accessories**. As a rule of thumb, dress appropriately for the type of business you are operating. Remember that solid colors are preferred over prints, geometrics, plaids or florals. Accessories that dangle, move, glitter, shine or create noise are inadvisable. If you wear eyeglasses, ask the camera operator what you can do to reduce the glare.

**Ready? Break a Leg!**

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