

FIVE TIPS FOR GIVING GOOD INTERVIEWS

Good media interviews, where you get your desired message across clearly and concisely, don't just happen. Here's what our experts advise:

- Prepare, prepare and prepare some more.
- Who's the audience: think how to tailor your language and content.
- What are your three key messages?
- Keep abreast of current issues and have responses ready.
- Set your boundaries: what will you say or not say?

Preparation is the absolute key: you're the subject expert, but you need to distil down all the information in your head for the sake of clarity. Remember: if you get three clear messages across in one news media interview, you're doing very well.

Tailor your language and content to the audience. Interviews for specialist publications with readers across a lot of terminologies are very different from interviews for a more general audience.

Keep on top of your research sector and current issues. Professor Gary Mortimer of QUT Business School reads three newspapers every morning to stay abreast of retail business issues and has comments ready for forthcoming industry events.

Don't get caught on the hop if you're not ready to discuss a topic. Professor Nick Wailes of UNSW will try to buy a couple of hours after a media contact, get up to speed on current data and jot down his key points before an interview.

Know what you can and cannot say, and don't discuss subjects outside your area of expertise. Think about any hot topics that you may be questioned on. It may be wise to discuss your responses with your university communications person or a colleague with extensive media experience.

Practise your answers out loud until you feel comfortable with them or, better still, run them past a colleague. Spoken words always come out differently from thoughts, so it's best to warm up before an interview.