



# How to Approach Media Interviews

## Determine your key messages

After going through your key messaging exercise (see “Messaging Tip Sheet”), determine what points you want your audience to know after you’ve completed the interview. Be sure to plug in your top messages at the beginning, middle and end of your interview.

## Prepare Q&A

Think about what questions may come up and be prepared to answer them without leading the interviewer down an undesirable path (per below).

## Turn negatives into positives

When asked a question aggressively or with a negative tone, respond with positives. Avoid using or reflecting the negative language. You may need to stop the negativity with a simple “No” or “That’s not the case,” but don’t dwell on it. Make a transition to one of your key messages and continue to tell your story.

## **Build bridges**

Answer the reporters' questions, but don't dwell on negativity or topics that don't meet your own agenda. Address the question, then build a bridge to your messages. Using a bridge phrase like, "Let me just add," or "what I want people to know is..."

## **Beware of "Off the Record"**

If you say something to a reporter outside the context of an interview, it is still fodder for a story. If you speak off the record, remember that the reporter's definition of "off the record" is not likely to be the same as yours—you are the story source!



## **Additional tips:**

- Use language the interviewer and target audience will understand.
- Keep your interview positive.
- Make short, simple, and specific statements.
- Deliver your message with confidence.
- Relax, but sit up straight—even for telephone interviews. This improves your tone and energy.
- If the interview is being recorded for broadcast (e.g., radio, podcast), make sure you are settled in a comfortable place and use a reliable phone line without static.