

## Remarkable Interviews – Top Tips from the Experts

- **Know your topic. Revise like it's an exam if necessary**

Be prepared to go off topic to create some light and shade, the same as you would in a normal conversation with a friend.

**Lisa Marrey – BBC Presenter and former commercial Program Director**

- **Unless it's inappropriate, have a smile on your face**

Smiling puts a smile in your voice and also relaxes you.

- **Don't be scared of the interviewer**

99.9% of us want the interview to go great so will work with you to make it that way. We want you to be human and to chat with us. A bad interview doesn't sound good, and ratings will fall. No one wins.

- **If you don't understand the question, ask the interviewer to rephrase**

Use that to buy some thinking time, then analyze and repeat the question as part of your answer.

- **Don't say something you are unsure about**

Along with that, don't use language you don't understand or make a point you haven't thought through properly. If in doubt - shut up!

**Dave King – Editor and Journalism Professor**

- **Tell a story. I'll remember that. I'll forget statistics.**

We were told how many people were on the 9/11 planes hundreds of times, but I don't remember. I do remember that many of them were phoning loved ones to say goodbye.

**John Marshall – Radio Producer and Actor**

- **Don't use jargon or technical speak.**

Don't be afraid to explain in simpler language. Be concise. Try not to waffle or repeat yourself. Don't rush. Do not read any prepared notes, by all means glance or refer to them but if you read them, you won't sound natural.

**Henrietta Creasey – News Editor and Presenter**

- **Try not to stress about whether the interview sounds good or interesting**

It's the job of the interviewer to pull that off, you just need to listen to the questions!

**Dan O'Brien – Journalist and Presenter**

- **Try and speak slowly**

Even if you think it sounds far too slow in your head it won't on air, allow yourself to take pauses to think and respond when you're ready rather than garbling at speed or starting to answer before you've decided what you're going to say.

If it's pre-recorded, they will edit to make you sound even better and everyone stumbles over words and says "um and ah" even professional broadcasters.

Forget how many people are listening, just talk to the interviewer one-to-one as if it's a natural conversation and allow yourself to relax into it, listening carefully to what they say so you can react and respond well. Try to enjoy the experience!

**Jill Misson – Award winning BBC Radio Producer and Presenter**

- **If possible talk to your interviewer before you go on air**

Remember they're normal people with families and distractions and mortgages and hopes and dreams - they're not grand inquisitors. They're (usually) on your side, so establish a connection and rhythm with them before you go 'live'.

- **Don't oversell yourself**

If you're trying to plug something (either a product or a point of view) then do it subtly; this will go down better with the interviewer and the audience.

- **Cool calm and collected**

If you're part of a discussion or debate, try not to take anything contributors say personally - stay calm and dignified... remember people will be able to hear the interview for a long time after the heat has died down.

**Lee Stone - BBC Editor, Presenter, Bookshots co-author with James Patterson**

- **Give answers of appropriate length**

Try not to answer yes/no unless it's that type of question. (IE do you think The Packers rock (yes)). If you're asked "So, was this book a challenge to write?" they're looking for the story of how you wrote it, not "yes, it was." A too short answer can be disappointing, but nobody wants a windbag who never allows you to ask more questions. Think conversation!

**Mark Halvorsen - News Director WWIB Radio**