

VIDEO **STORYTELLING**

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

First and foremost, always LISTEN to what people have to say so you can pick up on particular points that the person makes. By keeping your ears open, you may be able to find some fascinating information about which you can ask follow-up questions. Remember to speak clearly (enunciate), and vary the tone of your voice and the speed of your speech to suit the conversation. Keep the interview visually interesting; before or after the interview, get some insert and cutaway shots of the environment, the person's hands, any buttons or pins a person is wearing, etc. These shots can be edited in or cut later as appropriate. Zoom in slowly and tastefully on important visuals, which may provide emphasis.

The Interviewee

The word "interviewee" may sound strange when you first hear it or say it, but it is often used in reference to the person being interviewed. The interviewee often exhibits different qualities—some people are easy to interview, while others are more difficult. Listed below are some helpful suggestions to help prepare you for different types of interviews.

The Unresponsive Interviewee

Don't ask the person closed-ended questions (ones that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no") unless you have a follow-up question prepared for a "yes" or "no" response. Ask open-ended questions that people can expand upon, i.e., "Tell me about--" or "What do you think about--". Avoid questions that begin with phrases like "Do you think that--" or "Are you--"; they don't seem like closed-ended questions, but they will get you little more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Your goal is to get the interviewee to talk to you as much as possible. If you don't get many or any answers to your questions, cut the interview short and thank the person for his or her time.

The Talker

These types of interviews can be difficult to guide. Keep in mind what kind of information you're trying to gain from the interview. If the interviewee strays off the topic of conversation, courteously but firmly get the person on the right track--don't be afraid to redirect the conversation if the person begins talking about things unrelated to the interview. Remember: it's your interview. Sometimes people need some warm-up time to get into a conversational mode, so don't cut them off immediately if they don't quickly come to the point. To indicate at the start that this is a serious interview and not just a taped conversation, try to hint at a time limit by saying something like, "We need a brief, concise statement about the issue."

The Friendly Interviewee

This type of person may be friendly but has nothing to say that you want or need to hear. Again, keep the person to the subject about which you're trying to find more information. If s/he can't provide you with any relevant insights, politely discontinue the interview.

The Hostile Interviewee

First of all, you don't want to give this person any ammunition with which to attack you--don't ask condescending questions that hint at your own attitude towards this grumpy guy or gal, because you won't get any or much information if you deliberately anger, bait, frighten or intimidate the person. Keep in mind that there are some people who are hostile to everyone, so it may not be you. Do the best you can with this type of interviewee--courtesy and tact will help you get some information from him or her.¹

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