

Bluewood Top Tips

For print interviews

Before the interview:

1. **Your messages:** Make sure you have your messages prepared and tested (with colleagues or the press office) and try and include real-examples / illustrations to back them up.
2. **Tailoring:** Financial Times readers will want something very different from Daily Mail readers – make sure you think how you should tailor your story for the audience.
3. **Research:** Will the journalist understand your business? Are they likely to be hostile? What angle might they take?
4. **Negative question:** Spend some time thinking about any negatives you might get asked and make sure you have prepared some suitable answers.
5. **Press office:** If you have press advisers make sure you keep them in the loop and use them for advice and guidance.

During the interview:

1. **Building relationships:** A good interview can be the start of a mutually beneficial relationship – keep this in mind and treat the journalist with respect from the outset.
2. **Fact-check:** At the start (and end) make sure the journalist has your name and job title etc correct, they might also appreciate an offer to check their facts when they are writing the article.
3. **Avoid jargon:** Even if you are used to technical language in your role, don't assume your audience or the journalist will be (even the trade press might not understand all the jargon).
4. **Avoid the competition:** Avoid talking about your competition (especially in a negative way - this will reflect badly on you). You are there to talk about yourself, your work and organisation.
5. **Be honest:** Lying or bluffing will never help you in the long-term. If you can't answer a question say that to the journalist or tell them you will get an answer to them (make sure you do!). Avoid "no comment" as this can make you look like you are hiding something.
6. **Off the record:** If you don't want your quote repeated, don't say it. However good your relationship might be, it's best to assume nothing is completely off the record with a journalist.
7. **Stick to your agenda:** The journalist will have their own agenda but you must stick to your guns and bridge back to your own agenda if you feel you are losing control of the interview.
8. **You are the expert:** Remember the journalist has come to you as the expert; they want AND need your opinion but if you aren't helpful and clear they will probably look elsewhere.
9. **Help the journalist:** If they are struggling with the story (or your messages), offer to help, go through things again and explain any relevant background for them.
10. **Body language:** Your body language can tell the journalist a lot; be relaxed and open, maintain eye contact, be enthusiastic and don't forget to smile!