

# MEDIA & MESSAGING TOOLKITS: HOW TO DO A MEDIA INTERVIEW



**extinction**  
**rebellion**

## **Firstly, do your background research**

Be aware if the interview is live or pre-recorded.  
Know how long the interview will be and how much of that will be aired.  
Know if anyone else is being interviewed for the same piece  
(eg an opposing view).

Check out the interview style of the show/presenter. If you know who this will be, it makes it easier to practice being in conversation with them, and imagining getting your message across.

## **Get preparing**

What is your aim with this interview?  
What do you hope the person who is listening will remember?  
What do you want the listener to do or think?

Write down 3 “key messages.” Thinking of the above, choose 3 messages that you want to get across. Keep them in simple, plain English and keep them short (a maximum of a couple of sentences, and preferably one). Why three? People are unlikely to remember more than three things. If you try to get too much across, you risk losing the most important things you want to say.

## **Rehearse**

Ask someone to interview you, and afterwards look at how you could have improved. Do this lots of times. Practice being asked difficult questions by brainstorming all the difficult questions you may be asked and practicing answering them in a way which will lead back to your key messages.

You will have a very short window of time to get your message across- don't waste it! Prepare well.

Rehearse your key messages. Say them in different ways, find some stats, anecdotes, examples, anything that illustrates the key message. Get comfortable with the core messages. Everything comes back to these!

## **Do the interview**

Focus on getting your key messages across. That is your aim. Whatever question you are asked, if possible, answer it in a way which allows you to

get across one of your key messages. Don't allow the line of questioning to wander off topic: remember, the interview will be edited, so don't think because you got your key message in, you can just be less focussed now. Aim for everything you say to be something that would achieve your aim if it was the only thing broadcast. This might not be possible, but the more it can be, the better your chance of success. (I have lost count of the number of times people have come to me and said: "oh they didn't use the good bit, they cut out what I really wanted to say." Everything needs to be something you really want to say!

### **Tips on doing a radio interview**

- Focus on your key messages. Use "ABC": answer, bridge, communicate.
- Don't guess. If you don't know something, it's fine to say so.
- Be yourself. Listeners want to feel connected to a real person.
- Use anecdotes or examples if you can. Make it human, paint a picture.
- Don't worry about repeating your key messages, especially in pre-records.
- Don't stray off topic or be pulled off topic.
- Avoid repeating "loaded" words used by the interviewer.
- Beware "would you say that?" questions. Never simply agree, always put it in your own words.
- Avoid "as I just said" as it can't be used in edited pieces or as a clip for later programmes.
- Remember: rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

### **Tips on doing a TV interview**

All the above points apply, but here are some extra tips:

- Ensure the spokesperson resonates with the target audience/gives the right image.
- Is the spokesperson dressed to convey the right message? Avoid busy patterns as they can interfere with the camera image and distract.
- Consider the location/background. What message does it convey? Could anything appear in shot?
- Don't fidget but don't be rigid either.
- Be aware of when filming starts/stops, and don't immediately relax/react when an interview runs.

## **What to do after the interview**

Listen again. Did you get your message across? What could you improve?  
What are your next steps?

## **Resources**

The XR UK spokespeople team is currently working on revamping all our resources for spokespeople and these should be ready soon. In the meantime, the following may be useful:

Basic notes for an initial media spokespeople training:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MJ1UACx9Jbd-9fqQkR-XKzi7pretWZUIV7wizAlhvEnE/edit>

Video of initial media spokespeople training:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CvYAeAp1iY&feature=youtu.be>

A guide to shows and hosts. This is useful for predicting how challenging an interview is likely to be and what angle the interviewer is likely to take. You might want to build a similar spreadsheet for local and regional media in your area:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1675-rtA-dljXDoEkUYJfS2X7OP\\_v4odGLsHuV0stsoI/edit?folder=0AF3gucUHw8EQUk9PVA#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1675-rtA-dljXDoEkUYJfS2X7OP_v4odGLsHuV0stsoI/edit?folder=0AF3gucUHw8EQUk9PVA#gid=0)