

## Chapter 6 – Interviewing

### INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

- **Always have consent for your interviews**  
The easiest way to do this is to ask your interviewee to say on camera that they are granting you permission to record an interview with them which they understand you will use for X purpose.
- **Be prepared**  
Understand why you want to record the interview: to inspire, to provide information and frame your questions accordingly.
- **Let Them Know What to Expect**  
Introduce them to the director and any other crew who will work directly with them. Briefly explain any potentially distracting off-camera activity that will occur during production. Don't go into detail; just point out that cameras and people will be moving around and that guests should disregard them, unless you want someone to speak or perform directly to a camera.
- **Help Subject Feel at Ease**  
When you work with people, you want them to appear as natural and relaxed as possible. So try to make their experience non-threatening. Avoid being overly critical or doing anything that will unnerve them or put them on the defensive. Make their experience a good one, and in return they will be genuine!
- **Before Turning on the Camera, Talk to Them**  
Make sure you have had enough time to talk to the subjects before turning on the camera. This way, you can understand their nature, their style of answering questions as well as get an idea of sensitive topics which will take time or probing to discuss. You need to open the person up before a little prior to turning on the camera.
- **Always Ask Open Questions, Not Closed**  
The way you phrase your questions is very important and allows the person to answer without feeling confined to any specific yes/no. Open ended questions start with “please explain,” “how do you feel,” instead of “what is this?” “where is that?” which are closed questions. Also, do not cut in between, let them finish speaking.
- **Ask them to include the question in the answer or rephrase sentences**  
Most often, the interviewer's question is not included in the final edit. So it's a good idea to remind the interviewee to refer to the question in their answer so that the viewer understands what they are speaking about. Also, if the interviewee explains something in a way that you do not understand, feel free to ask them to repeat or rephrase the answer in a different way.

- **Be silent so only your interviewee's voice is recorded**  
Do not keep on saying hmmm, okay... You can nod your head though, to communicate that you are listening. If you ask a question, keep the mic closer to you and put it back near to them when they start answering.
- **Last question**  
It always pays to ask 'Is there anything else you would like to add that I haven't asked you'. Most of the time, the interviewee will take this opportunity to expand on something interesting.
- **Thank Them**  
Of course, your guests may benefit from the exposure your program provides, in which case it is a mutually beneficial experience. But this should not prevent your expressing sincere appreciation for their help.
- **Tell Them When and Where to Catch their Video**  
Tell them what website the video will be on and when. People are usually interested in seeing themselves in a video and will invite others adding to your audience.

**Open Question Technique:** *An open question is likely to receive a long answer, and not a simple yes or no.*

Although any question can receive a long answer, open questions deliberately seek longer answers, and are the opposite of closed questions.

- They ask the respondent to think and reflect.
- They will give you opinions and feelings.
- They hand control of the conversation to the respondent.
- A nice trick is to get them to ask you open questions. This then gives you the floor to talk about what you want. The way to achieve this is to intrigue them with an incomplete story or benefit.

*Examples of open questions: Remember that open questions begin with WHAT, HOW, WHY, DESCRIBE.*

- What did you do on your holiday?
- How have you managed to keep your business successful all these years?
- Why do you think the economy is suffering nowadays?
- Please describe the problems in your community lately.

## TALKING ON CAMERA GUIDELINES

- **Self-Confidence** - The key is self-confidence and feeling prepared.
- **Relax and move naturally.** Nervousness is okay - it adds a little edge to your efforts and makes you work a little harder. Before you are on camera, take three deep breaths, then keep your breathing calm and even. Dressing comfortably and knowing your subject will help you stay calm.
- **Be yourself.** The more relaxed and natural you are, the better you will reach your audience. Don't try to act too formal. It is OK to smile or laugh when appropriate. Sit or stand comfortably, but with good posture. Move slowly enough for the camera to follow your actions.
- **Don't fidget.** Don't play with the microphone cord; it will cause scratchy sounds that you can't hear but your audience can. Try not to sway in your chair, drum your fingers on the table, or tap your feet. *Remember: relax.*
- **Use a script.** A written outline of main ideas can help prompt you. Word-for-word scripts are hard to use and make your delivery less interesting. You should also repeat your sentence out loud a few times before recording so it is delivered naturally without long pauses. Then, if you record at least twice, that will give you options to select whichever clip you like better.
- **Don't let your notes steal the show.** If you have to carry papers on camera, they should not be white. Notes should be on colored paper or secured on a dark clipboard. Try not to rustle papers. The microphones will pick them up loud and clear. Try using coloured index cards; they're quieter and smaller than sheets of paper.
- **Don't hurry.** Allow enough time to cover each point you want to make. Don't race through your material. Leave time for a summary at the end of the program.
- **Stay focused.** Be aware of what is going on in your surroundings, but not distracted by it.