

Working with Media

Notify the Communications Team

Let us know about upcoming research, announcements and noteworthy projects. Some will be selected for circulation on [USU Today](#), or pitched as stories to external media. Let the communications team know if you have had a media inquiry so that we can support and coordinate.

Preparing for an interview

- Reporters are usually working on a tight deadline. Call back right away. Always find out what kind of deadline he or she is facing.
- Ask for the reporter's name and media organization.
- Ask for some sample questions. If you need time to collect your thoughts, offer to call back later.
- Think of two or three main points you would like to make. Gather **brief** facts, figures and anecdotes to support them. Anticipate questions and have responses ready.
- For complicated topics, email extra material to support your points to minimize errors.
- Don't be offended if an interview gets canceled or rescheduled. It happens a lot.

During the Interview

- If you are being interviewed by phone, ask if you are being recorded.
- Begin with the basics. Avoid academic and technical jargon.
- Be brief. Television and radio stories may use only 10-30 second of a 20 minute interview. Print reporters are looking for short, snappy quotes.
- There are four C's to successful interviews:
 - Speak with **conviction** in a **conversational**, professional manner.
 - Be **confident**. You are the expert.
 - Be **colorful**. Tell stories and anecdotes that illustrate the point; give examples.
- Stick to your main points. Many people make the mistake of talking too much. Repeat your main points if necessary to get back on track.
- Speak in complete thoughts, even if you are repeating yourself. The reporter's question may be edited out.

- Don't overestimate a reporter's knowledge of the subject. Offer background information where necessary.
- If you do not understand a question, ask for clarification
- If you do not have the answer, say so. Tell the reporter where to find the information, if possible.
- Never say, "No comment." If you cannot or do not choose to answer, briefly explain why.
- Avoid saying things "off the record." If you don't want to hear it on the evening news, you had better not say it.

Tips for Broadcast Media

- For on-camera interviews, wear solid-color clothing ... stripes, plaids or other designs can cause problems on screen. Avoid large, jangling or reflective jewelry.
- Check the mirror. The reporter may not tell you that your collar is folded over or your hair is out of place.
- Choose a quiet, controlled location.
- Find out in advance whether the interview is edited or live. If you agree to a live interview, be sure you are comfortable thinking on your feet.
- In edited interviews pause briefly before answering. This helps the reporter get a "clean" sound bite and gives you time to think.
- In edited interviews, it's O.K. to stop and start again.
- In a TV interview, if you're uncertain where to look, ask.
- Stay stationary in front of radio or TV microphones and avoid sitting in a chair that rocks or spins. Wandering around or rocking in your chair can cause the recorded volume to rise and fall. Be aware of and avoid nervous habits such as pen tapping.

After the Interview

- Ask the reporter to identify you as being affiliated with the Quinney College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and/or Utah State University.
- In most instances you will not have the opportunity to check over the reporter's story before it appears. However, you can ask questions at the end. You might inquire, "What do you think is the main story angle here?"
- You may want to ask when a story will appear. The reporter is usually happy to tell you.
- If you feel that you misspoke or gave incorrect information, call the reporter as soon as possible and let them know. Similarly, you can call with additional information if you forgot to make an important point.

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- Give positive feedback to reporters, if merited, after a story appears. It builds trust and positive relationships.
 - If an error appears, politely let the reporter know right away. Sometimes a correction can be printed or aired. You also will want to prevent the incorrect information from being used as background for future stories.
 - If you are unhappy with a story, share your concerns with the reporter first. Contacting their editor is a last resort.
 - Review and critique your own performance, looking for ways you might improve.
 - Contact us when you have done an interview so that we can track it down. Send a link if possible.

Text adapted from University of Michigan Media.