



**M E T I S**

COMMUNICATIONS

Agents of Influence™

## SICK AND TIRED OF GENERIC MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS? READ ON...

*First: let's be honest.* There are a lot of guides out there on the internet about how to have a good media interview. Many cover similar things – have your messages down, don't say anything "off the record," and don't expect to review the final copy before it runs! All those are great points. But, we want to offer you something a little different.

**Do you know who you're talking to?** Answer this honestly. Don't go into a media interview without reading the background your team provided, and without taking time yourself to read the reporter's story file. In reality it is inexcusable to pop onto a media call unprepared, because

it hurts your credibility and doesn't help you anticipate what the reporter might care about. Does she always use data in her articles? Does he like to include interesting personal anecdotes?

**Are you the CEO or the Head of Product?** (Or something in between?) Stay in your wheelhouse! It's okay to say when you're not the right person to talk about something (say revenue, future plans, etc.) Prepare to talk about YOUR stories, not someone else's.

**Have you practiced – for real?** There are no do-overs in media. Media training can be an incredibly useful tool, but maybe you didn't have the budget or time to participate in a full media training session. Have you practiced your answers aloud? Have you distilled the most important things you want to communicate, and actually worked with someone to review them? Just being clear with yourself (*in advance*) can be a great tool for getting into the right mindset.

**Are you in the right frame of mind?** This isn't about girding up for battle, but it also isn't a simple chat with a friend. Are you uber-clear on what you're prepared to share? Are you prepared to NOT share information, even if pressed, if it will be damaging or misinterpreted? Are you tired, sick, distracted? You need to be on point, so don't go into an interview off kilter. Don't come racing out a challenging meeting with your board into an important interview – build time in your calendar to collect your thoughts, review your materials and think through the next 30-minutes.

*Even if the reporter is on deadline you need to take a good 15-minute break in advance to just breathe!*

**Are you ready to be direct and responsive?** Most guides will tell you to prepare message > answer > message (*or something like that!*). Yes, you want to work in your key points, but are you also ready to handle anything the reporter could throw at you? If the reporter asks you to comment on your growth plans, don't change the subject! Answer the question. There is nothing more frustrating to a reporter than being "messed".

This goes back to being prepared. If you don't want to share financials, don't get on the phone with a reporter who always covers financial data!



**Do you love the resulting article?** Socialize it – on YOUR handles, not just the corporate ones. Show the reporter you paid enough attention to appreciate the outcome and that you're eager to share broadly.

**Sometimes tough stuff happens, deal with it.** You can't always control the outcome. Maybe you said something you wish you didn't. Maybe the reporter included more favorable information about a competitor. Maybe you just don't like the tone of the piece. What is done is done. You (*or your team*) can ask for any factual corrections, but you don't get to dictate the tone or content of an article. If you want marketing copy, then create marketing copy.



**Did you say thank you?** Too many executives don't take the time to say thank you, or to offer a real connection. Even if you didn't love the piece, was it accurate and fair? If so, reach out. You're not thanking a reporter for coverage (*please don't!!*) but for taking the time. For sharing their insights with you. For considering you for a potential piece. Send a short, but thoughtful, thank you email after the interview – or at least after coverage appears. Make a LinkedIn connection, or follow the reporter on Twitter. The best interviews are the start of a relationship, not the end of it.