

## DR. LOIS FRANKEL

*Get and keep the job you want.*

Welcome to those of you who are receiving our coaching tips for the first time this month. Many of our clients find themselves faced with what can be an intimidating experience -- being interviewed by a reporter on matters pertaining to your company or a volunteer organization with which you're associated. Even if you have experience with these interviews, you can be lulled into a false sense of security -- as I recently found out when what I thought was "off the record" was published on the internet! John Gregory, a former newsman and now a member of our coaching team, offers these coaching tips for taking charge when you're being interviewed. When I read them I thought they were good suggestions for not only media interviews, but also answering most questions you're asked in the workplace.

### **When answering reporters' questions:**

1. Provide responses that are no more than 45 seconds for newspaper and magazine interviews, and less than 30 seconds for TV and radio. Reporters tend to switch to the next question if you talk too long.
2. State your key point first, then add one or two supporting sub-points. If your answers are in reverse order (less important points first), reporters might think one of the subpoints is your primary statement. The key-point-up-front technique helps you keep your answers short.
3. Remove the jargon and buzz words that your ultimate audience--the readers, listeners or viewers--won't understand. Save the acronyms for your colleagues.

### **To prepare for interviews:**

1. Learn things about the reporter and her/his media outlet. This not only helps you learn what reporters want, but gives you an opening to break the ice just before the interview, such as: "That article you wrote last week made an interesting point..." Building rapport can be important when it comes to them putting a positive spin on your comments.
2. Decide on three key points you want to make related to your and the reporter's interests. Your goal is to state all three, no matter what the reporter asks during the interview. If you wait to be asked the right question you may hear the reporter say, "That's about all the time I have" before you've made your most important points.

### **During the interview:**

1. When interviewed in person, maintain good eye contact with the reporter. When our eyes gaze to the heavens or the ground while we search for answers, we give the impression we're guilty until proven innocent, or praying this interview was over.

2. Assume that everything you say is on the record, even after the interview is declared "over" but the reporter is still in the room (or on the phone).

3. Err on the side of giving less, rather than more information. Once you hit the 30 or 45 second mark stop by asking the interviewer, "Did I answer your question?"

If you have a question our coaches can help with, e-mail me and we'll address it in a future coaching tips communication. Also, if you were forwarded this e-mail from a friend or colleague and want to be added to our mailing list, just hit the reply button and in the subject line write "Add Me to the List." Until next month, stay well.

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Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.