

Media Interview Tips

The following tips are designed to help you prepare for media opportunities during a transportation construction project. Use this opportunity to promote your business and emphasize your accessibility and continued excellent customer service.



Before the Interview

- If you agree to a media interview, always be polite and respectful. You may decline to be interviewed if you prefer.
- If it's an inconvenient time, or you feel unprepared, request to be interviewed later. Honor the reporter's deadline.
- It is acceptable to inquire about the angle of the story beforehand and ask what information they have already gathered so you can contribute appropriately to the story.
- Prepare three key talking points to emphasize during your interview. Look for opportunities to address your points in your answers.
- For TV interviews or photographs, suggest an interview location that reflects your business positively in the background.
- Present yourself in a positive manner and be meticulously groomed. Do not wear sunglasses and avoid white clothing if possible.

During the Interview

- When answering questions or delivering your talking points, present them in a positive way. If there is an issue, speak to the solution. Remember you are representing your business and want to be perceived in a positive light.
- Always be calm and professional to gain credibility with the audience. Showing enthusiasm and encouraging people to do business with you is free advertising.
- Maintain an optimistic approach to the subject matter. Studies show that customers are attracted to and frequent businesses with a positive message.

- If the reporter asks a negative question that makes you feel uncomfortable, redirect your answer to one of your talking points, or say *"Let me think about that. May we come back to that question?"*
- Take your time when answering questions, as a concise answer is less likely to be taken out of context. Stop speaking once you've made your point.
- Don't interrupt the reporter. Begin your answer when he or she is finished speaking.
- Assume that you will always be on the record, even if a reporter says you are off the record. Assume that a camera or recorder in the room is always on and running.
- Always presume that a reporter has their own angle for the story and may be working from limited information. Be prepared for shock value questions and respond with one of your key points to reinforce your message. This will help to keep the interview focused on your agenda.
- Look directly at the reporter during the interview and avoid looking down or away when speaking.

After the Interview

- Asking a reporter to summarize the points they hope to make from your statements gives you an opportunity to ensure that your comments are not taken out of context.
- Your interview is a reflection of you and your business. Your comments can directly influence whether people will visit you, both during and long after the project is completed.

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