

What's the best way to prepare for television interviews?

Q: What's the best way to prepare for television interviews?

Robin Cohn, president of Robin Cohn and Company, a media consulting company in New York City offers these tips:

1. Clothes for television should be subdued. Stay away from stripes, checks and bold prints. If you normally wear glasses, wear them for the interview.
2. Don't let anything distract from what you are saying. Unless you are a jewelry designer showing off your creations, leave the large flashy jewelry at home.
3. Don't assume the interviewer will stay on one specific topic. Be prepared to answer questions on other subjects as well.
4. Prepare in advance by having friends or associates conduct mock interviews. This will help you formulate answers and boost your confidence.
5. Don't evade a tough question. Answer as directly as you can, put your position in the best light, and move on.
6. Be concise. Give a direct answer first, then elaborate with details.
7. Talk to the host and forget the camera is there.
8. Try not to date what you're saying, especially if the show is being taped. If you mention that something happened "today", the story will not be accurate a week later and may be scrapped.
9. Don't ignore erroneous statements. If an outrageous accusation or incorrect statement is made, don't let it go unchallenged. It gains credibility the longer you let it hang around. Refute it politely, give a brief, positive explanation, then shift to the topic you want aired.
10. To prepare for television, try to say everything you feel or know about a difficult subject in one sentence. Then fit it into 20 seconds. Practice with a tape recorder.

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