

Interview Strategies

Select Interviewee:

1. Should they be alone or in groups?
2. Experts and/or general population?

Select kind of interview:

1. On-The-Street Interviews

-Information collecting from chance meetings with people in the neighborhood who are all asked the same question or series of questions.

-Provide an overview of popular feeling about an issue or event.

Use an external microphone when possible

Keep your questions short and simple

Avoid shooting against the sky or a bright wall in order to avoid backlight effect

2. Sit-Down Interviews

-Interviews for which you have set up an appointment

-Provide more depth from an "expert" point of view

-More controlled environment with more in-depth questions that lead to conversation

Write Questions:

1. Research your topic and learn as much about the background of the people as possible

2. Plan questions ahead, but be prepared to deviate

3. Write Open Ended questions

-Not yes/no

-Ask to describe things (tell me about, what was it like, what do you remember about)

4. Start with routine/uncomplicated questions to ease into interview

5. For more sensitive questions try depersonalizing question

Before the Interview:

1. Preliminary Meeting

-Make a brief visit before

-Without recorder

-No longer a stranger

-Explain project

-Make connection (using small talk)

2. Choose a Location

- Find noise free location
- Put in context that would help them think about topic (home for personal, work for business)
- Best if person is comfortable there

3. Collect any material (such as photos) that might awaken memory or provide fodder for stories

On Day of Interview:

1. Discuss and have sign informed consent

- Describe work in way they can understand
- Any dangers or benefits to them, including who is going to be viewing this material
- Talk about how they are in no way obliged to participate
- And how they can stop the interview at any point
- Record or get this in writing whenever possible

2. Set up shot

- Everything in frame should add to the interview
- Avoid distracting sound or movement
- Focus in on interviewee vs. having the interviewer in the shot
- Position interviewer so the eyes of the interviewee are as close to the camera as possible
- Ask the interviewee to talk to the camera and not to rock or fidget in their chair

During Interview

1. Start by having them state and spell name

2. Make as much eye contact as appropriate

- Avoid reading questions from sheet
- Avoid taking too many notes

3. Listen Carefully

- Don't cut them off, even with verbal acknowledgments
- Use non-verbal responses to show you are interested
- Control your face and body language to avoid judgment
- Avoid making corrections unless really off track

4. Ask follow-up questions that go more in depth

- Pay attention to when they seem particularly interested
- Probe for further information when there seems to be more of a story to tell
- Ask the reason why
- Clarify any needed material
- Use hypothetical questions or comparisons to get further depth
- Can occasionally use a challenge style, but not always work

5. Avoid moving the camera
6. If veer off course wait for pause and bring back on track
7. Try to match the pace of the interviewee but allow for pauses
8. If really struggle turn to objects around the interview site
9. Listen to first couple of questions with interviewee if worried about audio levels or background noise
10. End by asking if there is anything else they wanted to talk about
 - Did I miss anything?
 - Why willing to talk
11. Don't turn off the camera until last minute
- 12 Allow for at least five seconds between starting/stopping the camera and action