

15 Ways To Prepare A Colleague For Their First Live Interview

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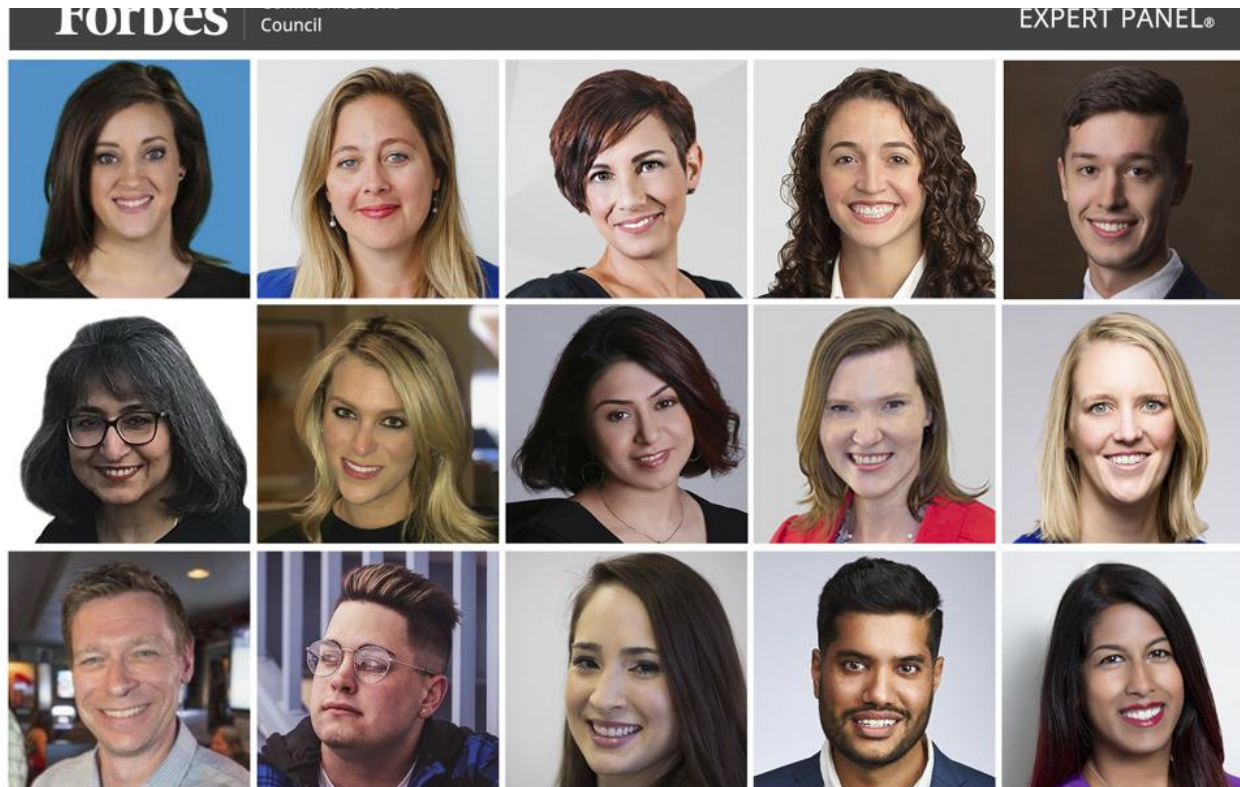
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Media interviews are a great way to generate awareness of and attention for a business, so having a company representative featured in a live interview is an exciting and promising opportunity. However, if someone's never participated in one, they may be unsure about exactly what to say or how to say it.

As their manager or co-worker, you can offer guidance and support to help your colleague feel more comfortable delivering the company's message.

Below, 15 members of [Forbes Communications Council](#) share their best tips for helping someone prepare for their first live interview.



Forbes Communications Council members share ways to prepare a colleague for their first live interview.

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1. Do Some Of The Heavy Lifting

Do as much heavy lifting for them as you can. Of course, you need to ensure that your spokesperson has the key messages in an easy-to-read format, and you should do mock interviews with them. But you also need to provide background information. Provide a list of topics and headlines the interviewer has covered in the past, and share examples of other interviews they conducted. - [Kristi Harrington](#), [PestRoutes](#)

2. Make Key Messages Clear, Concise And Repeatable

There are three fundamentals to follow when preparing for an interview, whether it's the first or 50th time: Make your key messages clear, concise and repeatable. Practice in advance to polish your words and ensure that you sound like yourself when delivering them. Schedule a breather in your calendar before the interview. Breathe, center yourself and be in a position to confidently deliver your best. - [Camille Weleschuk, ATB Financial](#)

3. Take Them Through Media Training

Practice and preparation for answering interview questions is key. In many cases, I'll take representatives who will be in repeated interview situations through media training, including mock interviews. Besides providing talking points, I also like to remind anyone struggling with nerves for a live interview that they know their subject, all they have to do is talk about it! - [Ami DeWille, Perform\[cb\]](#)

4. Ask Them Mock Questions

Practice, practice, practice. Do your homework and come up with all possible questions your colleague may be asked. Then, simulate the interview with you as the reporter. Work on short, sound-bite answers for all possible questions. And also make sure they're comfortable with a response they can provide if they are asked a question during the live interview that they don't know an answer for. - [Brittney Manchester, Catholic Charities of Oregon](#)

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5. Remind Them To Slow Down And Listen

Make sure they really listen to the questions being asked, slow down their speech and give their answer to the interviewer, not the audience. If they're preoccupied with how they sound to the audience, they're setting themselves up for a mishap. Instead, make sure they allow the natural conversation between themselves and the interviewer to flow just as if they were conversing with someone off-screen. - [Mason Burchette, Best Buy Metals](#)

6. Have Them Practice In Front Of A Mirror

Practicing mock sessions prior to the live interview helps new and budding spokespersons. Another word of advice that works well is to practice in front of a mirror. And using conversational language in the interview is also important. - [Arati Mukerji, Tata Communications Ltd](#)

7. Help Them Learn Their Audience

Preparation is the foundation for taking control of any interview. Help the interviewee learn their audience so that they can anticipate and practice difficult questions. Write down a list of anticipated questions and rehearse responses with them so that they can include their central message or point. Prepare a few key phrases that can be their "go-to" responses for guiding the interview toward emphasizing the points they want to get across. - [Kara Krause, E.J. Krause & Associates](#)

8. Help Them Sharpen The Message

The key is preparation and practice. Assuming that the executive is media-trained already, the prep should include working alongside them to practice and sharpen the message. Mock interviews are a great way to give feedback and help the executive present their most confident self. - [Jyoti Khan, Bricks & Clicks](#)

9. Make Sure They Don't Sound Rehearsed

The key in live interviews is to be prepared, but not sound overly rehearsed. You want to have a conversation with the interviewer. I would prep a colleague by asking questions they will likely be asked, then asking the same questions in a slightly different way. That way they know the heart of an answer, but need to respond to the question slightly differently. - [Kathy Sucich, Dimensional Insight](#)

10. Recommend Relaxation Techniques

Help them find a way to relax right before the interview begins. Whenever I'm in a situation such as this, I go somewhere quiet right before it starts. I take a few deep breaths to calm myself. I stand up and strike a power pose in order to push out self-doubt. And I rehearse the most important messages to communicate. - [Kate Barton, Clearview Advisory](#)

11. Work Through Talking Points

If possible, see if you can get a list of potential questions in advance, and then work through talking points with the team member doing the interview. Don't make it too scripted, as you want your company rep to sound comfortable in their answers. This approach can go a long way toward making your company

rep both more prepared and relaxed before an interview. - [Tom Wozniak, OPTIZMO Technologies, LLC](#)

12. Request The Interview Script In Advance

Doing an interview for the first time can always be scary. A good way to overcome this fear is to simply request the interview script before participating in the interview. This allows for the interviewee to prepare answers and make sure they are comfortable with the material being discussed. - [Christian Anderson, Lost Boy Entertainment Company](#)

13. Make Sure They Focus On Being Respectful

Make sure they don't focus on establishing themselves as an expert, which can make them more nervous as they try to say the perfect thing. Instead, have them focus on being respectful. They should also be sure to smile (even if it's a phone interview). We want people to like them because the audience will be more likely to listen to what they have to say. - [Lyndsi Stevens, Celerium](#)

14. Remind Them To Laugh Off Mistakes

When you are confident that you know what you're talking about, you can relax and have fun doing a live interview. Ask for a list of questions or topics ahead of time so that you can rehearse responses with the interviewee. Remember, anything can happen in a live interview. Remind them to laugh it off and move on if something goes wrong. Nobody will remember their mistake if they don't make a big deal out of it. - [Haseeb Tariq, Disney, Fox, Guess](#)

15. Arm Them With Bridging Statements

Being armed with a few bridging statements in advance can help an interviewee get out of a tough spot. Bridging is a popular PR technique to address difficult or irrelevant questions. Instead of saying, “No comment,” or directly avoiding these questions, bridging works by starting off on common ground, and then naturally transitioning to talking about your key messages.

- [Roshni Wijayasinha](#), [Foxquilt](#)

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