

Hosting a Show on Access Nashua (Channel 96)

The “Dos and Don’ts”

(1) The Basics of Being On-Camera

What (Not) to Wear:

- Wear clothing that is comfortable, and not too dressed-up: you want the audience to focus on your discussion, not the way you keep pulling at your collar or scratching at those itchy socks.
- Going in front of the Green Screen?
 - o If you don’t think BLUE is your color, now’s the time to rethink... blue is a great color to wear on camera, and works perfectly in front of the green screen.
 - o RED, GREEN, and WHITE do NOT work well with the green screen technology... even during the holidays.
- Another “don’t”: STRIPES, SPARKLES, and BUSY PATTERNS (plaids, polka dots)... or any combination of the above. Again, it’s all about what you want the audience to focus on.

The Confident Presenter:

- Your audience wants you to have a good show... so give them one! Be confident in yourself and your show, and the audience (and your guests) will follow your lead.
- How to Fake It (until you make it...):
 - o SMILE! At least every once in a while, to relax the audience (and remind you to not take things so seriously!).
 - o Practice in the mirror or with a friend, to get any kinks out ahead of time.
 - o Don’t slouch! Good posture is a sign to the audience and your guests that things are going exactly as they should (even when they’re not).
 - o Avoid fidgeting (see above: no itchy clothes!).
- Look directly into the lens (and practice doing so before you start taping, to get used to doing this).
- Stay Calm: Take deep breaths before you begin, and take a nice deep breath while your guest is answering a question.

(2) Interviewing: How to Get the Most Out of Your Subject

Creating a comfortable and non-threatening environment for your guests...while ensuring you get the best footage!

“Conversate” Before You Interrogate:

- People (your guests included) tend to be nervous about being on-camera. It is important to make them feel comfortable BEFORE the cameras start rolling, to ensure that you get the most of their visit.
- Get to the studio (and ask your guest to get to the studio) early enough to have a conversation (small-talk only!) before the show starts. Breaking the ice and making them comfortable talking to you will make the transition to questions on-camera easier.
- Also, by making them comfortable with you, they will focus on YOU once the cameras start rolling, and NOT on the camera – this means a better and more natural interview.

Plan Your Route Ahead of Time:

- Make sure that all of your equipment is ready and working before you start taping... you don't want to interrupt the flow of a good interview with technical difficulties!
- Research your topic/interviewee, and come up with an outline of where you want the interview to go – what you want to ask, where it might lead the discussion, and how the person's responses are going to affect and contribute to the story you want to tell.
- On the other hand, don't over-plan! Think of your outline as an itinerary, with lots of room for pit-stops and side trips – if your guest gets rolling on something “off-topic” don't stop them right away... you never know where they might be going, and how it might add to your show. And you can always go back to your planned questions later.

The Right Kind of Question:

- Keep your questions simple, and focused; your question shouldn't be too long or try to fit in too many points. This will just leave your guest confused and unsure how to address it all.
- At the same time, try not to ask too many questions that only need a “yes” or “no” answer. The goal is to have an answer that can be understood by the audience, without their even having heard your original question!

Free To Be (You and Me):

- The best footage is going to come from an interviewee who is relaxed, and free to express him or herself... i.e., free to answer your questions or discuss a topic without your controlling their every move or word!
- You may have to clarify a point or answer made by your guest, but make sure you do so with their input, and don't put words in their mouth, or fail to let them finish a thought before you jump in or continue to the next point.
- On the other hand, it's OK to help a guest who seems to be in trouble or has lost their train of thought – again, it's all about ensuring your interviewee is calm and comfortable.

(Don't) Pardon the Interruption:

- It was said above, and it bears repeating: don't interrupt your guest!
- Cutting someone off mid-thought is easy to do when you're passionate about the topic of discussion... but what if the other half of their thought was the thing that really would have gotten your discussion to the next level?
- Remember: a long-winded answer from your guest can always be edited after the fact, but an answer that was lost to your impatience can't be added in post!

Be the Boss:

- Don't let the peanut gallery (e.g., the cameraman, the producer, etc.) interfere too much during the taping – get their input and comments prior to shooting, or between shots. Your audience is only going to hear the noise, and your guest may feel distracted or left out.
- Maintain control of the taping environment. Any discussion of the how/when/etc. from your team should flow through you, and not in front of your guests.

Try Not to Play With Your Toys (Too Much):

- Make as many adjustments or decisions regarding lighting, camera angles, etc., before you start taping – fiddling with your equipment during the interview is going to be distracting to your guest and the audience, and can ruin an otherwise perfect interview.
- If you do have to make adjustments during taping, try to do it between questions, or when you know the camera (and the audience) is focused on your guest.