

No Need to Panic!

10 Tips for Interviewing and Appearing on Camera

With most people finally (praise be!) understanding that video content drives search engines there has been a delightful spike in the number of “expert” interviews we’ve been asked to shoot. Many people who’ve never sat down in front of a camera are now happily online telling the world about their products, services, beliefs and passions. It’s fantastic. That also means that there’s a significant number of badly shot, badly edited and poorly delivered videos making their debut on-line. Here are my tips to help you stay out of that group!

There are a few things that you can do to ensure the best bits of you make it online. They are so simple but trust me honey, you’ll thank me!

1 First things first—know the vehicle!

Are you being interviewed in a studio on a broadcast quality HD camera? On-location Handi-cam-style? Over a webcam in your own home? The way you apply your make-up and the manner in which you speak will vary with each situation. HD shows every glorious characteristic so make sure your make-up is perfect! Hire a professional make-up artist to give you a clean fresh look and to be on “shine patrol.” If there isn’t a budget to hire a professional, then give Murad Oil Control Mattifier™ or M.A.C Matte™ a try. They will keep you shine free. And guys this goes for you, too! A shiny forehead and nose is equally as distracting on your fine selves. The heat in the room due to the lights may require a few on-going applications as you shoot.

Lower-res Handi-cam style cameras and webcams are actually more forgiving. I like to keep make-up super subtle for these formats. A natural look for you on-camera is seen by viewers as you being a more honest, straightforward person.

2

Smile damnit!

After having directed many CEOs, business owners and content experts on-camera, I can say there is power in a smile. A person who is relaxed, happy and confident carries authority while drawing viewers in. Practice and prepare so that you are happy and confident when the cameras roll.

3

Trust your director.

I'm not talking about blind trust, ask whatever questions you have. Be willing to put yourself in their hands. A good director can help you with content and performance. They can guide you into telling your story in one sentence and can come up with a few examples for you to back it up. And trust them when it comes to notes on your delivery. If your performance gets too "big" or "boisterous" they'll help you bring it down. Conversely if your energy is low they will spot it and help you bring it up.

4

You may adore bubblegum pink and stop-sign red but chances are the camera won't!

HD video has come a long way but reds and pinks in the camera can still be a problem. By the time video is compressed and uploaded then recompressed and shared, red can look "fuzzy" and horrible. Pink can wash-out and the colour can bleed. Blues, greens and earth tones* tend to stay looking really lush!

**Guys, if you have green eyes then grab a gorgeous green tie. Pair your smoldering brown eyes with a rich earthy shirt. Your "windows to the world" will sparkle. Go for colour, just steer clear of the red family when you can.*

5

If you are not a chef leave the bright whites at home.

White backdrops and sets look crisp and clean but not great right next to your skin. Depending on your skin tone it can also be a challenge for your shooter to light properly. If you opt for ivory and cream, you'll look healthier and the camera crew will be happier.

6

Stripes and knits are classic, but not for video interviews.

Thin stripes and fine knits are too much info for the video camera and they can appear to vibrate on screen. Solids are king. Large patterns (just be careful that they won't date your video) can work well, too. Bring a few items along on shoot day that you look and feel good in. A cinematographer worth their weight will tell you kindly and honestly what looks best on camera.

7

Be kind to your sound recordist! Choose your *bling* wisely.

Keep it simple, folks. Chat with your stylist and choose “quiet” jewellery that looks good and won’t get in the way. Gorgeous big hoops and a matching long necklace might be your style but if either item is hitting your lav mic or your ear bud/microphone it will be a distraction for your viewers*. Try on your bling and give your head a shake. Silly but it works! If you hear the jewels then choose other pieces. Let the sound track feature your fabulous voice, not your noisy jewellery. A clear soundtrack will keep your video editor happy as he or she will have more usable clips of you to choose from.

**Bonus tip: Starched shirts are also a bad idea. They rub against the lav mic and your skin and create a sound distraction.*

8

Practice, practice, practice...

and then practice again! Use your iPhone™, your Handycam®, whatever you have near you to record yourself and then play back and *watch it*. Trust me, there are things you have no idea that you do. I discovered while playing back some footage of myself that I rock from one foot to the other and look up to the ceiling when I’m thinking about my next sentence. Classy! Needless to say, I nipped those delightful mannerisms in the bud. Get a pal to shoot you, play it back, and see where you can improve.

9

Ditch the jargon and “bureaucrateeze”.

Lose industry-specific terms and abbreviations like ROI, USP, “social looping”, “value-added” etc. They have lost their meaning and that is not how real people talk anyway. Real people use real words. Pull your potential customers in by using a conversational honest vocabulary. You’ll feel much more accessible to your audience!

10

What is that famous quote...

“be yourself because everyone else is taken”?

Well, it is so true. Nothing is more of a turn-off for a viewer than watching an on-camera speaker obviously trying to be someone else. Authenticity equates with truth in the minds of viewers so embrace yourself and let it out. Whether you are soft-spoken or a raging extrovert—whoever you are is exactly the on-camera person you should be. Leave the acting to the actors. Your passion will shine through in whatever delivery style you possess.

Simple stuff really but I see these points often overlooked by both first timers and seasoned pros. Now that you’re armed with my free info, dear reader, go forth and tell your stories while looking good!