**Tips for recording interviews**

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| **Ensure the interviewee is wearing plain block colours** | * Jazzy patterns and fussy accessories can be a little distracting for the viewer. You want them to be focused on what your interviewee is saying not what they are wearing. This applies whether you are conducting your interview in person or online. |
| **Discuss your questions with the interviewee beforehand** | * Your interviewee should have the questions in plenty of time to consider their responses and prepare their ideas. The best interviews are with subject matter experts who ‘know their stuff’ or with interviews who are giving a genuine response to how they feel or something they’ve experienced – in these instances it’s best not to practice but to take enough footage so that you can edit together a natural response to the question. * If, however the interview requires specific information delivered in a specific order and the interviewee is nervous about remembering this – script the piece and use an autocue to support them. * Conducting an interview online via teams or zoom? The same rules apply – but if the information is specific, they may choose to use a slidedeck. In this instance avoid reading out what is on the slides and use the slides as prompts online. |
| **Leave some slack** | * Ask your interviewee to leave a second or two before responding to your question, and when they have finished their answer leave some slack for editing here too. Don’t interrupt them – and while you may give them encouragement through nodding or smiling avoid making sounds like mmmm and yes. |
| **Position your interviewee to one side of the camera** | * Having an interviewee talk “down the barrel” into the camera can be a bit intense!  The result can feel rather unusual and most interviewees aren’t particularly comfortable with this approach which means the outcome can look a bit amateurish. If you put your interviewer to the side of the camera, your subject will maintain eye contact with them, which will feel warmer for the audience and make your interviewee significantly more comfortable. |
| **Have the camera at eye level** | * The camera is effectively the eye of your viewer. If our audience is looking down or up at the interviewee this feels unusual. Don’t forget the psychology of height and positioning – you don’t want your audience to feel either superior or inferior to your interviewee! The aim is for the audience to feel like they are engaged in a conversation with the interviewee who is talking to them directly. |
| **Sound** | * A wireless radio mic is great for two reasons. Firstly, it banishes any unsightly wires from the process. Secondly, it effectively makes filming an interview a one-person job. It also means that the positioning of the interviewee isn’t dependent on things like cable length, thanks to the generous range of most radio mics. But remember to back up with the audio on the camera too * Interviewing online? Test the sound quality of the interviewees mic – and if you are interviewing multiple people in a roundtable try to ensure that their sound levels are comparable. * Never forget that you’re conducting an interview and that no matter how exciting a background might prove to be, if it’s a loud, outdoor place the ambient noise will affect sound quality. The less you can control what’s in the background, the more those elements can interfere with your interview! * If you’re going to film indoors, bear in mind the sound quality of your chosen space. Echoey rooms will have a cold, airy sound and cozy rooms a warm, intimate sound. One is not necessarily better or worse… It’s about what fits best with your interview. |
| **Lighting** | * Nothing spoils an interview like poor lighting. As much as possible use natural light, but be prepared to enhance this with additional lighting. But beware casting shadows on the interviewees face and reflection on glasses! |
| **Background and location** | * The priority for an interview is for it to be rich with content, not necessarily looking like a Hollywood set. Choose somewhere that reinforces the content or message and that isn’t in any way a distraction from the primary focus of the shot. * The ideal interview background is interesting, but not distracting. If possible, it should have something to do with the subject of the interview or with who the interviewee is. * Avoid bright backgrounds like windows or blank white walls. |
| **Ensure your shots are consistent** | * If your clip is short a single shot is fine. However, if your video is longer – then you might want to consider an additional camera for a side shot. Ensure the cameras are set to the same level of zoom, and make sure you’re not picking the other camera up in your shot. * Keep the camera at a distance from the subject if possible – and if the lighting is good then aim for a low aperture to create a good depth of field. |
| **Online interviews** | * Treat your online interviews with the same care and preparation that you would your face-to-face interviews.  Advise your interviewees on plain backgrounds and clothing and prepare them with the questions in advance. Two of the biggest issues with online interviews is sound quality and camera position – this is particularly important if you are interviewing a group.  Try to ensure everyone had the same or similar set up;   + All interviewees are framed in the middle of the screen and have positioned their laptop so that the camera is at eye level   + All interviewees are either using the laptop mic or they are using headsets – and they are all at the same distance from their mics for more consistent sound levels   + All interviewees are participating via a laptop – this avoids the situation where one or two people in a group appear in portrait mode while everyone else is in landscape. |
| **Have the interviewee state and spell their name** | * Most videos will require a “lower third” – a title to show the interviewee’s name, like on most news interviews. * To avoid errors, particularly when recording external interviews ask the interviewee to state and spell their name just before the interview while the camera is already rolling. This trick is used by news camera crews all over the world and will help the editor put in the right titles and identify interviewees correctly. * They can then go on to introduce themselves more formally as part of the interview. |