

How to Interview an Expert for a Print or Website Article

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If you're looking for a way to add credibility to the next article you write for [the web](#) or print, consider adding an interview with an expert in the field of your subject matter. Readers enjoy getting a glimpse of how someone with experience looks at an issue. Conducting an interview with an expert is fairly simple but requires preparation if you want to lend an impact to your articles. Here are a few ways that you can get through a great interview with an expert.

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Thorough knowledge of the material you're writing about
- A good understanding of the website or publication you're writing for and who reads the articles
- Advance permission by the expert you're interviewing

- 1 Before you contact the expert you'd like to interview, draft a list of 10 to 20 brief questions you'd like them to answer. Keep the questions brief and avoid closed ended questions that require a simple yes or no answer.
- 2 Try to think about the type of information your reader would like to read - even if it's not interesting to you.
- 3 Consider using a tape recorder to record your interview with the expert. Be sure to test the machine to make sure it works and get the expert's permission to tape the discussion before you begin.
- 4 Call ahead of time and make an appointment with the expert before you conduct the interview. Give them a synopsis of what you're writing about so that you don't put them on the spot.
- 5 When you do call the expert at the pre-arranged interview time, be sure to ask them if this is still a convenient time to conduct the interview. Things change and although they may have scheduled the interview with you a week ago, they may be in the middle of a crisis when you call.
- 6 Try to get inside the head of the reader and ask the expert some thought provoking questions the readers have never read before. Try to make the questions compelling without alienating the expert.

Tips & Warnings

- Always schedule an appointment for the interview. If you try to interview an expert "on the fly", neither one of you will be properly prepared.

- Make sure that the expert has plenty of time to speak with you. If they feel rushed, their responses will be superficial and uninteresting to your readers.
- Avoid complicated questions that require too much thought.
- Never try to provoke the expert with insensitive questions. They'll shut down and the interview will be over.