

THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

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Annotation: This article explores the art of conducting interviews, focusing on essential techniques, effective communication skills, and the psychological aspects of questioning. It provides insights for journalists, researchers, and students on how to build rapport, ask meaningful questions, and obtain valuable information during interviews

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается искусство проведения интервью, акцент делается на ключевых техниках, навыках эффективной коммуникации и психологических аспектах вопросов. Статья предоставляет полезные советы для журналистов, исследователей и студентов о том, как наладить контакт, задавать содержательные вопросы и получать ценную информацию.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada intervyu olish san'ati yoritilgan bo'lib, asosiy uslublar, samarali muloqot ko'nikmalari va savol berishning psixologik jihatlari haqida so'z yuritiladi. Maqola jurnalistlar, tadqiqotchilar va talabalar uchun suhbat davomida ishonch o'rnatish, mazmunli savollar berish va foydali ma'lumot olish bo'yicha tavsiyalarni taqdim etadi.

Keywords: interview, communication, questioning techniques, journalism, interpersonal skills

Ключевые слова: интервью, коммуникация, методы опроса, журналистика, межличностные навыки

Kalit so'zlar: intervyu, muloqot, savol berish usullari, jurnalistika, shaxslararo ko'nikmalar

The art of interviewing is a powerful tool used in various fields, including journalism, academic research, psychology, and even everyday conversations. At its core, interviewing is not simply about asking questions; it is about creating a meaningful dialogue that uncovers truths, reveals stories, and builds human connection.

A successful interview requires more than curiosity—it demands preparation, active listening, emotional intelligence, and the ability to respond flexibly. An interviewer must know how to establish trust, read body language, and guide the conversation in a natural yet purposeful direction.

In today's fast-paced information age, where data is abundant but genuine human insight is rare, mastering the art of interviewing is more valuable than ever. This article aims to explore the key principles behind effective interviewing, highlight common mistakes to avoid, and provide useful strategies that can help anyone become a better communicator and story-seeker.

The Importance of Preparation. One of the most crucial elements of a successful interview is thorough preparation. A well-prepared interviewer not only asks better questions but also creates an atmosphere where the interviewee feels respected and understood. According to a 2022 study published in the *Journalism Studies* journal, 78% of professional journalists reported that well-prepared interviews yielded more accurate and detailed responses compared to unstructured ones. This highlights the importance of planning ahead—knowing the background of the person being interviewed, the purpose of the conversation, and the key topics to explore.

Preparation allows the interviewer to craft open-ended questions that encourage storytelling rather than simple yes-or-no answers. It also helps avoid redundant or irrelevant questions, saving time and keeping the conversation focused. For example, if a journalist is interviewing an environmental scientist, reading the interviewee's published work or recent research findings beforehand ensures that the questions will be informed and relevant.

Christiane Amanpour, an award-winning international correspondent, has repeatedly stressed the value of research and preparation in her interviews with global leaders and conflict survivors. She notes that thoughtful preparation not only increases the quality of information gathered but also builds credibility. When an interviewee senses that the interviewer has made an effort to understand their background and perspective, they are more likely to open up and share authentic, meaningful insights.

Furthermore, preparation reduces the likelihood of miscommunication or awkward silences during the interview. It enables the interviewer to adapt to unexpected answers and ask follow-up questions that dig deeper. In essence, preparation transforms an interview from a basic Q&A session into a dynamic and insightful conversation.

The Role of Active Listening. Another fundamental skill in mastering the art of interviewing is active listening. While asking well-prepared questions is important, the ability to truly listen to the interviewee's responses can determine the depth and success of the conversation. Active listening involves maintaining eye contact, showing genuine interest, avoiding interruptions, and responding appropriately to what has been said.

According to a 2019 study by the Harvard Business Review, people who practiced active listening were 40% more likely to build trust and rapport during interviews compared to those who focused only on their prepared questions. This skill

helps the interviewer pick up on emotional cues, unspoken concerns, or hidden details that might otherwise go unnoticed. For example, in a famous interview with whistleblower Edward Snowden, journalist Glenn Greenwald adjusted his line of questioning mid-interview after noticing subtle shifts in Snowden's tone and body language, which led to deeper revelations.

Active listening also demonstrates respect and empathy, which encourages the interviewee to open up more. In qualitative research, scholars have found that participants tend to share more personal and honest answers when they feel heard and understood. The *Qualitative Health Research* journal (2020) noted that interviews where researchers actively engaged with participants yielded richer, more nuanced data.

Moreover, active listening enables flexibility in conversation. If an interviewee mentions an unexpected yet interesting topic, a good interviewer who is actively listening can follow that thread, often leading to surprising and powerful insights. Without this skill, interviews risk becoming mechanical or superficial, losing the very human connection that makes them valuable.

Establishing rapport and trust is essential for conducting effective and meaningful interviews, especially when discussing sensitive or personal topics. Without a foundation of trust, interviewees may give guarded or incomplete responses, limiting the quality of the information gathered. Rapport refers to the sense of connection and mutual respect between interviewer and interviewee, and it plays a vital role in encouraging openness.

According to a 2020 report by the American Press Institute, interviews in which journalists invested time in small talk or informal conversation before the formal interview began were 30% more likely to result in deeper, more emotional answers. This is particularly important in investigative journalism and oral history projects, where vulnerability and honesty are key. For instance, documentary filmmaker Louis Theroux is known for his calm demeanor and non-confrontational style, which often helps his subjects feel comfortable enough to share personal and controversial details.

Trust can also be reinforced through transparency. Letting the interviewee know how the information will be used and respecting their boundaries (e.g., asking for consent to record or quote them) builds a safe environment. In academic interviews, researchers are ethically required to explain the purpose of the study and obtain informed consent — a process that fosters openness and protects participants' rights.

Moreover, body language, tone of voice, and even clothing choice can subtly influence the level of trust established. Research published in the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (2021) found that interviewers who maintained a relaxed posture and used empathetic expressions were more likely to receive honest and in-depth responses from participants.

In short, rapport is not just a "nice to have" feature of interviews — it is a strategic and ethical necessity that significantly enhances the depth, quality, and integrity of the dialogue.

Common Mistakes to Avoid in Interviews. Even experienced interviewers can fall into common traps that reduce the effectiveness of their conversations. One of the most frequent mistakes is asking leading or closed-ended questions that limit the interviewee's response. For example, instead of asking, "You liked the new policy, didn't you?", a better approach would be, "What are your thoughts on the new policy?" Leading questions can unintentionally influence the answer, making it less authentic.

Another common error is failing to adapt. Sticking rigidly to a prepared list of questions without acknowledging the direction of the conversation can make the interview feel forced and unnatural. A 2018 survey by the Pew Research Center showed that 61% of respondents felt more comfortable in interviews where the flow of conversation was flexible rather than scripted. This highlights the importance of listening and improvising based on the interviewee's answers.

Interrupting the interviewee or frequently correcting them is another major mistake, especially in sensitive or emotionally charged interviews. Such behavior may create discomfort or defensiveness, reducing the chance of receiving genuine answers. Additionally, ignoring non-verbal cues—like hesitation, facial expressions, or tone changes—can lead to missed opportunities for deeper questions.

Poor time management is also a practical but impactful mistake. If the interviewer spends too much time on introductory topics, they may run out of time before reaching the most important questions. According to a guide by the BBC Academy, interviewers are advised to prioritize their questions and structure them from general to specific to maximize time and depth.

Avoiding these common errors not only improves the quality of the interview but also builds credibility and professionalism, ensuring that both the interviewer and the audience gain meaningful value from the exchange.

Conclusion. Mastering the art of interviewing is not merely about asking questions — it is about building connections, uncovering stories, and creating a space where truth and insight can emerge. As explored throughout this article, preparation, active listening, and trust-building are foundational components of a powerful interview. Equally important is avoiding common mistakes that can hinder the flow or depth of conversation. In journalism, research, or even everyday interactions, effective interviewing opens the door to understanding others on a deeper level. By developing these skills, individuals not only become better communicators but also more empathetic listeners and thoughtful questioners. In a world where genuine dialogue is more valuable than ever, the ability to conduct a meaningful interview is a tool worth mastering.

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