

5 COMMUNICATION TIPS

— brought to you by Olle Bergman
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How to succeed as a fact-seeking interviewer

How do you get to hear really interesting stuff when you're gathering facts, experience and opinion during an interview for an article, report, etc? By establishing trust between you and the interviewee!

1. Be well-prepared! The more you know, the easier it is to learn new stuff, understand complex relations and—not least—spot the really interesting information when it shows up. Do your homework before the interview!

2. Start with bonding small talk to create a safe atmosphere and find your best strategic position. The crucial question is "Can the interviewee handle the fact that you are as smart and knowledgeable as they are?" The answer lies in their self-esteem! Sometimes it is best for you to take command, and sometimes you should let them be in charge so as not to appear as a threat. Sometimes you even have to act less informed than you are to make them lower their defences.

3. Be polite and appreciative without exaggeration. To appear trustworthy, you must of course not be a silver-tongued devil. But keep a

positive and well-mannered attitude. If you honestly like something the interviewee has done, say so; it strengthens their position! The safer they feel, the more they will give you.

4. Talk about your personal experience, observations and opinions. It's not only questions that make people talk! In a normal conversation, people listen to what you have to say and then offer their point of view or share their own experience. Acting a bit naïve can be especially rewarding.

5. When approaching sensitive things, put a hypothetical third party between you and the question. For example, don't say "Some people have criticized you ..." but rather "I spoke to a colleague and he said something about people who had been critical – I do not remember the details. Do you know what he was referring to here?"

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