

November 1988

**TO: Executive Addressed**

**FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR Chairman**

**RE: Profile of the Successful Interviewee**

Today's executive spends more time than ever before answering questions in a variety of settings including news interviews. The goal is to explain, advocate, convince, and be visible. How do successful interviewees communicate their messages through the news media concisely, believably, and understandably?

Having analyzed good news interviews, I consistently see that a good interviewee:

- Is an excellent listener.
- Thinks and speaks in terms of messages that are important to the organization and responsive to reporters' questions.
- Is a complete thinker, able to offer solutions as well as definitions for problems and issues.
- Controls ego involvement in the solution of problems and recognizes limitations in affecting the outcome of interviews.
- Can translate management jargon into people-oriented terms.
- Is a good storyteller.
- Understands the organization and knows what keeps the boss awake at night.
- Anticipates the major concerns of the people in the business, especially those at the top.
- Has a sense of the customer -- has gone out on sales calls, handled complaints and been on the firing line internally and externally.

The message here is that interviewing is an oral communications skill. Despite the proliferation of technologies, tomorrow's successful executive will use oral communication as the number one tool for successful communication, action, persuasion, and leadership.

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