



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

BRANDING AND IDENTITY GUIDELINES

QUICK TIPS

Interviewing and Storytelling

Current as of 02/12/2021. For the most recent guidelines, please visit identity.unc.edu.

Interviewing and Storytelling

CHOOSING A STORYTELLING STYLE

Q&A. There's interest in the subject, and the person interviewed is capable of telling their own story. Audiences will want to hear directly from them without a narrative frame getting in the way of their words.

Feature Profile. There's interest in the subject, but also a unique opportunity to showcase the impact of their work. A narrative frame will help convey some of those details and interviews with 1-2 (or more) other people connected with the person's work will bring in additional voices.

Reported Feature. Similar to the feature profile, it'll be important to touch on the interest and impact of the subject's work, but context, history, and even timeliness take on a greater role. The narrative, in this case, does a lot of heavy lifting.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERVIEWING AND STORYTELLING

Prepare for the Interview. Drafting a list of questions in advance is helpful, even as you may veer off topic or have the interview go in different directions as the conversation flows.

Create Comfort. Strike up a conversation before you begin to make the interview subject comfortable.

Establish Connections. Finding relatable aspects of your lives can create a connection which leads to openness and comfort with the individual you are interviewing.

Ask for Preference. Interviews can be conducted in several ways, including over Zoom, phone or email. Asking what method of interview someone prefers (and being open to all types) will bring comfort and respect.

Establish a Recurring Content. Establishing a regular monthly feature or series will give readers something to expect and look forward to. It can also potentially ease the challenge of inventing new content on a continual basis.

Rely on User-Generated Content. Relying on user-generated content can bring new perspectives and provide a starting point for features, series or highlights. When using user-generated content, it is best to help coach people through what you really need by also being specific and sharing questions or direction with them in advance.

Share and Curate Content. Collaborate with other units as much as possible to see if there are opportunities to repurpose content.

Choose a Story Style. After you conduct and transcribe an interview, consider what format works best for the story based upon the information received.

Divide Up Content. Subheads are a great way to break up information into consumable pieces. The subheads will draw attention to the main topics in the story, while allowing readers to get a sense of the overall content.

Use Sidebars and Lists. Pulling out key points into bulleted lists or sidebars allows readers to consume that information quickly and in a visually appealing way.

Consider Graphics and Icons. Complex ideas can often be more easily understood visually through infographics, charts or graphs. Icons can help visually distinguish information and easily categorize main ideas or subtopics in an article or story.

QUICK TIPS

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Keep Visuals in Mind. Adding photos, illustrations or other graphics throughout a story can help to draw the reader into the story, while keeping them engaged and connected.

Use Resources and Tools. In addition to taking notes during an interview, using recording tools and transcriptions services can help with retention and accuracy.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

- Do research ahead of time.
- Think about your audience and what information they might want to learn or know from the story you are writing.
- Think about how each story can be repurposed (such as for an external facing website, an internal newsletter, social media, etc.) and think through questions you might want to ask to ensure you get what you need for each of those outlets.
- If interviewing a faculty member about a journal article or book, ask if they have a summary or any summary material they produced for the journal or publisher.
- If you have time, it's helpful to close an interview by asking the interview subject if there is any information they want to share or that might be helpful that you didn't ask.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Otter - Transcription tool

Rev - Transcription tool

Happy Scribe - Transcription tool

Zencast - Recording tool

Buzzsprout - Recording and Podcasting tool

Zoom - Recording tool