

Conducting Engaging In-Person and Remote Interviews at CFRC

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Introduction

Manual Overview

This manual, sponsored by the Community Radio Fund of Canada and CFRC 101.9fm, is designed to help you conduct engaging and professional interviews, whether in-person or remote. By the end of this guide, you'll feel confident tackling any interview scenario.

Why Interviews Matter

Interviews are a cornerstone of CFRC's mission

By providing unique perspectives and stories

Amplify voices and share meaningful conversations.

To build credibility and connect with your audience

Create authentic exchanges that resonate with listeners.

And establish CFRC's reputation

Fulfill the station's mandate to empower and celebrate the diversity of Kingston and Queen's through innovative, noncommercial, community-oriented programming.

A good interview isn't just about asking questions—it's about creating a memorable, authentic exchange that leaves a lasting impact.

Preparation & Networking

Making Professional Connections

Interviews start long before you hit record. Build a strong foundation by:

Researching your guest

Understand their background, work, and perspective.

Crafting a professional outreach message

Be polite, clear, and express genuine interest.

Establishing rapport

Be friendly and genuine during initial interactions.

Communicating expectations

Clearly outline the format, length, and topics of the interview.

Preparation is Key

To ensure a smooth interview

Research the topic thoroughly

Ask informed, thoughtful questions.

Prepare a list of open-ended questions

Encourage detailed responses.

Anticipate follow-up questions

Be ready to adapt based on your guest's answers.

Test your equipment

Ensure microphones, recording software, and other tools are functioning properly



Interview Techniques & Strategies

Mastering the Art of the Interview

During the interview - Start with easy, open-ended questions
Help your guest feel at ease.

Listen actively

Nod, make eye contact, and respond naturally.

Keep the conversation flowing

Gently steer the discussion if your guest goes off-topic.

Avoid vocal affirmations

Saying “yes” or “mhm” can be disruptive—let your guest finish their thoughts before responding.

Technical Setup

Setting Up for Success

At CFRC, you have access to professional tools and spaces. For a successful setup

Pre-record vs. live-to-air:

Pre-recorded interviews allow for more focus on sound quality.

Live-to-air interviews require thorough preparation to avoid on-air issues.

Mic positioning and sound levels:

Ensure proper placement and balanced audio.

Studio etiquette:

Respect the space, handle equipment carefully, and clean up after yourself.

Remote Interviews: Phone & Online

Phone interviews

Use CFRC's Telephone Hybrid Boxes for high-quality audio.

Instruct your guest to call the number in the volunteer manual and displayed on the "Rack"

Watch for the flashing light and press "call" to connect.

Online interviews

Use platforms like Zoom or Riverside.fm.

Ensure your guest has a stable internet connection, a quiet environment, and headphones.

Test the setup beforehand and communicate troubleshooting steps.



Engagement

Engage Your Guest

Using conversational cues

Show you're listening with nods or phrases like, "That's interesting—can you tell me more?"

Respecting their time and expertise

Avoid interruptions and let them shine.

Guiding them back on topic

Gently steer the conversation if they go off-track.

Thanking them

Always express gratitude for their time and insights.

Engage Your Audience

Summarizing key points

Help listeners follow along

Inviting interaction

Ask for questions or comments during live interviews.

Using tone and pacing

Speak clearly and energetically to maintain interest.

Providing context

Briefly explain any terms or references your guest mentions.



Handling Challenges

Even with preparation, challenges can arise. Here's how to handle them

Guest cancels last minute

Have a backup plan, like a pre-recorded segment or another guest.

Technical issues

Stay calm and troubleshoot methodically.

Brief or unengaging answers

Reframe questions to draw out more detail (e.g., "Can you elaborate on that?").

Flexibility and composure are your best tools in these situations.

Continuing Your Development

Explore CFRC's equipment guides

Available on the volunteer resources page.

Shadow experienced hosts

Learn from seasoned interviewers like Cyndy of Thursday's Indie Wakeup Call or Chris of Today in YGK.

Seek feedback

Reach out to CFRC staff for guidance or to review your interviews.

Conclusion

Conducting engaging and professional interviews is a skill that takes practice and preparation. By following the steps outlined in this guide, you'll be well-equipped to create meaningful, impactful conversations that resonate with your audience and fulfill CFRC's mission.