

In a Nutshell

- Use your voice effectively to express your genuineness.
- Always greet the interviewer with enthusiasm.
- Do not answer questions with one word. Try to give details of your area of expertise. Keep notes handy. If necessary, prepare a write-up on your responsibilities and refer to it during the interview to make sure that you do not forget anything.
- Do not use any words of your native language.
- If you have not understood the question, ask the interviewer politely to repeat/elaborate.
- Avoid repeating yourself.
- Do not raise your voice during the interview.
- Exhibit appropriate non-verbal cues while listening and speaking.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer while he/she is talking.
- When talking about your project, instead of trying to sell the product or your present company's capabilities to him, explain how you went about doing it and sell your capabilities to him/her.
- Even if the interviewer appears to be asking trivial or irrelevant questions, take all of them seriously. Maybe he/she is trying to check your communication skills.
- Do not ask the interviewer any personal questions.
- At the end of the interview, always thank the interviewer for his/her time.

Let us now discuss the most important aspect of preparing for interviews—résumé.

RÉSUMÉS



'Let's hire this lady right away. Wait! This is my Résumé.'

Résumés are technical as well as marketing documents that present the candidate's past and present performance to the prospective employers so that they can assess his/her future potential. In fact, a prospective employer forms his or her first impression of the candidate from the résumé. Of course a good résumé is not sufficient to get a job; but it can help the employer to shortlist the candidates to be considered. Employers usually have more applications than they can handle, and hence, they naturally look for ways of narrowing down the candidates to a manageable number. An effective résumé will put the candidate into that shortlist.

A cover letter is an essential accompaniment to résumés. Chapter 15 discusses covering letters in detail.

Résumé, Biodata, and Curriculum Vitae

Although the terms résumé, biodata, and curriculum vitae (CV) are synonymously used, they differ from each other in certain aspects. In French, résumé means summary. It is usually one page long, but may extend to two pages sometimes. It includes the gist of an individual's education, past employment, and skills for the new position. The features of a résumé include the following:



- Written in points
- Objective and formal in approach
- Written in third person
- Name and address of the applicant
- Summary of educational qualification
- Employment history
- Professional affiliation
- Skill sets

A résumé is suited for any position in an organization. Personal information such as age, date of birth, marital status, nationality, and gender are generally not included in a résumé. It is suitable for almost all types of organizations. It can also be modified according to the skill sets required by a particular job. For instance, if engineering students wish to apply for the post of a software executive post, they may highlight their skill sets in software.

A biodata is a shortened form of biographical data, and has now become an obsolete term. In this format, the emphasis is on personal details such as date of birth, nationality, marital status, gender and address. The applicant's hobbies may also find a place in a biodata. These details are followed by the educational qualification, work experience, and skills for the job.

A curriculum vitae contains all the elements of a résumé but it is more detailed in terms of the academic credentials. It is generally used for a position in a research organization or when the candidate applies for a research fellowship. A CV contains a detailed account of all the papers published, papers presented at the conferences, and research projects carried out. On the other hand, a résumé may just mention the number of conferences attended/ number of papers published/a brief summary of the projects carried out. We can say that a CV is more knowledge-oriented whereas a résumé is more skill-oriented.

Résumé Design and Structure

A résumé should present a brief summary of the candidate's personal details followed by details such as career objectives, educational qualifications, professional and technical skills, and extracurricular activities and achievements. It should not be very long, as the applicant will get the opportunity to present detailed information if shortlisted for the interview.

Appearance and elements

A résumé, like every important business document, should be impeccable. Any mistakes or sloppiness here could raise doubts in an employer's mind regarding the person's capability. The purpose of the résumé is to get called for an interview. It must be well-organized so that vital information is readily accessible.

A résumé should reflect the professional image that we want to create. It should be:

- Neat and error-free with no whiteouts or hand corrections;
- Legible and well-spaced;
- Printed on good quality paper of A-4 size; and
- Reproduced clearly on a high-quality printer or copy machine.

There is lot of debate on the ideal length of a résumé. The general notion is that the more the achievement in life, the lengthier the résumé. However, the ideal length for résumé is around one page, and it should never exceed two pages. Employers are often unimpressed with longer résumés that are hard to read and can seem padded, especially when they come from people with comparatively little job experience. A long résumé may even prompt your disqualification early in the selection process. All the details can be mentioned in brief. A concise, but complete résumé saves the reader's time and hence is more effective. If the employer needs further detail, it can be provided in the second round.

While résumés can be organized in more than one way, they will almost always contain the same basic information. Résumés are not autobiographies. The purpose is to gain the opportunity for an interview, and not to give a detailed history.

Personal information

The first thing an employer needs to know is who you are and where you can be reached. So include your name, address, phone numbers, email address, and website under this heading. Make sure that the information allows an interested employer to reach you easily. If you are currently employed, this can be difficult and delicate. Career specialists recommend that you proceed ‘carefully and cautiously’ and set up boundaries to keep your job search out of your current employment. You may not want to list your current business phone or business email. A personal email address and home or cell phone is preferable.

One might set up a separate email account especially for seeking employment. Ensure that it sounds professional and does not sound frivolous. An email ID like volcano2000@hotmail.com may be okay for personal use, but a prospective employer might not like it. A permanent postal address should be provided, indicating how long the address will be valid (i.e. ‘until June 31’).

Career/professional objective

This element is optional. However, most employers agree that a statement of professional objective should be included in a résumé. While stating the objective, make it effective by being as specific as possible about the requirement or aspiration. For example,

Entry-level position in design and development of microprocessor circuitry; eventual advancement to position as project leader or technical manager.

A software sales position involving international experience in a growing company.

Education/academic preparation

While applying for a job when one is about to graduate, educational qualification and experience are the highest selling points. Employers are usually interested in learning about the candidate’s academic training, especially education and training since high school, degree earned, major and minor fields of study, courses or projects done, and also the practical experience gained during graduation.

Begin with the most recent education and work backward. If the information will be helpful and if space permits, we may consider listing notable courses taken. If the grade-point average of the candidate is impressive, it should be included. Finally, note any honours earned. If the individual has received awards for other accomplishments, all achievements can be listed in a separate section entitled ‘Awards and Honours’.

Work experience/professional skills

A prospective employer would always be interested in a candidate’s past work experience. When describing work experience, list jobs in chronological order, with the present or last one first. Include any part-time or summer internships or projects done, even if unrelated to the career objectives. It demonstrates the person’s ability to get and hold a job—an important qualification in itself.

Each entry in this heading includes the name and location of the organization where one has worked or completed an assignment, the job title/designation, the duration of work, and also a brief summary of the work.

There is no need to use complete sentences; phrases will suffice. Be sure to use very concrete language, including technical terminology, to describe the work experience. Place this section either before or following the section on education, depending on which will be most important to an employer.

Activities, achievements/special interests, aptitudes, memberships

Most employers want to know about special abilities that will make an individual a more valuable employee. These include professional courses undertaken, community service/volunteer activities, languages known (written and spoken communication), knowledge of handling special equipment, relevant hobbies, and so on. The key here is to include only information that the employer will find useful, and that casts the candidate in a favourable light. Activities can be grouped into categories such as College Activities, Community or Social Services, and Seminars and Workshops.

Mention awards or honours received. Give details regarding the nature of the award, the activity for which the award was received, date or month and year of receiving, and also the authority from whom the award was received.

If we belong to any organizations in our field, those can be listed under 'Memberships'. Be sure to include any offices or committee appointments held.

References

This section should always be the last one in a résumé. For space and privacy considerations, one may simply include the phrase 'References available upon request' and supply the names only when and if asked for, as employers rarely investigate references until the candidate is under serious consideration.

If, however, the references are impressive enough to merit listing, follow these basic guidelines. Choose only the three or four people who combine the best elements of familiarity with the work and a credible position. A reference from a celebrity who barely knows you is not as good as one from an unknown person who has worked closely with you. In any case, do get permission beforehand from the people listed as references.

Types of Résumés

There are three types of résumés: *chronological*, *functional*, and hybrid (also called *combination résumé*). Each type has its own advantages, and the one we choose will probably depend on the specific job description that we apply for and our past accomplishments.

Chronological résumé

The chronological résumé emphasizes education and work experience and is most effective when such experience clearly relates to the job we are seeking. Within the categories Education, Work Experience, and Related Experience (if there is such a section), list entries in reverse order, beginning with the most recent experience. Under each position listed under Work Experience, describe responsibilities handled and accomplishments, emphasizing on relevant experience with the skill set required for the job that one seeks. In case of recent graduates, listing the education first makes sense. The chronological approach is the most common way of organizing the information in a résumé, and it is preferred by most employers.

Functional résumé

The functional résumé features the skills that the candidate has got (organizer, researcher, manager, etc.). It provides examples of the most significant experiences that demonstrate these abilities. This résumé emphasizes individual fields of competence and is hence used by applicants who are just entering the job market, who want to redirect their careers, or who have little continuous career-related experience. In a nutshell, it demonstrates the applicant's ability to handle the position they are applying for.

While drafting a functional résumé, follow the Skills category immediately with a chronological Work History and a scaled-down Education section that lists only institutions, degrees, and dates. Either of the latter two categories may come first, depending on whether most of the skills and experience were gained in college or on the job.

Hybrid/combination

A combination résumé includes the best features of the chronological and functional résumés. However, this type is not popular or not commonly used as it tends to be very long and also it may turn out to be repetitive in nature. Whatever the format, strong résumés possess the same qualities:

- They focus on the employer's needs.
- They are concise.
- They are honest.

Exhibit 8.1 shows a sample résumé.



Refer to the CD for another sample of résumé.

Scannable Résumés

A scannable résumé refers to a document that has been formatted in such a way that it can be successfully scanned using optical character recognition (OCR) technology. It is also known as a *plain text résumé*, as the technology used recognizes only the text and not any fancy fonts, bullets, italics, or other ornamental features of the résumé.

Though the contents of a scannable résumé may be similar to that of a print résumé, it is prepared in such a way that all the required information can be easily scanned and loaded into electronic programs. Scannable résumés save time as employers can quickly go through all résumés when there is any vacancy, with the help of the search option. Many employers prefer soft copies of the document, as it is easier to access them. PDF (portable document format) résumés are in vogue, as the setting in these documents does not get disturbed. Many organizations have their own format for résumés, which just have to be completed and submitted.

Scannable résumés differ in format from traditional résumés. They require just simple text and, as mentioned earlier, do not involve the use of underline, bullets, bold fonts, box or table items, columns, etc. They include key words which are not generally found in traditional résumés. In addition, they may run into even three or more pages, whereas traditional résumés are generally restricted to one or two pages.

Once received, the résumé is scanned into an electronic résumé database with the help of OCR software. A scannable résumé assists employers in selecting the right person by using existing databases to quickly match the applicants skills to suitable job openings.

EXHIBIT 8.1 A sample résumé

Gopinath M.C.
 Email: gopinath_mc@yahoo.co.in
 Mail: 248, Ashok Bhawan
 BITS, Pilani
 Rajasthan
 India – 333031

Objective

- To associate myself with an organization that provides a challenging job and an opportunity to prove innovative skills and diligent work
- To be involved in providing software solutions to enhance network security

Professional Experience

Project Trainee (July 2009–December 2009)

Satyam Computer Service Ltd, Hyderabad

Project: Metadata Management System

Description: Metadata Manager is a tool to create and maintain data marts. It creates a centralized metadata repository to store all the details about data marts.

Databases, Technologies & Languages used: Oracle, Swing, JDBC, Java Security, XML, PL/SQL, Java.

Responsibilities

- Designed a database in Oracle to hold metadata.
- Designed an appropriate graphical user interface for the system.
- Led in the design and development of Security System for this application.

Project Details

Implementation of secure File Transfer System (January 2009–May 2009): It involves the design and implementation of Kerberos for File Transfer Protocol in C language.

Kerberos improves the security of FTP by preventing replay attacks and IP spoofing. It uses DES for encrypting the packet that reduces the processing time when compared with RSA.

So the performance of FTP is not degraded.

Learning Aids Development (January 2010–May 2010): It involves the design and development of applets for BITS Virtual University. It includes the analysis of security vulnerabilities of applets.

Courses Done

- Network Security
- Computer Networks
- Network Programming
- Telecommunication Switching Systems and Networks

Educational Background

Degree of Examination	Name of the Institution or School	Year	Division
*M.E., Software Systems (Final Year)	Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan	2009–present	
B.E. (Hons), Electronics and Instrumentation	Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan	2005-2009	First Division with 72%
Higher Secondary Examination	Bharathi Vidya Bhavan, Erode, Tamil Nadu	2003-2005	Distinction with 97%

*Pursuing

EXHIBIT 8.1 (Contd)**Software Skills**

- Programming languages: C, C++, Java PERL, and Assembly/Machine Language
- Technologies: HTML, Java Security, JDBC, Swing, XML, SQL PL/SQL, and GNU Make.
- Operating Systems: Linux (extensive experience), UNIX, Windows 95/98/NT, DOS
- Security experience: Have helped to uncover multiple serious security holes in the LAN network and to build Firewalls.

Accomplishment

Achieved a transfer of degree from B.E., (Hons) Electronics and Instrumentation to M.E., Software Systems.

Personal Details

Date of Birth: 28 April 1981
 Marital Status: Single
 Languages Known: English and Tamil
 Permanent Address: 1329 –A, KK Nagar First Street,
 Kalingarayanpalayam,
 Bhavani, Erode District, Tamil Nadu,
 India – 638316.

References

- Mr Munikumar
System Analyst,
Satyam Computer Service Ltd, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India
- Mr Sunil Pal
Senior Software Engineer,
Satyam Computer Services Ltd, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India
- Mr Madhu Manohar
Senior Software Engineer,
Satyam Computer Service Ltd, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

The following are some tips that one should keep in mind while preparing a scannable résumé (see Exhibit 8.2):

EXHIBIT 8.2 Scannable résumé

S. SRICHARAN

PHONE + 9 1 - 9529445673 • EMAIL SRICHARANSIYER@GMAIL . COM
ROOM NO 262 , RANAPRATAP BHAVAN , BITS - PILANI – 333031

BE (Chemical Engineering) & MSc Chemistry, 2005–2010

EDUCATION

- BITS, Pilani
- 6.34 (at the end of 9th sem)

INTERNSHIPS

STERLING BIOTECH LTD, VADODARA (INDUSTRIAL TRAINING)

July 2009 – Dec 2009

- World's Largest Gelatin Producer
- Worked on the development of media composition, optimization, and scale up of growth media for industrial fermenter (160,000 liter fermenter). Associated design characteristics for effectiveness of the fermenter were also studied.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, BANGALORE

June 2008 – July 2008

- Simulated and studied the sensitivity and control analysis as well as behavior of cells in signaling pathway using CoPaSi (Complex Pathway Simulator). The study also worked on the pharmacokinetic model to understand the parameters to reduce the unwanted absorption of drugs.

NATIONAL METALLURGICAL LABORATORY, CSIR CAMPUS, CHENNAI

May 2007 – July 2007

- Achieved breakthrough in a project for Govt of Bangladesh to remove arsenic from drinking water by proposing a novel mechanism for their separation. The project has been implemented and is now being used for water treatment.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Project 1: Extractive separation and determination of chromium in tannery effluents

- Work published in Journal Of Hazardous Chemicals (2009)

Project 2: Currently pursuing a study on 'Market parameters and resources for effective advertising in chemical and pharmaceutical industries'

Project 3: Application of nanomaterial in drug discovery and selective drug delivery research.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

Awarded the INAE (Indian National Academy of Engineering) summer fellowship for my work at the Indian Institute of Science

- TEAM LEADER, United Way of Baroda (an umbrella NGO that manages 140 other NGOs)

EXHIBIT 8.2 (Contd)

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- CULTURAL SECRETARY of my hostel-Organization and Hosting of 'INBLOOM', an intra-BITS cultural festival
- SENIOR CORE MEMBER, Department of Sponsorship and Marketing for sports meet
- Played pivotal role in signing a 5-year deal with Adidas to supply sports accessories for the meet. Also worked on routine sponsorship acquirement for a budget of Rs 8 lakh.
- SENIOR CORE MEMBER, Department of Informalz, during the annual cultural festival on campus
- PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANT, for the course Main Trends in Indian History

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Black Belt (Sho-Dan) in Shutokon Style Karate
- Runner-up at the India Quiz
- Hosted a number of quizzes
- Silver medal for Shot-Put in Bosm 2007

OTHER INFORMATION

- Fluent in 5 Indian Languages and German.
- Course topper in Modern Analytical Chemistry and Main Trends in Indian History

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- Always use capital letters for section headings
- Use any font size in the range of 11 to 14.
- Avoid decorative fonts
- Do not use special characters such as bullets
- Avoid using tables, any kind of graphics or shading, etc.

- Do not try to make the résumé noticeable by using underline, shadows, italics, etc.
- Always give white space while ending one topic
- Left justify the text
- Jargon can be used, if required, but they should be specific to the organization with which employment is being sought.
- Place the candidate's name at the top of the page



The CD includes another sample scannable résumé.

Non-traditional Résumés

The résumés discussed in the preceding section fall under the traditional résumé category, whether they are printed, sent through email, or scanned, as these focus primarily on providing a large amount of information about the applicant. Traditional résumés generally do not have the scope of using visuals/illustrations such as graphs, pictures, expressions, etc. Most of the traditional résumés include the applicant's photograph that serves as the only visual element. On the other hand, non-traditional résumés may serve better in making a good impression to the prospective employer about the applicant. However, both traditional and non-traditional résumés have their own pros and cons. Though the latter have become popular in Western countries, they are still striving to gain momentum among the Indian applicants. As the future job market may belong to non-traditional résumés, let us try to understand them in some detail.

Non-traditional résumés can be made available for the employers in various forms and through various channels. Your LinkedIn profile, though considered as non-traditional, may resemble an online résumé that looks more or less like your traditional résumé. Infographics, portfolios, video résumés, etc. are some other types of non-traditional résumés. They become social résumés when they are uploaded on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, WordPress, etc., so as to enable the prospective employers to get an idea about your profile.

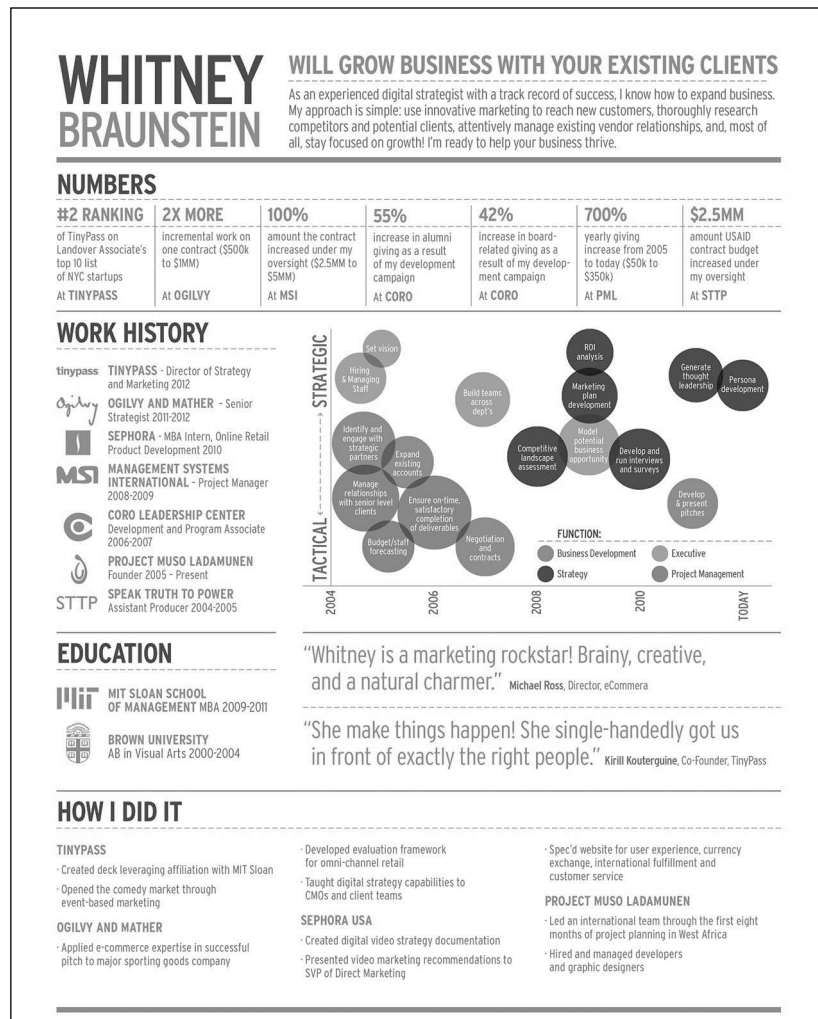
LinkedIn résumé/profile

One of the most widely used social networking sites LinkedIn helps you in professional networking. Available in many languages, this site enables you to create your profile and connect with other professionals. Once you have registered on LinkedIn, you can invite any other person to join the group. You can get to see the job and business opportunities through your primary and secondary connections. The prospective employers may get to see your profile on search. It is like your online résumé wherein you can add infographics, videos, etc. to highlight your achievements. You can request people to recommend you for an admission, assignment, job, etc. and also endorse you for your skills and achievements.

Infographic résumé

The word *infographic* is a combination of information and graphics. As we are aware, graphics are nothing but visuals that are used to catch the attention of the viewers. These visuals can be photographs, charts, graphs, diagrams, tables, etc., which can provide information about your personality, skills, and achievements. If you create an infographic résumé, you can share it with your connections on social networks and prospective employers. This non-traditional form of résumé can accommodate a lot of information in much lesser space than that is used by traditional résumés as shown in the Exhibit 8.3.

EXHIBIT 8.3 A non-traditional résumé



Source: <http://haganblount.com>, accessed on 28 October 2014. Used with permission.

Portfolio résumé

A portfolio is a collection of personalized documents or materials, which serves as a record of our professional development and a proof of your performances. For instance, your portfolio may contain your latest CV, certificates of various nature, videos that showcase your presentation skills, pictures of the work you have accomplished, etc. It is a good practice to create a portfolio and update it from time to time so that you can keep it as a record and use it for various purposes. From this portfolio, a brief version containing very important and recent materials can be created for your interviews because your interviewers may not have the time to go through the entire thing. In fact, this interview portfolio should include the best examples of your academic and professional achievements, and experiences. Look for the right time and opportunity to use your portfolio during your interview. Electronic portfolios can also be created and shared with your prospective employers. The site <http://www.pampetty.com/profportfolio.htm> may help in providing certain guidelines for preparing your portfolio résumé.

Video résumés

Video résumés are short videos created by the applicants to present themselves to the viewers. They generally last for two to three minutes and hence cannot serve as a complete résumé. A video résumé supplements or reinforces the highlights presented in the traditional résumés or admission essays. For example, the Young Leader Programme (YLP) run by the Indian School of Business (ISB) asks the applicants to send a short video presenting their brief profile along with other documents. The following are a few important tips that may help you in preparing your video résumé:

- Plan thoroughly before shooting your video. Note down all the points you need to cover. Rehearse speaking them with enthusiasm.
- Take care of your appearance; wear professional attire.
- Look into the camera while preparing the video.
- Record your video in a quiet place where there is no background noise.
- Keep it short, approximately of two to three minutes.
- Don't speak fast thinking that you would be able to cover more information in a shorter period of time.
- Begin by telling your name and current position, etc.
- Present the highlights of your résumé.
- Say why you are the best for the assignment/position applied.
- Conclude by thanking the viewers for giving you this opportunity.
- Once recorded, view it carefully and ask your friends to review it.
- Create a link to your video and mention this link in your traditional and other résumés.

You can watch a sample video résumé at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7l-HNXa5eHw#t=12>.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Media interviews are an important aspect of public relations. Such interviews can do a lot to promote business or government policies, and create awareness and acceptance of sensitive issues concerning the public. These can be in the form of print, radio, or television interviews, each mode with its distinct pros and cons. Generally, media gets prior appointment for the interview and also informs about the topic focus. However, if they call up without any notice, you can certainly ask for time—at least an hour or so. The following guidelines will help you successfully tackle interviews to the media.



- Be clear with your message and be ready with your points.
- Stay cool and smile.
- Ignore the camera and maintain eye contact with the interviewer/reporter.
- Correct errors in questions. For instance, if the interviewer asks, 'How many courses do you offer in your three campuses?' If the number of campuses is incorrect, you may interrupt and say, 'Please note, we have FOUR campuses'.
- State the most important information first and then provide the background.