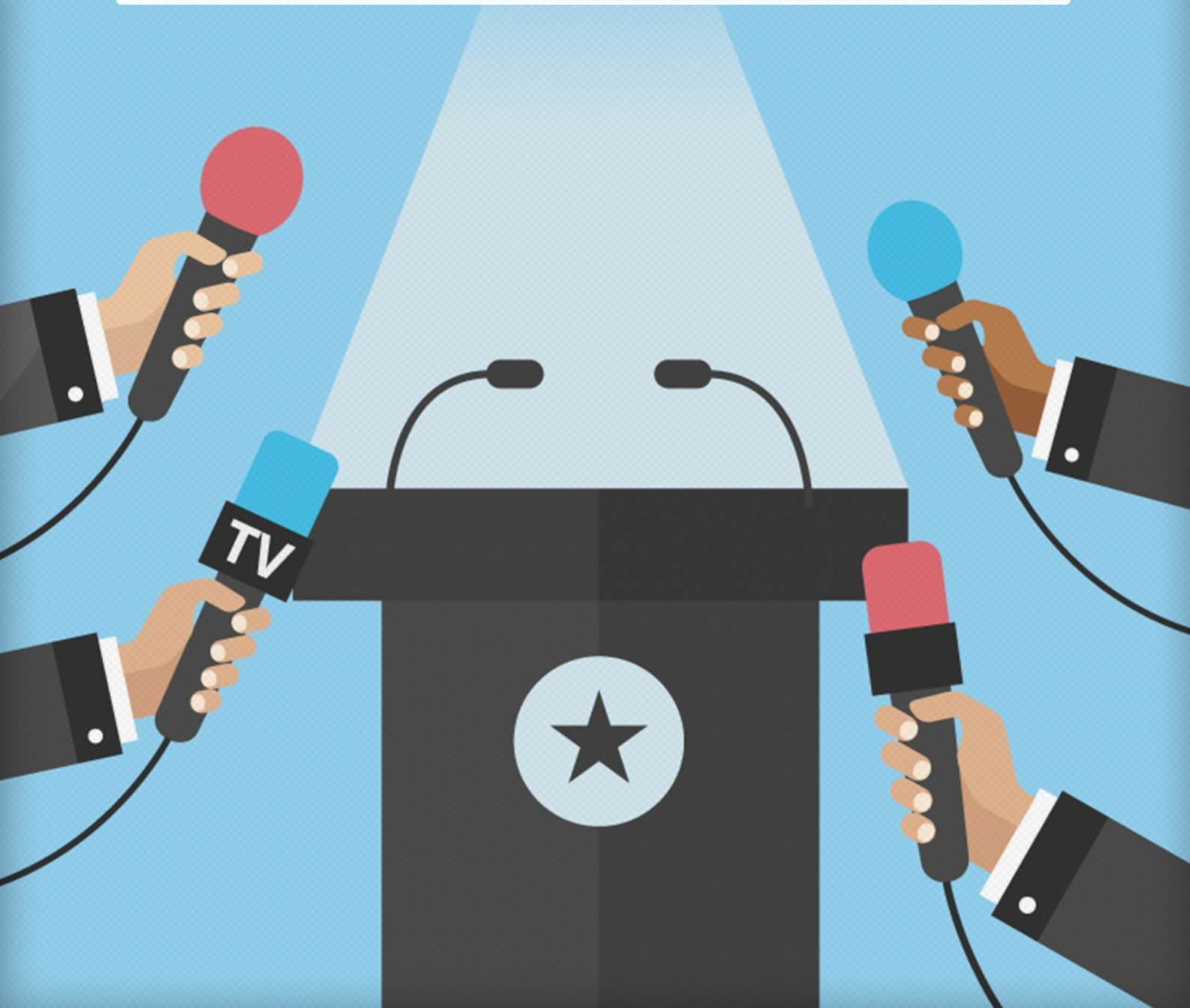
Paul Hollins

INTERVIEW Cheat Sheets



Introduction

Conducting an interview can be a daunting prospect, but with a little preparation and guidance you'll soon be interviewing like a pro!

These '***cheat sheets***' are designed to hold your hand as you get started, so you end up with great-sounding interviews in the shortest possible time.

Now. don't get me wrong, it's always better to write out your own specific questions based upon the subject matter you will be speaking about. These cheat sheets aren't designed to replace that, but they will offer you a great starting point.

One of the best ways to get started is to look through the list of questions starting on page 8, and then re-word them in a way you would naturally speak.

Make sure you write them in a way that's more specific to the subject matter you will be speaking about and once you've conducted a handful of interviews, you'll find this kind of thing second nature.

However if you don't feel confident enough to re-word the questions, you'll still find enough content in these 'Cheat Sheets' to help you to get started straight away.

And getting started is the key... but you may still be worried about recording an interview...

That's understandable - in fact some of the most frequent questions I get asked about how to conduct interviews are:

- ***What kind of questions should I ask?***
- ***What if I ask something stupid?***
- ***What if I run out of questions?***
- ***What is the ideal duration for an interview?***

Don't worry! Everyone shares these same fears when doing an interview for the very first time.

So, let's look at each one of those questions in a little more detail:

What will I ask?

This depends on a number of factors including: who it is you are interviewing and if there will be a specific topic that you are covering.

For example, if the person you are interviewing is a specialist on, say, list-building you would want to target your questions to match that subject.

But great interviews start with one question, so don't sweat it. Just ask the first question and then keep going.

Try to have 10 questions to hand, that will make your interview 'fly'.

These cheat sheets include a number of generic questions that cover a number of topics, but please feel free to adapt them so they fit your needs better.

What if I ask something stupid?

As an "interviewer", it's your job to ask the questions people listening at home would ask.

Just because you, as the interviewer, have an understanding of the topic, it doesn't mean that everyone listening will be as knowledgeable as you.

Remember that what might seem "stupid" to one person could easily be meaningful and helpful to someone else.

Guests are used to answering all kinds of questions, especially 'basic' questions, so you should never feel that any question you ask is stupid.

What if I run out of questions?

This is most people's greatest fear when conducting an interview, but it's also the one that is most easily addressed.

If you're recording an interview, it doesn't matter how many questions you ask - or the duration of the interview - what matters is that the content remains interesting an engaging.

I can't begin to tell you about the amount of boring, drawn-out interviews I've heard in my time. Usually it's because the interviewer is asking waaaay too many unnecessary questions or keeps going off-topic.

The best interviews tend to be the ones where the questions are focussed and concise and the replies are interesting and to-the-point.

As a rule of thumb, 10 questions will allow you to comfortably fill somewhere between 20 to 30 minutes.

What's the ideal duration for an interview?

If you've ever watched a TV chat show, you'll notice how most shows have around 3 'guests' within an hour. In other words, each celebrity is interviewed for about 20 minutes before they move on to the next guest.

That's because research has shown that the attention span of the average person tends to be around 20 minutes on any given subject matter. After 20 minutes they start to 'zone out'.

However, if you have a particularly good guest that's talking on a specific topic, you can easily go on for an hour without the 'zone out'.

In other words, if you feel that in 20 minutes or half-an-hour you have covered all the points you wanted to, then it's perfectly acceptable to wrap-up the interview at that point.

If, however, you are totally engrossed with what your guest has to say, then it's safe to say the interview still has plenty of life left in it... so keep going!

There are no hard 'n' fast rules when it comes to the perfect duration of an interview. Just remember the golden rule that it's important to keep your audience entertained.

Make the interview seem natural

Select questions you find appropriate and try to re-word them, so they are more personal to you (and the person you're interviewing).

Don't read the words verbatim from a piece of paper - bring them to life! Remember that good interviews have 'flow'... just like a regular conversation.

Listen to the answers that your guest gives you... and try to ask further questions based on what they're telling you.

In doing so, it makes the guest feel more relaxed because you are listening and interacting with them.

This method of questioning also engages your listeners more too, as it's more like a natural conversation instead of a list of rapid-fire questions.

Getting started

Ask the person you're interviewing for a short biography beforehand, that way you can write a little introduction for your interview.

An introduction is a good way to start off. Welcome your guest and explain to the audience why you're excited to have the chance to talk to your subject. For example:

> "Hello, I'm Paul Hollins and it's my pleasure today to speaking with well-known internet-marketer Johnny Sparkle.
>
> Johnny is one of the few people to have made $1million in the last 6 months using just free websites.
>
> In this interview I'm going be asking him how he got started; how he discovered the technique he uses and why he thinks it's easy for anyone to copy what he's doing.
>
> I'm really excited that he's agreed to speak with me today, so grab a pen as I think you're going to get a huge amount of value out of the next 30 minutes or so.
>
> Welcome to the show, Johnny Sparkle..."

Another alternative is to 'Google' the person's name beforehand, so you can find out a little more about them, so you can write an introduction like the one above.

If any of the facts you give are incorrect, don't sweat it, as the person being interviewed will simply correct them (and this can be a great ice-breaker moment in any interview).

Always start off any interview with the least controversial questions, as you want your guest to relax and open up. You'll get a much better interview this way as your guest will feel they can talk about things on a one-to-basis.

During a longer interview (*of say 40 to 60 minutes or more*) it's a good idea to remind your listeners who it is you're speaking to.

Perhaps every 20 minutes or so, you may want to use the guests name when asking a question.

I have a couple of examples of unobtrusive ways for you to do so:

> **Example 1:** "Today we're speaking to internet entrepreneur Johnny Sparkle as his business and how he's banked $1M in the last 3 months alone...(next question)"
>
> **Example 2:** "So tell me, Johnny Sparkle... (next question)"

Both examples just reaffirm to your listeners who it is you are speaking to.

Wrapping up your interview

Once you've asked the questions, it's time to bring your interview to a close.

There are no hard and fast rules on how to close an interview, but it may be an idea to write a short 'thank you' script to help you bring it to a natural conclusion.

This could be something simple, such as:

> "Well, on that note, I'm afraid that's where we have to leave it. I'd just like to say thanks once again to my special guest, Johnny Sparkle, for sharing so many of his insights, tips and resources.
>
> Johnny has a great course that delves even deeper into this subject matter, which you can find at his website:
>
> *www.sparklemarketing.com/interview.*
>
> I'd encourage you to check out Johnny's website and in the meantime, I've been honoured to have him as my special guest.
>
> I'm Paul Hollins - Thanks for listening."

If your guest is going to be promoting one of their products, ask them if they would be happy to promote YOUR affiliate link to that product.

By doing so, you can both benefit from the interview: you get a commission fee for any sales made and your guest also makes some money too! It's a win-win situation.

5 Final Quick Tips:

- Let your guest answer your questions fully. Don't interrupt them (it ruins the flow)
- Keep your questions brief, on topic, and to the point

- Don't keep agreeing (or disagreeing) with your guest - it becomes annoying
- At the end of the interview be sure to thank your guest, and allow them to plug one of their products (ideally using YOUR affiliate link) so that you both benefit
- Be confident. Relax and enjoy!

What to do next

The next 2 pages contain 34 basic questions that are ready for you to print off and ask your guest.

The questions are double-spaced to allow you to write any additional notes of your own underneath them (or even re-word them completely).

I have also included a little area before each question so that you can tick off the questions you've asked as you go (it'll help make sure you don't ask the same question twice).

Alternatively you could use this space to number your questions, so that you mix up the order a little.

Good luck with your interviews!

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_____ WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR (TOPIC)?

_____ WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST?

_____ HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?

_____ IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

_____ WHO ARE YOUR HEROES?

_____ WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

_____ HOW DO YOU RELAX?

_____ HOW HAS YOUR BUSINESS CHANGED OVER THE LAST YEAR OR TWO?

_____ HOW HARD DO YOU PUSH YOURSELF?

_____ WHEN ARE YOU COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK?

_____ WHY DO YOU THINK HAVE YOU SUCCEEDED IN A FIELD WHERE SO MANY OTHERS HAVE FAILED?

_____ WHAT'S THE MAGIC FORMULA FOR SUCCESS?

_____ WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

_____ WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE STARTING THIS BUSINESS?

_____ IF YOU WERE PRIME MINISTER/PRESIDENT FOR A DAY, WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU'D DO?

_____ WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON LATELY?

_____ WHAT HELPS YOU STAY FOCUSSED?

_____ WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

_____ WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T WORKING IN THIS NICHE?

_____WHAT DO YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS/FRIENDS SAY ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS?

_____ HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED?

_____ WHEN DID YOU KNOW, FOR SURE, THAT THIS WOULD BE YOUR PROFESSION?

_____ WHO (OR WHAT) INSPIRES YOU?

_____ WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU OVERCOME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS?

_____ HAVE YOU PARTNERED WITH SOMEONE TO CREATE A PRODUCT? AND IF SO, WHO HAVE YOU ENJOYED WORKING WITH THE MOST?

_____ WHICH PRODUCT WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

_____ IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D DONE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO BURN ALL THE COPIES OF?

_____ DO YOU HAVE A MENTOR?

_____ WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF THAT MENTOR/COACH?

_____ WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OTHERS TO HAVE A MENTOR/COACH?

_____ WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 3 TIPS FOR SUCCESS?

_____ WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT TODAY?

_____ DO YOU NEED ANY SPECIAL SKILLS TO ACHEIVE WHAT YOU'VE ACHIEVED?