



THE MEDIA ANGLE

[“Can I start that question again?”](#)

For many this seems like a reasonable request if you get a bit nervous or tongue tied during a pre-recorded interview but be warned it can back fire. Take a look at what happened recently to Victorian Senator elect Ricky Muir when he was interviewed by veteran journalist Mike Willesee for Channel 7’s Sunday Night program.

[The Guardian story on Ricky Muir Channel 7 interview](#)

At one stage Mr Muir asks “Can we start that question again?” To which Mike Willesee says “Sure just go ahead.”

A little later Mr Muir asks “Sorry can we go to another question, I’ve got myself in a fluster?” At this stage Mr Willesee tells him to take a few deep breaths.

Then further on the Senator elect is asked to explain what he means by the “after-market industry” for cars. Mr Muir then stumbles and asks if he could go out for a minute.

All of these fumbles have been played and re-played by numerous media organisations.

Some may argue Mr Muir would not have expected the stumbles and requests to be made public but the fact is they were and it serves as a timely warning to all media spokespeople to:

1. Prepare properly. If you agree to do an interview on national TV, think about the likely questions you will be asked and have a go at answering them before-hand (See my tip sheet called “If you fail to plan”). Mr Muir should have expected many of the questions he was asked.
2. Calm your nerves before the interview by doing some abdominal breathing.
3. It’s best not to ask to start the question again or ask to move on to the next question. Even though the interview is pre-recorded the journalist may well use your stumbles to prove a point.
4. If nerves do get the better of you and you feel as though you have been stumbling too much in a particular answer, simply pause for a couple of seconds and take some deep breaths. Re-focus your thoughts and simply start your answer again by saying “what I meant to say was ... “
5. Most journalists will give first-timers and inexperienced people a little leeway and will readily let you start an answer again but my advice is to avoid asking whenever possible, especially if you are a high profile spokesperson or politician.

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