

Creating a video interview for promoting a community project's ethos and values

Process

Below are some tips on how to conduct and video record an interview with representatives of a community project in your area to present, promote, and highlight the ethos and values of a community project/space. The tips provide a step-by-step approach and are combined with the analytical directions and tips given in the videos, provided in the video section of this module.

Introduction

Interviews are usually defined as a conversation with a purpose. They can be very useful for the public and for stakeholders in your community to gather and disseminate information about the functioning of a community project in your area, the aims, objectives, values and principles of the project and the views and experiences of the project participants. They are also excellent if you are looking for in-depth information on a specific topic from an expert.

Interviewing has been described as an art, rather than a skill or science. In other cases, it has been described as a technical skill you can learn.

The greatest technique to have an accurate and full discussion of thoughts between you and the individual from whom you're gathering information is to conduct an interview.

Planning an interview

When planning an interview there are certain questions you must answer.

1. What is the goal/objective of the interview?
2. Who are you interviewing?
3. How will you conduct the interview?
4. What topics and questions will your interview cover?
5. How will you record the information you receive from the interview?

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Answering these questions clearly will enable you to conduct targeted interviews successfully.

1. Define the purpose/objective of the interview.

Perhaps the most important part of planning an interview is determining the purpose/objective of the interview. The objective and purpose will determine the choice of interviewees, topics, questions, and interview techniques to be used.

Tip: In our case, the purpose of the interview is to highlight the principles, values and ethos represented by a community-based project you will select and the representatives you will interview.

2. Selection of the topic and interviewees

The first issue of concern for the interviewer using the interview as a means of collecting information is the choice of the topic and the respondents. In our case, the topic is fixed and concerns a community-based project of our choice.

Tips:

- It is important to choose a project that you are interested in and about which you have basic knowledge and information or intend to research and profile its activities and participants before moving on to the interview process.
- Make sure that the interviewees are representatives and experts of the topic you are discussing and have a direct and active relationship with the community-based project you have chosen.

A second important criterion for the selection of interviewees is your ability to reach them, i.e. that they are people who we can -with relative ease- find, contact and arrange to meet with them for the interview.

3. Preparation, planning the interview

a. The main concern of the interviewer is to plan the course of the discussion and to have a clear idea of what to ask and why. Therefore, the interview needs to be planned according to some thematic axes. In general, the axes of an interview should be consistent with our objective. In this phase we make sure to create different axes and possible questions for each axis.

Another approach during the interview is to have a list of Topics to be discussed, but in this case, it is good to have “umbrella-titles”, e.g. themes and questions, to make sure that you have not strayed from the purpose and topic of the interview.

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Tip: In our case, the ethos the values and principles espoused by the community-based project you choose will be one of the main pillars of the discussion and the questions developed should focus on this.

b. The second point of the interview design is determining the time and place of the meeting and when it will take place.

The interviewer should have identified the appropriate time and place to propose them to the interviewee. These two factors, although not relevant to the substance of the interview, are often crucial to its smooth and seamless conduct. It is therefore the interviewer's responsibility to ensure a quiet place at a time that is convenient for the interviewee to avoid creating pressure, stress, anxiety, embarrassment, difficulty, etc.

Tip: It would be advisable, if possible, to conduct the interview at the premises where the community-based project you have chosen is housed/operates, if it meets the above-mentioned conditions, in order for the interviewee to be in a familiar place where he/she will feel safe to express him/herself freely and answer our questions.

4. Basic tip regarding the structure of the interview

There are different basic approaches to the structure of the interview. Interviews can be:

- formally structured
- loosely structured
- not structured at all.

The approach you choose is based on the results you want to achieve and the objective of the interview.

A formally structured interview is usually based on a list of specific questions that the interviewer asks the interviewee.

A loosely structured interview may contain predetermined questions, but it has more flexibility and allows you to focus more on a topic at that time if you want to, or to ask more questions based on the interviewee's answers to questions that are of interest to you and consistent with the interview objective.

The not structured interview is a form of discussion with the interviewee. It moves along specific themes and contains questions where the interviewee is asked to develop their views on a topic, with the interviewer commenting and advancing the discussion with further questions of clarification or development of the topic being discussed.

Tip: At this point you should choose which interview approach to use, so that you can formulate the appropriate plan.

5. Initial approach of the interviewee

An important element of the success of an interview is due to the communication with the potential interviewee. The approach and first impression often determine the quality of this

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communication and play an important role in establishing a climate of trust - essential for an interview.

The first approach can be made in person, by e-mail or by telephone, but in any case, you present yourself, the reason you are asking for the interview, and what you are trying to bring out through it. You should be as enlightening as possible at the outset about the purposes of the interview and why you have chosen the individual to interview, to reduce their caution and concern. In this first communication you can also specify the type of recording that will be made, in our case video recording, to ensure the participant's consent.

6. Finalizing the questions

Based on the theme of the interview concerning the function and services offered by the community-based project you have chosen, and the ethos and values that the project promotes, you need to finalize a list of questions based on the approach and type of interview you have chosen and the objective of the interview you have set.

Tip: At this point, it is a good idea to finalize the developed list of open-ended questions to be used in the interview.

7. The video recording of the interview

At this point, please have a look at the relevant videos, in the video section where the video recording via smart phone is explained step by step.

8. Conducting the discussion-interview

In the interview, the interviewer needs to have the ability to build trust and create a climate of confidence that will make the interviewee relax, open and give clear, honest and complete answers. The interviewer must listen to the interviewee with interest, listen and react to what he or she says in such a way as to prompt the interviewee to reveal more information without losing the train of thought or going off topic.

Small expressions of encouragement, clarifying questions, positive hand, eye and facial expressions, and in general, a friendly and open attitude help an interview to run smoothly.

During the interview, the interviewer needs to be careful not to stray from his/her thematic axes to bring out the points he/she wants to make and to achieve the goal/objective of the interview.

9. Dealing with difficulties and unforeseen situations

When an interview seems to be "stuck", the interviewer needs to give it a boost, a moment of thought or time to get it running smoothly again. It is therefore the responsibility of the interviewer to facilitate the conversation, to unblock the interviewee.

Tip: The interview can be reinforced with supplementary or encouraging questions, to encourage or facilitate the interviewee and make the interview run smoothly. In this case the interviewer can use some communication techniques, such as:

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- "Mirror questions" (you perceive the answer given as a question, e.g. "do you mean that ", or "if I understand correctly, you are saying that ...").
- paraphrasing (you ask the same thing in different words, e.g. "we could say it like this....").

You may need to move on to the next topic or question and if you can, you can come back to the unanswered question later, at a more convenient time.

External circumstances can also stop or interrupt or even cause an interview to be postponed. Noise, a technical problem with the smart phone that is recording us, an external event, an interruption from a third party, etc., may cause your planning to be disrupted. The interviewer must be flexible and try to correct what can be corrected or find an alternative solution or even try to reschedule the interview at another time if necessary.

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