

Landmark Associates, Inc. General Recording Tips and Etiquette

- Before you start the event, a sound check (where you record a few words from each subject and then listen to make sure the result is clear) is helpful. When doing a sound check, make sure to speak at the distance from the microphone that you will be at during the entire interview and be sure to check everyone involved.
- Minimize background noise. Some common sources of background noise include:
 - Traffic, construction, and other street noises coming through open (or even closed) windows
 - Noise from adjacent rooms or hallways
 - Machinery running in the background, e.g. fans or air conditioners
 - TV sets or radios
 - People making noise in the background
 - Pets or other animals
 - Clocks with audible tones
 - Doors shutting
 - Coughs, sneezes etc.
- For optimal results, keep the recording environment as consistent as possible. The quieter, the better.
- If anyone is leaving or entering the room during conversation, advise them to close the door softly and encourage speakers to pause while the door is being used.
- Place the microphone(s) as close to the speaker(s) as possible and have the microphone(s) pointing directly toward the speaker(s).
- If in an interview with only one microphone, direct the microphone towards the interviewee. Typically, it is less of a concern to miss out on the transcription of the questions than the answers.
- When using lapel microphones, be sure they do not brush up against a piece of clothing.
- If it is important to correctly reference people, places, websites, organizations, etc. that the layperson might not know or be able to easily distinguish, it is ideal to repeat them clearly or spell them out.
- Alternatively, if your project involves many references to technical terminology, sending Landmark a list of terms will help ensure accuracy.

- If you are concerned about the sound quality of a recorded interview, please consider having the interviewer(s) repeat important responses to be sure information is captured accurately.
- If an interviewer(s) is using a standard list of questions, consider providing that list with the recorded interview.
- Avoid typing next to the recording equipment as this can make transcription unnecessarily difficult.
- Avoid consuming food and/or beverages while speaking and/or recording.

Additional Tips for Multiple Speaker Situations

- It is critical to have a microphone for each speaker. This is commonly done in conferences, but often overlooked in focus groups or group interviews. If a speaker is too far from the microphone, their contributions will be competing with background noise and may not be captured clearly by the microphone.
- If you have multiple speakers, it is ideal to be able to identify each speaker each time they speak. The speaker or the facilitator can do this. Having easy identification methods makes it possible for Landmark to label each speaker correctly in the transcript.
- An active facilitator is very important when recording focus groups. These groups often devolve into overlapping conversation and typically become difficult to transcribe. In addition, parsing multiple speakers apart adds to the cost of the transcript. Repeated requests to speak one at a time usually results in a more complete, accurate transcript.
- If you have an audience asking questions and they are not using a separate microphone, you can ask your speakers to repeat the question that has been asked, before answering it.

Interested in learning more about Recording Best Practices? Email us at landmarksupport@thelai.com or give us a call at (480) 922-1105! We would be happy to share more tips with you.