

Audio Recording Tips

Before Recording

1 Choose the right recorder for your recording environment.

Before the interview, ensure you have the correct recording device for your requirements.

There are a variety of different voice recording solutions on the market, so it is important to do your research and choose the right product for you.

Note: If you are recording large groups you may wish to consider purchasing additional microphones, such as the Olympus ME33 boundary microphone, to ensure everyone's voices are picked up.

2 Ensure you have the recorder on the highest quality setting and that you are recording in a suitable audio format.

For example, many Olympus professional dictation recorders have two different recording modes - dictation mode and conference mode. To record groups you select conference mode. Some recorders allow you to record in different formats, such as .ds2, .dss or .wma file types; .wma, .mp3 and .pcm are the most versatile and friendly formats to record in.

3 Find a suitable location to conduct the interview once you have organised your recorder.

Try to avoid places with a lot of background noise, whether that is general chatter from a public place, a radio in the office, or even a loud air conditioner. Background noise obscures much more than what you would expect.

Try to avoid positioning your recorder on a hard, flat surface when you are recording because these surfaces pick up vibrations and amplify background noise. Position the device on something soft (such as a cloth or a tea towel) to prevent this.

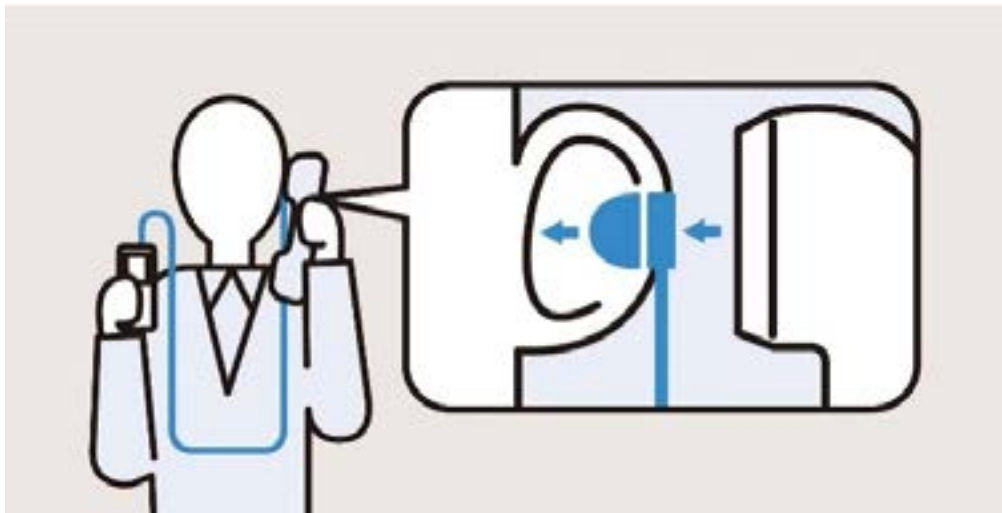
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4 Phone interviews can be recorded using your digital voice recorder and a telephone pick-up microphone.

We recommend using either the Olympus or Philips telephone pick-up microphones. When speaking on the telephone, these will capture both sides of the conversation for recording by your digital voice recorder. Plug the telephone pick-up microphone into your digital voice recorder, just as you would any other external microphone. Pop the telephone mic earpiece into the ear that you hold the phone to - the telephone pick-up microphone captures both your voice and the voice of your interviewee. This preferable to capturing the interview on your recorder via speakerphone.



During Recording

1 Ensure recorder is equidistant from participants, including yourself.

Even though it is critical to successfully capture the interviewee's responses, you want to ensure your questions are also captured in the audio. Positioning the recording device equidistant between the speakers helps ensure both the interview questions and responses appear in the transcript.

Once the recorder is in place, avoid moving it.



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2 For speaker identification, ask speakers to say their names each time they speak.

The transcriptionist has more opportunity to distinguish between the speakers when each speaker says their name each time they speak.

Note: Speaker identification from audio alone is not always possible. If accurate speaker identification is critical, we recommend writing a log which records the speaker order and, if possible, the first couple of words spoken in each turn.



3 Once the interview has started, encourage participants to speak one at a time.

If any laughter or side comments begin during the recording, wait for quiet before asking your next question – laughter is notorious for obscuring all other speech.

4 Small ambient noises can obscure speech.

Remind speakers to avoid rustling paper or drumming their fingers on the table. Mobile phones placed near the recorder can cause loud interference on the recording, even when the phone is on silent. Use non-verbal gestures to let speakers know you are listening.

5 Don't hesitate to repeat key sentences for clarity.

If you're afraid that the digital recording device didn't pick up something due to ambient noise, repeat it at the time, rather than look over your transcripts and wonder what was said!



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6 Lastly, it's a good idea to have a spare battery on hand, just in case!

Running out of battery mid way through an interview is less than ideal, that's why keeping a spare battery with you is always a good idea. Alternatively, use a power adapter for your recorder if a power outlet is nearby.



After Recording

1 Specify the template that you would like to use.

We have a Sterling Transcription standard template, but we are happy to comply with specific formatting requirements, saving you time at the other end. Typists are also trained to create NVivo, Atlas TI and Leximancer compatible documents.

2 Send us a vocabulary list of commonly used words or place names.

Sending us a vocabulary list helps ensure the most accurate transcript possible, particularly if your interviewees use specific jargon or acronyms. Our general transcript is intelligent verbatim (slightly edited), as requested by 95% of our clients for ease of readability and analysis. Other transcript styles, such as those used for conversational analysis, are available upon request.

Note: Complex transcription styles do incur surcharges. [Contact us](#) for details.



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3 Give us a call to clarify with us your desired turnaround time.

We offer a range of turnaround times to suit your individual needs. At the same time, let us know your requirements regarding the naming of speakers, to ensure we begin transcription knowing exactly what you need.

Contact Us

Ready to go? To get started immediately complete our self-registration form to create a new client account.

Or phone us on 0800 910 1410
or email us at
enquiries@sterlingtranscription.co.uk, to
discuss your particular needs.



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