

## HOW TO GET THE BEST RECORDING

High quality recordings make our job simpler and easier, resulting in the most accurate transcripts in the least amount of time. Here are some important tips and tricks.

1. **Try to get everyone as close to the recording device (as is comfortable) so the recorder will pick up everyone's voices.** If this is not possible, you may want to use TWO recorders. Keep one closer to the person asking the questions, and the other one closer to the other speaker(s). If we can't pick up certain portions off one file, we can always go back and listen to the second one and type in any missing sections. *(Also see "Option A and B" below.)*
2. **If you're putting the recorder on a desk or table, it's a good idea to put a towel or sweater underneath the recorder.** This will muffle out any ambient noise that may bounce off the table.
3. **Try to record in a quiet room.** If that's not possible, try to make sure everyone speaks loudly and clearly. Encourage people who tend to sit back in their chairs, look down when they speak, talk under their breath or talk very softly to SPEAK UP. Children and teens tend to speak like this, so encourage them to speak up.
4. **Try to make sure everyone speaks in turn (not over each other).** That may be hard when everyone gets excited, but just do the best you can. The better the recording, the better transcript! Another good tip in focus groups is to repeat the answer. Example:

Q:           What is your favorite animal?  
Nancy:      I like (inaudible)...  
Q:           Elephants? Okay, Nancy likes elephants. Anybody else?

5. **Make sure you test the recorder BEFORE you start the actual recording.** Is everyone audible? Is the recording clear? Do you need to move people closer to the mic?
6. **Send us any information we can use as reference** (just in case something isn't clear on the tape or digital file, and to help with spelling of names, places, buzz words, etc.). Things such as Powerpoint slides, agendas, list of participants, discussion guides, etc. are all very helpful.

## DIGITAL RECORDERS

1. Digital recording is the current industry standard. The sound quality is excellent (unless, of course, people mumble or there's a lot of background noise). You can record anywhere from 8 hours on up. After you're done, just save the recorded file to your hard drive, then simply upload it to our server, burn a CD, or transfer the file to a USB flash drive.
2. There are many brands to choose from. The most popular are **Olympus** and **Sony**. Try to select a model with a USB port for easy transfer to your computer (such as the Olympus VN-8100PC Digital Voice Recorder 142600)

## GET BETTER RECORDINGS - OPTION A (RECOMMENDED FOR LIVE MEETINGS AND FOCUS GROUPS)

One option is to purchase an inexpensive bi-directional or multi-directional mic. (You can get this from Radio Shack, Best Buys, Staples or online at <http://www.nextag.com/omnidirectional-mic/compare.html>.) Though you may choose to use a bi-directional or multi-directional mic, you should still make sure that all participants close to the mic and everyone speaks up. We recommend these:

- VEC CM-1000 Omni-Directional Stereo Conference Microphone (plugs into handheld recorder or computer's microphone input).
- USB MXL AC404 USB Conference Microphone (plugs directly into your computer via USB).

## GET BETTER RECORDINGS - OPTION B (RECOMMENDED FOR LIVE INTERVIEWS)



Another option is to purchase "lapel" mics. (You can purchase these at an audio/visual store, or online at <http://www.nextag.com/wireless-lapel-microphone/stores-html>.) These are tiny little microphones that clip onto your shirt or lapel. They come wired and wireless. These little things are very powerful, but with power comes responsibility! Try not to jostle around otherwise the mic will pick up the sound of clothing rubbing across the mic! You will also need to purchase a mixer (they come as small as a credit card). The mixer will allow you to have multiple channels so you can hook your lapel mic into the mixer and up to two or more participants (depending on how many channels your mixer has). The mixer is then hooked up to your recorder. Remember to do a test first to make sure the recording levels are just right before you start the actual recording.

## GET BETTER RECORDINGS – OPTION C (RECOMMENDED FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS AND CONFERENCE CALLS)

There are a couple of options to choose from for telephone interviews and conference calls:

**Use a Plug-in Recording Device:** With the Olympus Mini-Tele Recording Device, you can quickly and easily record your conversations from both landline and wireless phones. Simply plug the jack into the "MIC" jack of your recorder and place the earphone into your ear. Place your call and the recorder will record both sides of the conversation. You can get these at Radio Shack or go here to purchase: <http://www.radioshack.com/product/index.jsp?productId=2141764>. Once your conversation has been recorded, simply upload the file to us for transcription.

**Use an 800-number for Conference Calls:** Why fumble around for a digital recorder, putting everybody on a speaker phone, and getting a recording that includes everything but the participants' voices? Since everybody on your conference will be calling in on their own phones, they will be speaking directly into the microphone portion of their device. Pay only \$0.089 cents per minute and have your conference recorded, accessible, and ready to be transcribed. (Example: 3 people on a 60 minute call with cost \$16.02.)

*Rule of Thumb: Quality in, quality out.  
Take the time to review your process so  
you can be sure you get quality  
transcripts back!*

**NEED HELP? Call us and we'll help you pick the best method for your project!  
(310) 829-3272**