

“Hot Guest” Primer

Twenty-five Tips for Successful Interviews

1. The audience must care about what is said. The content or topic must matter to them, touch their lives, or reach them in a real or true way.
2. Talk to the audience one-on-one. Listeners must feel you are talking to them personally, as if you are speaking to a friend. Embrace the audience through the airwaves. If you take call-ins, say the caller's name when you respond.
3. Humor helps! You don't have to be a funny person recognize a funny moment and run with it. Humor is a key element in powerful radio, especially during early morning shows-making groggy listeners laugh or smile is great!
4. Speak in terms your listener can “picture.” A picture is worth a thousand words, but in radio you must paint the picture with your words.
5. Tell the truth. Your audience will know if you are lying.
6. Never be boring. If you are, your audience will tune you out!
7. Audiences want to be entertained. Rush Limbaugh claims this is why he's so successful - her entertains first.
8. YOU are the expert! They want you because of your “national/global” expertise.
9. Never ramble. If you do, you will seem scattered, aimless, unfocused, deadly!
10. Know something local about the area, subject or the host. Your research into local trivia will pay off as you endear yourself the audience, and the host.
11. Be familiar with the prepared questions sent to the host. Hot Guest always sends sample questions along with your bio. However, some hosts may not use them, instead choosing to shoot from the hip and dig deep. Some of the best interviews happen this way! Be flexible and go with the flow.
12. Keep it simple - use laymen's terms. The average listener has the equivalent of a fifth through eighth grade education. Don't lose them with big words.

13. Avoid using too many statistics. If you've got one BIG one, give it to them up front. Wow them, dazzle them, then take it home. But don't overload them with too many numbers.

14. Your message is important. Know how to bridge in an acceptable manner to get back to where you want to go. Don't irritate the host!

15. Remember to do a reality check. Ask yourself questions like: "Why am I a guest on this show today?" and "What is important about what I am saying?"

16. Break the ice with the host before you are on air. Whether you are going on radio or TV, take advantage of any time spent with the host before the show begins to establish a friendly, relaxed relationship.

17. Dress appropriately for televised appearances. Your best bet is always a business suit. However, if the interview is conducted in your work setting, then wear the clothes you usually wear to work.

18. Use catchy names and phone numbers. People will remember a number if it's catchy or easy, such as 1-800-HOTTEST or 1-800-BELIEVE. You must give out your number once every 15 minutes.

19. Never prop the telephone against your chin during an interview. Your voice will sound muffled and unnatural. Try standing instead—you may sound more relaxed.

20. You want to be asked back! Just because you've done a show once doesn't mean you can't be on that program again. Conduct every interview with a positive attitude, and the hosts will be begging to have you again. Make it your goal!

21. Be Prepared! Always have a copy of your book/information nearby, as well as pen & paper, a glass of water, and a box of tissues. You might need to refresh your memory, as well as your voice and nose during an interview. And, you never know what you might like to jot down - an interesting caller's number, a hot tip, or idea for your business.

22. Smile! If possible, conduct your interview in front of a mirror. Your voice will be more animated and your smile really will come through over the phone!

23. It's your interview - listen to yourself! Make sure your voice inflections sound authoritative, energetic, and easy to listen to, not hesitant, sing-song, or monotone. Avoid using "ums," "ahs," and "you knows" while thinking on your feet. Pause instead - you'll sound more professional and what you say next will have more impact.

24. Make them remember you! Repeat your book/business name and phone number as much as politely possible. People can't get in touch with you if they don't know who you are. Keep a cheat-sheet by the phone, and write down three points you want to drive home. On the average, people remember three things. Put checks by them as you say them.

25. Direct your audience. If you want them to go out and buy your book, tell them how! For example, tell them where to find it in the bookstore, whether in the "how-to" section or wherever else it may be found.

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