



Taking to the Waves: Using Radio to Get the Word Out

by Julia Schopick



You've just published a book with an important message—one you and your author hope will change the world. Now, it's time to promote it. Of course, you'll use a number of tried-and-true methods, some of which will succeed, and some of which will fall flat. One way that's worked well for me is radio. Radio promotion is a great way to involve your author in the promotional process, sell more books, and, believe it or not, enjoy the process!

Successful radio interviews helped me make my independently published book, *Honest Medicine: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases*, an award-winning bestseller.

For instance, after an appearance on one late night radio show, *Coast to Coast AM*, my book climbed to No. 49 out of all the books on Amazon.com, and in that one month alone, over 1,200 copies were sold. Additionally, as a result, my book has been featured on several high-traffic websites, including *The Atlantic*, and it has received excellent reviews. Five years after its publication, *Honest Medicine* remains an Amazon.com bestseller, and I still receive offers to appear as a guest on talk shows.

Why Radio (and Internet) Talk Shows Matter

As I was writing my book, I knew I wanted radio to be the main means of getting my message out to the public.

I'm a longtime fan of talk radio because it gives the guest time to tell a story. Stories are what make that connection to the listener, and that's what sells books. Television, on the other hand, is more about the sound bite. Unless you're a *New York Times* bestselling author with a very topical message and a big publishing house, it's hard to get booked on TV. If you do, chances are you'll get a few minutes at most. That's not enough time to say very much—or to sell books.

Finding the Right Programs

You'll want to appear on shows that regularly address topics like yours. For instance, in my case, these are shows that feature health (especially alternative health) and spiritual topics. For the first year after my book was published, because of my years in public relations, and also because of my interest in (and knowledge of) talk radio, I was able to get my own bookings. But after the first year, I hired a publicist. I usually recommend that publishers and authors hire a publicity company that has excellent relationships with the media. John Kremer, author of *1001 Ways to Market Your Book*, maintains a database of book publicists on his website, bookmarketingbestsellers.com. Of note for authors: Kremer's database lists the publicists' areas of interest and specialization.

Does the Size of the Market Matter?

Many authors wonder if they should aim to appear only on shows in the larger markets. I was surprised to

3 Different Kinds of Radio

1. **Terrestrial stations** are the AM and FM stations we have known as "radio" for many years. These include very small local stations, as well as large (up to 50,000- and 100,000-watt) stations with a much wider reach, often going to several states.
2. **Internet radio**, such as BlogTalkRadio, iHeartRadio, VoiceAmerica, and podcasting via iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon.
3. **Satellite radio**, which includes Sirius and XM, which merged in 2007, becoming Sirius XM Radio.

learn that while my largest response came from being on *Coast to Coast AM*, a national radio show with a huge and passionate listenership, many smaller shows in both larger and smaller markets also bring excellent results. For instance, Frankie Boyer has two daily radio shows: one nationally syndicated on BizTalk Radio, and her holistic health show on the 50,000-watt WCRN 830AM in Boston. Whenever I'm on one of her shows, I receive many e-mails and sell lots of books. The same goes for internet radio shows such as Miriam Knight's *New Consciousness Review*, which is widely syndicated in several venues, including iTunes and iHeartRadio. One of the pluses of being on ►



Psst... Wanna know a secret?
You can get great 4-color pricing
without going overseas.

800-331-8163

Taylor-Made Solutions for all your 4-color needs.
www.TaylorSpecialtyBooks.com



internet shows is that they are usually archived online so that people can listen to them months, and even years, after your appearance.

Perhaps most importantly, the best shows are those that give you time to tell your story. For storytelling, Mimi Stoneburner's *The Body Talk Health Show* on K-TIP Radio in Porterville, California, is ideal; also Joni Aldrich's *Treatment SOS* on W4CS Radio and iHeartRadio. Both of these shows are an hour long, and both hosts encourage authors to tell their stories. Many authors, such as thyroid experts Mary Shomon and Dana Trentini, authors of *Your Healthy Pregnancy with Thyroid Disease*, do well by telling their inspirational stories on radio. Five to 10-minute appearances won't suffice, especially if your message is complex. These examples speak to the area of health, but you'll find good storytelling stations in numerous categories.

What Makes a Good Guest?

Many authors have told me, "I've been on lots of radio

and much of it can be taught. For instance, it's also the ability to convey your belief in your book's message without becoming shrill. Although it's admirable to have strong beliefs, a good guest never preaches. Effective guests cultivate the ability to convey their messages in a clear, concise manner. You may need to be coached to achieve this level of professionalism.



There are several rules of thumb. First and foremost, authors should always provide producers and hosts with a Q&A beforehand. Most publicists provide questions, but few provide the answers. This is a huge mistake.

It is the combination of questions and answers that gives the host a context to work from. Your host may not have necessarily read your book; several hosts have told me as much.

Fortunately, well-crafted questions and answers can save the day.

As Ric Bratton, an excellent interviewer, says: "I hate to ask a question to which I don't know the answer. Knowing the answer gives me a better shot at the direction my guest wants to go in." And Ric is one of the hosts who *does* read authors' books. Yet he still appreciates having questions *and* answers.

Many authors have told me, "I've been on lots of radio shows, but I haven't sold many books." I wish I had the nerve to tell them, "Well, maybe you weren't a very good guest!"

shows, but I haven't sold many books." I wish I had the nerve to tell them, "Well, maybe you weren't a very good guest!" I usually don't say that, but it's the truth. You have to be a good guest.

Some authors are simply "made for radio." They have pleasant, interesting-sounding voices and an innate sense of how to convey their messages. Theirs is partly a "gift of gab," but it's really more than that—

Radio Rules

Here are seven more rules of thumb that may seem to be common sense but are important to follow:

1. A problem with many authors who are also professionals in their fields is that they use jargon. Don't do it! If you're a doctor, use "bruise" instead of "hematoma." Some of the worst offenders are

therapists and lawyers. Have a friend or a coach go through your questions and answers with you to make sure your answers are jargon-free. The problem with using jargon is that, if listeners don't understand what you're saying, they will not be able to concentrate on your message—you'll lose them.

2. When providing your host with questions and answers, don't memorize those answers. There is nothing worse than a guest who is obviously speaking from a script. It sounds wooden and boring. The aim here is to sound natural, to go with the flow.
3. Always be prepared for the unexpected. Be ready for a host who asks you a question you didn't foresee. This is what makes an interview more exciting.
4. Try to keep your answers simple. One mistake authors often make is to give too many details. It's preferable to say, "All of these lab tests are listed in the book," instead of mentioning every single test on air. Like jargon, too many details will make your audience go to sleep.
5. Mention your book's title, but not in every other sentence. Trust your host to mention the title for

you. This is much more effective way of getting the word out.

6. Offer to send listeners a free article or a free chapter from your book. Give them your e-mail address. And make reference several times throughout the show to "your listeners." For instance, "Your listeners may not know that ..."
7. Remember that the best interview is a conversation.

If you follow these rules, you'll be on your way to being an excellent radio guest who will sell a plethora of books. ●

Julia Schopick is a best-selling author of the book, Honest Medicine: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases. She is a seasoned radio talk show guest who has appeared on over 100 shows and is often invited back. In addition to radio, she uses social media, particularly Facebook and blog comments, to promote her book. Julia coaches authors on how to use promotional methods. Learn about this service at WebBasedPR.com. You may learn about her book at HonestMedicine.com. Write to her with questions at Julia@HonestMedicine.com.



INDEPENDENT BOOK
ibpa
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Interested in contributing an article to a future issue of *IBPA Independent*?
Contact managing editor Alexa Schlosser at alexa@ibpa-online.org.