

Are You New to the World of Talk Radio? Then You Need to Read This!

In my nearly twenty years in the publicity industry, I have seen a fair bit of evolution in how the media reaches their audience. Some newspapers and magazines have turned into websites or blogs and several television shows have turned into streaming videos on YouTube. Talk radio seems to be the only media outlet that has remained untouched, right? Wrong!

If we use the 1990's as a reference point (and all of you radio pros from that era will back me up on this) the landscape of talk radio has most definitely changed from then until now. In the 90's the average time allotted for a guest interview was anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes and most of the interviews took place in-studio.

Today if you want to find a 45 to 60 minute interview you have to focus on smaller markets (and/or smaller stations in big markets). Why? It all comes down to format. Today, the format for guest interviews in top markets can be as short as 3 to 5 minutes and as long as 10-15 minutes. So the same major market talk show that used to have one guest per hour will now have 3-5 guests in one hour!

Also, say goodbye to in-studio interviews. Most hosts today don't want guests coming to the studio. Now with shorter interviews, having to meet and greet an in-studio guest can be an unnecessary distraction, not only for the hosts but for other employees at the station as well. And, where quality of sound used to be a factor, we've seen enough technological advances in equipment that phone interviews now sound far superior to those of the earlier days.

Ok, so things have changed. But it isn't necessarily for the worst. Any opportunity to be a guest on a radio show is an opportunity you want to take advantage of - regardless of the amount of airtime, the size of the market or the power of the radio station!

For years I have told my clients about the power of radio, and have watched many campaigns produce fantastic results. Here are just a few helpful tips I share with my clients about the value of talk radio and how to maximize these opportunities to connect with their audience.

Work With However Many Minutes You Have on the Air!

Be careful not to fall into the negative mindset about short interviews. Even if your interview only lasts say 10 minutes, these are 10 very valuable minutes of airtime...just learn how to maximize it!

- **Develop those Sound Bites.** If you only have 10 minutes to talk about your book, product or service you just need to develop your message so that it's concise and will grab the audience's attention. The secret for doing this is to make every word count in being able to communicate your message.
- **Know Your Message and Stay On it.** Figure out what your key message is and stick with it! You don't have time to be thrown off topic by the host or caller. When that happens, your job is to briefly acknowledge what was said and bring the conversation back to your message. It can be done as politely as, "...yes, that's a good point, but..." (the rest of your answer would be your message). This kind of response allows you to keep your manners in so that the host doesn't feel like you've ignored his comment, but at the same time, you're in control of the communication and able to get your point across.
- **Know the Host and the Show.** If the show is simulcast on the internet, take the time to listen to it before your interview. This will allow you to get a feel for the overall tone of the show and host and how he or she communicates with guests and callers. It will also give you a feel for the pace of the show. Then when it comes time for your interview, you'll know what's expected of you as a guest and you'll be able to stay in stride. I promise you, the host will appreciate that you're keeping the same pace and tone as he or she is! The benefit to you? The more the host likes you the more inclined they will be to promote your book, product or service for you!

Bottom line? Advertisers pay hundreds of dollars for a single minute of time on the air. So, a 10 minute interview is very valuable and can be worth thousands of dollars in advertising time!

Only Want a Long Interview? Ditch the Major Markets!

If you only want longer interviews, then look to smaller markets. If you are not sold on the benefits of these seemingly lesser markets, let me share some terrific facts about these rough diamonds:

- **Get Your Feet Wet:** Interviews in smaller markets give you the opportunity to gain experience as a radio guest providing terrific insight as to the

workings and rhythm of talk radio.

- Fine Tune: Knowing your message and knowing the right way to communicate it are two different things. These interviews allow you to test your messages and identify which ones resonate best with the host and listeners.
- Question Time: As a standard rule in talk radio, you always want to provide hosts with sample questions to ask you – as the host won't always have the time or discipline to study your topic prior to speaking with you. But, after doing a number of small market interviews you'll know which questions present the best opportunity for communicating your message and keeping listeners tuned into the show!
-and a higher concentration of listeners!

Yes, it's true. In smaller markets, there just aren't as many stations to choose from as in the larger markets. So, what's the benefit of this for you? Well, simply put, less choice of stations means listeners aren't able to do as much channel surfing. Think about it: in Gainesville, Florida there are 3 stations that have a talk show format whereas in San Francisco, California there are 10. So even though the population in Gainesville is minute compared to the population of SF – it's very feasible to have a larger audience listening to your interview in Gainesville, than the one you conduct in San Francisco. It's the channel surfing factor at play. In smaller markets listeners have less choice of talk stations to listen to and so they tend to have favorite stations and hosts they often view as a trusted advisor or friend. So being on a small market show with dedicated listeners and a host who endorses your book, product or service, can be far more impacting on your sales.

Not In-studio – Not a Problem!

With in-studio interviews you have to:

- Schedule time off from work;
- Be away from your family;
- Spend time and money on travel (planes, trains and automobiles...remember?);
- Incur cost of hotels and meals while on the road.

And what if you arrive at the station and there's hot, late breaking news and the show cancels or the interview goes short? Yikes! There goes your time and money down the drain. What a waste!

Radio phone interviews are so much more beneficial for you. Travelling isn't necessary! Time of day is no longer an issue. For example, if you have an interview on a popular overnight show, you can still do it, but from the comfort of your bed! Just imagine, talking to people all over the country while lounging in your pajamas!

And what about those interviews during office hours? Are you a busy executive? You can integrate radio phone interviews into your work-day, around client meetings, staff briefings or in-between those important reports you're on deadline to get done. You can even coordinate radio interviews when you're traveling on business. We've had clients conduct live interviews from airports and even abroad on an overseas business trip!

Yes, in-studio interviews are great for establishing camaraderie between you and the host – but that same camaraderie can be created with phone interviews. It just requires that you become more adept at your communication skills so that your ability to have a quality communication isn't hindered simply because the person isn't sitting in front of you!

The Take Away...

Even though the face of radio has changed, in many ways it has leaned toward your advantage. By using these tips, you can take make the most of the fantastic exposure that this medium can provide.

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ABOUT MARSHA FRIEDMAN

Marsha Friedman is a prominent business woman, radio personality, speaker and publicity expert. As a public speaker at numerous national

conferences large and small she shares her expertise on using the media to get publicity. In addition to these speaking engagements Marsha consults businesses and corporations on a daily basis on how they can harness the power of publicity to get results!

As a radio talk show host Marsha can be heard every week on her nationally syndicated radio show "Today's Woman". She and her co-host Robin Webster, tackle anything and everything that a modern woman faces in today's world. www.robinandmarsha.com

As a business woman Marsha is the CEO of EMSI (Event Management Services, Inc) which she launched in 1990. In the nearly twenty years since then she has firmly established the company as a major public relations player for a diverse group of clients ranging from Jimmy Hoffa Jr. to National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane to the famous Motown Group, the Temptations. EMSI represents corporations with consumer-related products and authors and experts in a wide range of fields such as, politics, finance, law, music, food, fitness and healthcare. www.emsincorporated.com

What keeps EMSI as a leader in the media is their News & Experts division. Their responsibility is providing talk radio, television and print media with top experts, stories and hot news. www.newsandexperts.com

About the Author

Additionally, Friedman has been giving back to the community that has served her. A mother of three and a grandmother who also is raising one of her grandchildren, Marsha co-founded Cherish the Children Foundation in 1996. The mission of this charity is to raise awareness of the plight of underprivileged and foster children and has been recognized by the White House. www.cherishthechildren.org

In 2008 Marsha will also be releasing her first book about the power of publicity through Warren Press with an audio series and DVD series to follow. www.marshafriedman.wordpress.com

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