

## Why Overlooking Interviews on Smaller Radio Stations Can be a Big Mistake

Talk radio interviews aren't what they used to be. In the "golden days," the hosts of major-market talk radio shows used to bring authors into the studio for long chats. An author could just knock off a couple of those interviews and sales would instantly hit "turbo." Sadly, those days are gone. Unless an author is a truly big name nowadays, the chances of hitting pay-dirt with just a couple of big radio interviews are history. The reasons are two-fold. First, there just aren't as many talk shows with a format for guests as there used to be. Secondly, the amount of "per-guest interview time" has shrunk. Blame the research: Researchers found that listeners are more likely to stay tuned if there are three 10-minute guests on a show instead of just one 30 minute guest. When it comes to talk radio public relations, quantity still rules. Think about it. There are thousands of radio stations out there, many just 1,000 watts or so and without a big-name host. But that certainly doesn't mean you should thumb your nose at them. Look at it this way. If a 1000-watt radio station had, say, only 100 listeners, you'd probably think it wasn't worth the trouble, right? But what if you could go to an auditorium and talk to 100 people about your book, would you go? Of course you would. See the contradiction here? So decide not to pass up an interview, whether big or small. You'll be building lots of selling momentum, and something else, too. Practice in the "Minors" Before You Step Up to the "Majors." A rookie baseball player doesn't throw his first pitch against the New York Yankees, does he? Of course not, and the same applies to radio. It takes approximately 10 to 12 radio interviews before most authors are comfortable behind the microphone. So it's far better to make your first inevitable mistakes on a smaller stage than a bigger one, and that's where the little stations come in. Small talk radio stations let you practice becoming a great guest. Having a large number of interviews under your belt will definitely give you experience. You'll be able to crystallize your thoughts on your book better, get your presentation down to a few succinct words: sound like a pro instead of a floundering amateur. Typical errors for first time guests include not giving out their website address or the title of their book, or not mentioning it frequently enough. It's also a mistake to mention these too often and upset the host, who will let you know that the show is not an infomercial. Technical authors have a tendency to slide into techno-babble, and even good guests inevitably walk out of their first few interviews knowing they could have done better. When first-time authors make these mistake (and they will), it is best if huge audiences don't hear their error. Sure, there can be pitfalls with smaller stations. Be prepared to run into some hosts who are unprofessional, and make sure you confirm an interview at least twice before you're scheduled to be on the air. And, nothing can save you from the 500 watt or 1,000 watt radio station in Peoria that's hosted by a kid right out of broadcast school, so be ready for what an unprofessional host will throw at you. Many hosts won't be as prepared as their big-league counterparts (translated: they probably won't read your book), so you may have to walk them through the major points of your topic. Prepare for these interviews as though you have just met someone on the street for the first time and you're telling them about your book. If the hosts aren't as prepared as they should be, you still need to be on your toes. Very bright people listen to some very small radio stations; so don't ever talk down to your audience. The bottom-line here is that small-station interviews not only can generate sales, they can prepare you for the big time.

### About the Author

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