

Your “ON-AIR” CHEAT SHEET



Use these preparation hints for any interview. With this checklist you will remind yourself of the things you have to do to be a great guest.

It is surprising how many people we interview miss these key points:

1. Remember: Radio is about telling stories.

- **The best storytellers are expressive.** They can be serious, funny, angry or sad. But they must bring emotion into the interview.
- **The best stories are simple.** Avoid statistics and numbers unless you really need them to illustrate a point.
- **The best storytellers talk about people and emotions** by describing thoughts and emotions.
- **They do not regurgitate facts** – everyone wants to know how your story relates to them.

2. When preparing for any interview, ask yourself the following questions:

- **What is my message?** And what is the purpose of this interview?
- **Does every detail pass the “So what” Test?** You have to share with listeners why they should care about your topic.
- **What are the key points I want to express?** Have those 3-4 main points written down and in front of you. If it’s a quick-paced interview sometimes you can lose track of the key points that really were important.
- **Do I have interesting ways of telling my story?** Remember that failure stories are as inspirational as success stories. It makes you human and listeners like that.

3. Remind yourself of these points:

- **Tell the truth.** Never try to ‘slide one by’ an interviewer...because radio hosts make a living connecting with people on the phone.

After doing 1000 + interviews, I can usually tell when someone is not being completely honest.

- **Avoid a yes or no response** unless you are asked for one. The interview is a dance of sorts...they lead, you follow...but it takes both to make the interview magical.
- **Ums, ahhs, and long pauses kill a great story.** Try avoiding them as much as you can.
- **Avoid reading from prepared statements.** In fact NEVER read your answers during an interview. Throw away the long notes and give the interview from the heart. It works every time.

4. When being interviewed:

- Keep your answers simple and brief.
- Be sincere.
- Find a way to get your message out.
- Be nice. Do not get angry with a poor interviewer. Rude never wins.
- Always attempt an answer. Do not leave the host hanging.
- Be funny when it is appropriate.
- Use the host's name if you get a chance.

5. Mechanics (if you're in the studio):

- Do not rock or swivel in your chair.
- Match the host's energy level. (This is VERY important for show dynamics.)
- Speak closely to the microphone but avoid popping your Ps by avoiding direct contact with the microphone.
- If you are holding a pen, do not click it throughout the interview. (It is amazing what nerves make us do.)

6. Mechanics (if you're on the phone):

- Speak clearly into the mouthpiece. (This may sound silly but many people hold the mouthpiece under their chin.)
- Do not use speaker phone as the quality is terrible.
- Do not use a cell phone as the drops and delays can sometimes make it sound very weird and nothing sounds worse than you constantly saying "Pardon?" because you couldn't hear the host.
- Stay out of the bathroom...there is too much echo.