

BECOMING SEMI-FAMOUS

How You Can Generate Direct Publicity and Sales
in a Crowded Marketplace

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Please note that much of this publication is based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence. Although the author (that's still me) has made every reasonable attempt to achieve complete accuracy of the content, he assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. I think he's a very smart man. Also, you should use this information as you see fit, and at your own risk. Your particular situation may not be exactly suited to the examples illustrated here. In fact, it's likely that it won't be the same, and you should adjust your use of the information and recommendations accordingly. It's a guide, not a Bible.

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Finally, use your head. Nothing in this book is intended to replace common sense, or other professional advice, which unfortunately is not always the same thing. This book is meant to inform and entertain the reader (that's you) and get you thinking. Then, put it down and get moving. Your success is up to you.

Now that our high priced legal team is happy, let's get started with the nuts and bolts of what it'll take for you to become *Semi-Famous*.

Becoming Semi-Famous

It has been said that most of what shapes you in to who you become happens when you're a kid. I guess it worked out that way for me, especially in terms of this whole 'Semi-Famous' thing. Growing up in the coalfields of Southern West Virginia, my thoughts were always on things bigger than my surroundings. I loved the stories of the comic book Superheros, especially Batman. Batman didn't have super powers, he just worked harder than the next guy. Plus, he had a really cool car. And, best of all, when he took the cape and cowl off, he was just an average, anonymous guy. Actually, a really rich average guy with a butler and a cute girlfriend. What's not to like?

I remember the day that Elvis died; it was a hot summer day in August of 1977. My mother, who'd been a fan since high school, was crestfallen. I sat in front of the television set watching all the coverage of The Kings' passing. I remember thinking about how sad it was that he was stuck behind the gates of Graceland. He never got to go out and have fun by himself. If Elvis wanted to ride a rollercoaster, he had to do it in the middle of the night when no one was around. Elvis had to rent out a whole theatre for himself to see a movie in peace. That kind of life really looked like absolutely no fun to a boy used to running free in the West Virginia mountains. And, when the big 'E' died, they even had to exhume his body and move it back behind the protective gates of Graceland because of a plot to actually steal his body and hold it for ransom! Egads! I liked the Batman business plan much better. Go home, lose the costume and leave it all behind.

Since Mom was such an Elvis fan, and Dad bought every country music singer songwriter's album that the RCA record club could mail to our tiny town, it's no wonder I wound up a major music fan. Dad had an old Gibson guitar and would even play a little Johnny Cash/Hank Williams for us on occasion, and that's still a special memory. Music was always around our little house, and as an adult, music is all around our home today.

Not surprisingly, the grown-ups were horrified when my very first "favorite" music group was KISS, the costumed, kabuki make-up wearing hard rockers. It made perfect sense to me. The music was best when played loud, the grown-ups were scared of it, and best of all, KISS were just like the comic book Superheros. They had the costumes, the cool nicknames and even secret identities! When Gene, Paul, Ace and Peter took off the makeup, no one had any idea who they were. They could go anywhere, do anything at any time and no one would bug 'em. Then, when it's time to rock, on goes the Superhero identity and the costumes and away you all go to fight for truth, justice and rock n' roll.

It's no wonder that I wound up on the radio before I even got to high school. Not only did I get to be around music for a living. It's the ultimate 'secret identity'. When you're on the air, you're the star. Everyone is listening, and they all want to hear what you have to say. You're just famous enough to get great tables at restaurants, free concert tickets and backstage passes, preview screenings of all the hot new movies and access to places and things that people with 'real' jobs can only dream about.

I even met my beautiful wife by being 'Semi-Famous'; as fate would have it, she happened by a live personal appearance I was doing one hot July evening. She had no idea I was 'that guy on the radio'. It's a good thing, or I may never have gotten a chance for a date. "Entertainment people are players", she said. But, I was determined to show her I was different. It took a while: we were married eight years later!

In my career, I've worked with and observed other people who've made an art out of being "***Semi-Famous***". These are folks that are close enough to being famous to enjoy the perks without having to deal with the crushing demands that real fame brings. And, I've worked with others who are REALLY FAMOUS and have seen first hand what that brings. Being ***Semi-Famous*** is the way to go. Here are some examples:

You may not have heard of Jay Thomas, but you've seen him. Jay, like me, is a former radio personality. He hosted morning shows in Charlotte, Jacksonville, New York and Los Angeles before turning to acting. He's the guy who owned the pizza shop on 'Mork and Mindy'. He was married to Carla on 'Cheers'. He got 'Murphy Brown' pregnant. He hosted the infamous 'Who Wants To Marry A Millionaire' fiasco with Darva Congers and Rick what's-his-name. Jay was even Richard Dreyfuss' best friend, the football coach in the great movie 'Mr. Holland's Opus'. But Jay can go anywhere, by himself, and nobody bugs him because he's not A REALLY BIG STAR.

My wife and I were in New Orleans staying in the French Quarter several years ago. I went to a business lunch and she hit the gym. When she came back to the room, Cristi said "I just worked out with the nicest guy in the gym. He looked really familiar. We talked about radio. I told you were in broadcasting. He said he used to be in radio too." Later, we found out it was Jay Thomas, by himself, hitting the exercise bike. I can't imagine Elvis doing that. Come to think of it, if he had hit the exercise bike a little bit more and the peanut butter and banana sandwiches a little less, things might've turned out differently. But, I digress.

Some years later, I was working with Jay Thomas and AMFM Radio on a project in New York City. Jay and I walked from the studios of his station right through Manhattan to Grand Central Station for lunch and to attend a press conference for Diana Ross. I was struck by how Jay could easily walk through the city, occasionally getting a quick glance but for the most part going completely unnoticed. By contrast, Diana Ross had to be ringed by security just to walk 50 feet from her limousine to the podium in Grand Central. People were pushing, shoving and made it impossible for Diana to even move like a normal person. Jay and I watched the press conference, he shouted out a smart-ass question to her about her hair style, and we went on to have lunch together in Grand Central. Without being bothered. No wonder Diana Ross hits the sauce.

Here's another *Semi-Famous* example: I have a friend named Jim Brickman. You may have heard of Jim; he's a great singer/songwriter of romantic tunes. He tours, hosts a syndicated weekend radio show and has scored several #1 hits on the Adult Contemporary charts. Jim usually has someone else sing his songs, and he's scored hits with vocalists like Martina McBride, Colin Raye and Donny Osmond. Jim and Donny were even gracious enough to videotape a special greeting and performance of one of our favorite Jim Brickman songs, "Love Of My Life", for my wedding. Jim is "*Semi-Famous*". His fans know who he is, but they're respectful of him, and he can move in the general public as he wishes.

Not so with Donny Osmond. I did an interview with Donny when I was with a radio station in Salt Lake City. Word got out in the building that Donny was there and every secretary in the high rise flooded into the radio station. You should've seen the women pressed up against the studio window. As Donny and I looked out at them, I felt like we were in a fishbowl. What he'd hoped would be a 20 minute station visit turned into a two hour ordeal of pictures, swooning and autographs. Donny completely missed dinner with his family. We finally had to have building security help him get outta there. Again, I say "*Semi-Famous*" is the way to go.



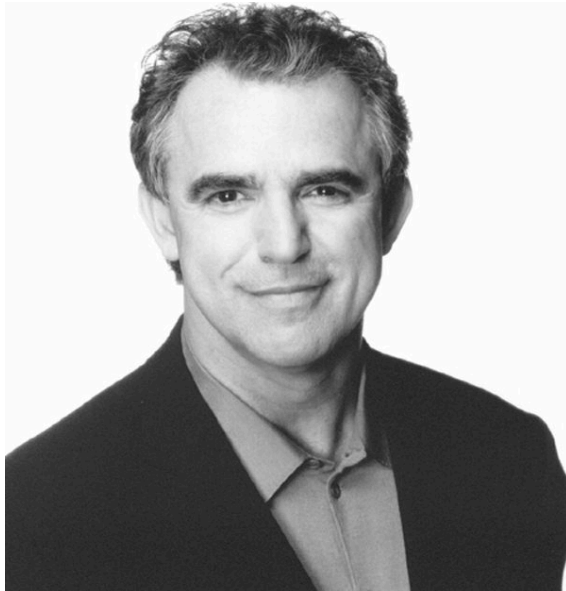
Elvis Presley, Really Famous and eventually a prisoner to that fame.



The author backstage with Gene Simmons and Peter Criss from KISS...in full makeup



Here's a photo of KISS without the greasepaint. The band's popularity, and their personal lives, were never as good as during the "makeup days".



Semi-Famous Actor and Radio Host Jay Thomas



Really Famous former teen heartthrob Donny Osmond

Did you ever see “Matthew Lesko” on TV? The guy with wild hair and glasses, the suit with question marks all over it, hawking the guides on how to get Free Government Grants? I guarantee that Matthew Lesko has made a mint selling those things, mostly on the strength of his uniqueness and personality. I also guarantee that Matthew can lose the suit, lower his voice and go completely unnoticed whenever he wants to. But, he’s *Semi-Famous* enough and entertaining enough to get tons of media interviews whenever he wants to. That results in tons of sales for his company.

You can be, and should be, *Semi-Famous* just like these people. It’s served me very well through the years and it can serve you too. Let me show you how.



What Do People Really Want?

I've spent over **two decades** working in the media, in cities large and small all over America.

It's been a great adventure. Remember the old TV show *WKRP In Cincinnati*? In the theme song, they talked about being 'up and down, round and round' the dial. That was me. I started on the air at my hometown radio station when I was just 14. I wasn't even old enough to drive to the radio station; my dad had to drop me off and pick me up. During my senior year of high school, I was editing the high school newspaper in the morning and working on the air in the afternoon. After going away to college, it was a blur of cities, radio stations, TV stations, interviews, concerts, newspaper articles, backstage parties, personal appearances, and more fun that humans should be allowed. I rode the *Semi-Famous* horse for all it was worth. Maybe I'll write about those adventures in my next book. Somewhere along the way, I became more interested in managing media companies than being the guy behind the 'mike' and in front of the camera. After running successful media properties for several years, in 2001 I joined a great broadcast consulting team that also has an office in Europe. Consequently, I've become exposed to media consumers from all over the world.



If I could distill into one simple phrase, the answer to the age-old question “**What do people really want,**” this is how I'd answer:

People want motion and emotion...something that moves them. That something is unique, compelling information and entertainment.

Unique without compelling is useless, and vice-versa; if you are the only guy selling asparagus flavored chewing gum, that is certainly a unique idea. However, more than likely, it's *gonna* taste pretty darn bad and nobody is going to chew it. That uniqueness, the asparagus gum uniqueness, really gets you nowhere in this instance because it lacks...being compelling.

The flip side of the coin is this: you may have a great seafood restaurant in a coastal city with terrific food, but you're likely not alone. Most coastal cities have dozens of seafood joints; they serve everything from fancy seven course meals to fish n' chips wrapped in newsprint. If you're just another seafood place, you've lost that uniqueness that you need to really prosper. So, no matter how compelling your seafood is, the consumer has nothing to differentiate you from all your competitors. As marketing pioneers Jack Trout and Al Ries have pointed out, **“If you can't be first in a category, create a new category”**.

What is your business or product category? Are you first? If not, how can you differentiate yourself to become different from your competitors?

Answer Below

If you can develop a unique and compelling proposition that creates, or evokes emotion, people will line up to talk to you on radio, TV and in print...**and** customers will line up to pay for your expert advice.

So, what is it about you and what you do that's unique and compelling?

Answer Below

What special gift do you have, or can develop, that will cause others to be drawn to the information you want to share?

Answer Below

Be realistic when you ask yourself that question. Just because something is interesting to you, doesn't mean that it will appeal to anyone else.

Does your particular field of interest solve a problem or fill a need for others?

Answer Below

Can they be persuaded to come to you for that advice? How?

If you have difficulty answering those questions, contact me for help creating a unique and compelling spin on your business at www.allenmediastrategies.com.

Why do psychics continue to make millions of dollars every year?

Because **people** want answers, they crave direction, and most of all they **want to feel**. Help them feel and you ‘**fill** the need to **feel**.’

So...how do you do that now?

Is it *really* working? What’s most and least effective about your methods?

If you had difficulty with these two questions, contact me to help you succeed at this. My website is www.allenmediastrategies.com. We’re here to help you become an expert in your field, create a marketing campaign that’s unique and compelling, and get more media attention!

As an example that this stuff really works, I’ve included the brief story of wonderful ***Semi-Famous*** success. It’s a real life example of someone who’s done just what I’ve been talking about. This gentleman found something unique and compelling that creates emotion and motion. Motion to order his product, and motion from media sources, especially radio stations, who scramble to book him. Here’s his story...

The Speeding Ticket Guy



Case Study:

I know a guy named Alex, who I interviewed some time back when I was a morning radio host in Savannah, Georgia. Not long before that, Alex was a delivery driver in a major Western city. Because of his job, he racked up tons of speeding tickets. **Alex also got really good at getting out of those traffic tickets.** He started keeping a list of great ways to get out of speeding tickets, and turned them into a small, self published book. Alex then found that this unique, compelling little book was generating a ton of interest with everyone that he told about it. Hey, who wouldn't want to know how to get out of speeding tickets?

Pretty soon, Alex was asked to be a guest on a radio show and talk about his little book of ways to get out of speeding tickets. **Listeners to that show were so interested** in what Alex had to say about the subject that **they called the radio station for weeks afterwards** asking the announcers how they could buy the book about how to get out of speeding tickets. Alex smelled opportunity; he started doing more and more radio interviews about his book. Then he started selling more and more books. He put systems in place to solicit interviews, to capture orders and to really work the system.

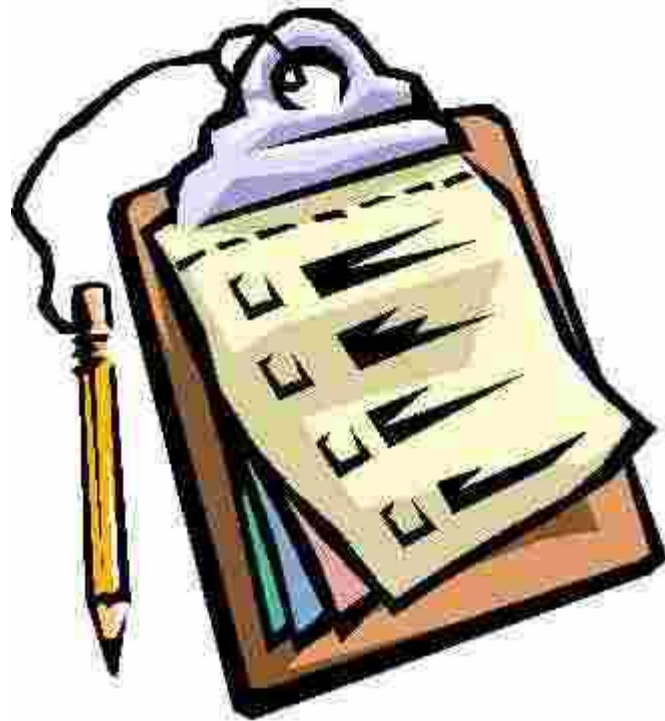
To date, **Alex has sold over \$1.5 million dollars** worth of his book on how to get out of speeding tickets. That's direct sales...**direct into his pocket**, because he self published and doesn't have to share a percentage with a publisher. And, he's spent nothing on marketing-**all those radio interviews were free!** He's generated over \$4 million dollars worth of FREE airtime with his radio interviews. Because Alex lives on the West Coast and does so many radio interviews for stations on the East Coast, he does most of them without even getting out of bed! That's right, most of his workday, Alex does from bed! Not a bad way to make a living. That's the value of having a unique and compelling angle. Many of the techniques Alex uses are the same techniques that I espouse in this book. Alex is a wonderful example of someone who really personifies being **Semi-Famous**.

So, what's it take to have a unique, compelling story to tell?

Above all, you need a story that that will entertain and engage others, and in many cases, cause them to open their collective wallets and spend some money with you.

That's what this book is designed to help you figure out. Then, I'll give you specific strategies to help you successfully do media appearances and interviews to promote yourself and your product. These are tried and true, easy to follow instructions that anyone, anywhere can do. They won't cost much money, they'll work for almost any business and they have the potential to boost your public profile and your personal pocketbook.

Media Goal Setting Checklist



Here's a checklist of some of the goals you should have if you want to become *Semi-Famous*; evaluate them on a 1 to 3 scale:

'1' being what you consider to be most important to helping you achieve your goals

'2' being somewhat important

'3' being not very important

Write your answer in the blank to the left.

I want to learn how to:

- build visibility and credibility by self positioning**
- get consistent media attention**
- become a center of influence within my industry**
- build a successful web presence**
- create "info-products" that make money and build public awareness**
- target the best prospects through research**
- develop a unique, compelling story**
- discover a market niche through positioning**
- zig when they zag, and why that is important**
- figure out why prospects need to trust you**
- stay faithful to the brand and staying away from brand extensions**
- learn the difference between PR vs. Advertising**
- determine whether the media wants to talk to me**
- become a good storyteller and a great seller**
- build a media database**
- put together a great press/media kit**
- position myself to the media as an 'expert in the field'**
- learn the keys to a great interview**
- write a press release**
- know when to get outside help**
- understand my ideal media mix: TV, radio, print, etc.**
- write articles and newsletters...and why that is vital**
- become a columnist**
- determine which radio stations I should target**
- increase website effectiveness and traffic**
- market and sell your information products**
- develop the right strategic partners**
- master cross-promotions**
- get involved with charity tie-ins**

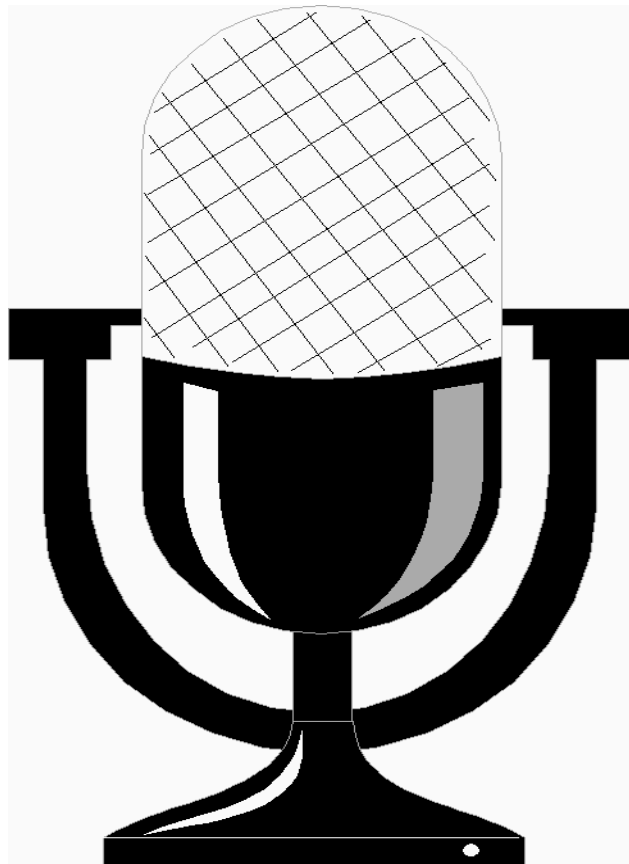
Book Usage Tip:

As you read *Becoming Semi-Famous*, use different color highlighters to mark areas that hold particular importance to you. For instance, a green highlighter when you find information that you've graded a 1, or 'must learn', a pink highlighter for information you've graded a '2', or somewhat important to learn, and a yellow highlighter for '3' which means it's not very important. Whatever you do, don't line through verbage in this workbook, because as your business grows and modifies, your media information needs can (and probably will) change.

And, there are some things on the preceding pages' Media Goals checklist that aren't in this workbook. But they ARE things www.allenmediastrategies.com can assist you with in your quest to become *Semi-Famous*. Your individual needs may require one-on-one, customized solutions and strategies. Get in touch with us to get answers for any additional questions you may have.



The Basics of The Semi-Famous Media Expert



Why is doing media interviews with radio stations, TV stations and print very important to you?

This is an incredible, mostly untapped source of (often free) publicity. Media outlets are always looking for unique, compelling content that their listeners, readers and viewers will find interesting. They're happy to create stars while they do it! Think about it: your average radio station has 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to try to attract listeners. The more listeners they have, the more they can charge for advertising and the more money they make.

Newspapers and TV work the same way. The more people consume the media, the higher their ad rates. If they think that you can entertain and inform their readers, viewers and listeners, and they don't have to pay you to do it, it's a win-win for everybody!

An added benefit for you is that by appearing in the media, it legitimizes you as an authority on your area of expertise. That raises your 'marquee value'. Once you become associated with, or 'branded' with, a subject, you'll become the go-to source for information on that subject. For years, whenever any TV station, radio station or newspaper wanted to talk about sex, they turned to Dr. Ruth because of her frank, funny and unconventional way of communicating what most of us prefer to keep private. Dr. Ruth's main gift isn't her medical knowledge, it's her entertaining way of distributing information. Because of this, Dr. Ruth's books, speaking engagements and other products were always in high demand. And most radio stations, TV stations and print organizations are only too happy to let you 'plug' your current project during your media appearance.

I'm sure you've seen the *Chicken Soup For The Soul* books. Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield are the marketing geniuses behind that book series. They're great at being **Semi-Famous**. Any idea how many books they've sold? Sixty MILLION. Mark Victor Hansen now holds marketing seminars to help others market their products. When asked what their secret was, Mark said, "Doing at least one interview a day. We did hundreds of telephone interviews with radio stations across the country. Our sales went through the roof!" M. Scott Peck, the best-selling author of "The Road Less Traveled" also subscribes to the 'at least one interview per day' theory. Marketing, publicity and promotion are the keys to moving product. Whether you realize it or not, you are an authority on some subject.

If you are an author, you are an expert on whatever it is you wrote a book about. If you're a doctor, a lawyer, a relationship therapist, people look to you for advice-you're an expert. If you're a speaker or seminar leader you are an expert on your topic as well. If you have a cause, you are an authority on that cause. If you are the inventor or developer of a new and interesting product you're the authority on that new product. Remember the 'Segue-Way Personal Transportation Device? Its inventor got millions of dollars in free publicity for his new gadget. By following the advice in this book, you'll become more than just an expert, you'll also something of a celebrity. If you need help finding that right area to become *Semi-Famous* in, contact me at www.allenmediastrategies.com.

Radio stations, TV stations, newspapers, magazines know that people just like you are their best source for programming and content.

They are always trying to entertain, inform, and enlighten their audience. If you want free publicity ... if you want to talk about and sell your product, book, seminar, company, cause or organization, you've *gotta* give the audience entertainment and/or information. You've *gotta* give the listeners/viewers/readers valuable information or a good show or no one will want to interview you.

Follow this books advice and join the fun and exciting world of Show Business. You see, if you think you're in business to promote yourself, you're wrong. You're really in business to entertain audiences. The media doesn't really care what you're selling. They'll only talk to you if they believe you can entertain and inform their consumers. Think 'less pitch, more show'. By giving 'more show', you'll actually sell yourself and your products more. People are naturally drawn to those folks who are entertaining and informative. They'll want to 'eat what you're cooking' because they like what you have to say and the information you share.

So...how do you take your concept or idea and make it interesting and entertaining enough for the media to want to talk to you about it?

Answer Below

How do you take your concept or idea and make it interesting and entertaining enough for the media to want to talk to you about it?

That's the million dollar question. I would suggest that any subject, and any speaker, can be made interesting and entertaining with the proper positioning.

Marketing geniuses Al Reis and Jack Trout have written several great books, including:

‘POSITIONING’
‘THE 22 IMMUTABLE LAWS OF MARKETING’
‘MARKETING WARFARE’
‘FOCUS’

In those books, they look at real world examples of how companies succeed and fail because of proper positioning in the consumers mind.

Here are some Reis and Trout style tips that will help you to zero in on what makes you and your product unique and compelling enough for people to notice you:

- Be known (at least initially) for one thing and one thing only. Great brands are singular.**
- If you can't be first in a category, create a new category. If someone else is doing what you're doing and they own that position in the consumer's mind, find a different twist.**
- Find out what people want, and find a way to deliver it to them. In other words, fish where the fish are. Research the consumer and deliver on their expectations.**

So...exactly what ARE most Americans interested in?

I've included on the next page a list of the Top 20 Radio Talk show topics. These topics are on the air because they generate the greatest number of listener responses; phone callers to interact with the hosts and votes from the listeners in the radio ratings.

Their importance varies depending on the media source's target demographic. (All media targets a certain audience segment).

Look over this list, and think about how your product or service can be associated in some way with one of these topics, or another similar topic. Use the space below to brainstorm.

Top 20 Radio Talk Topics

1. **Love, Sex & Relationships (Heart-strings)**
2. **Money, Consumer Scams (Purse-strings)**
3. **Violence, Gangs, Crime, School Violence & Gun Control**
4. **Politics: Corruption in Government, Term Limits, Campaign Contributions, the IRS, etc.**
5. **Sexual Harassment & Discrimination**
6. **Same Sex Marriages**
7. **Health, Fitness, Weight Loss, Nutrition & Alternative Healing**
8. **The War on Drugs**
9. **Crime's Punishment: The Death Penalty, Prisons & Police Brutality**
10. **'Mystical Themes': Psychics, Astrologers, Dream Analyzers, Ghostbusters, Soulmate Finders, Numerologists, Channels, Past Lives, Reincarnation, Near Death Experiences, etc.**
11. **Parenting: Schools, Education, Kids stories, etc.**
12. **Hollywood, Celebrities, TV, Movies & Entertainment**
13. **Sports Superstars and their stories**
14. **Making Money, Stocks, Investments, Retirement & Taxes**
15. **Computers, the Internet & other High Tech topics**
16. **Autos: Performance, Care, Purchase, Repair & Maintenance**
17. **Legal Issues: Outrageous Law Suits, High Profile Cases, Divorce, Spousal & Child Support etc.**
18. **Travel: Deals, Destinations, Suggestions**
19. **Careers, Jobs & Business**
20. **Home & Garden Improvement and Maintenance**

**Radio,
Television,
Print-
which is
right for
you?**

Almost any publicity is good publicity. In this chapter, I'll show you how to use each effectively to help market your business and the benefits of each.

Radio and Print Can Give You Instant Cash From Direct Sales

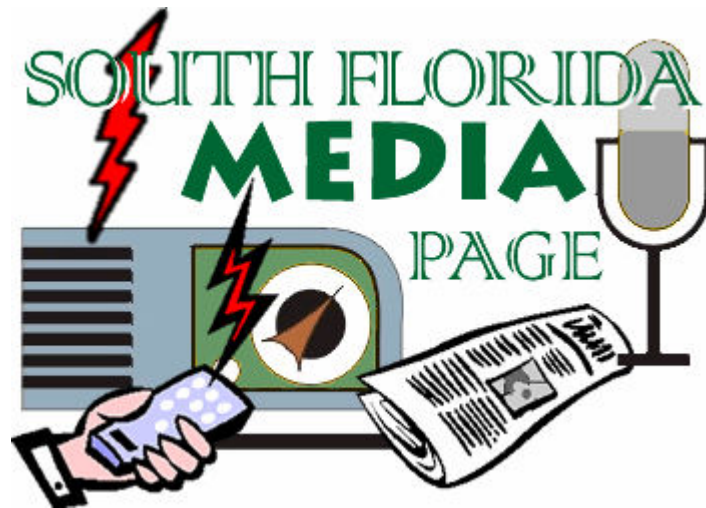
It doesn't matter what you're promoting, you are usually going to want to give the listener or reader a toll-free number or website to order, join, or get more information about you at the conclusion of your interview or article. Almost every radio station in the country will be happy to let you give out your number or website. If you are the author, most newspapers or magazines will allow you a brief 'by-line' at the conclusion of your article or opinion piece that lists your contact information. However, if you're interviewed by a newspaper or magazine, often the reporter won't give your contact information unless it's particularly relevant or 'newsworthy'.

The vast majority of TV programs will refuse to let you do plugs. The way they see it, allowing you to give out your number or website to their viewers' will represent an endorsement. However, if you're able to show your product benefit on TV somehow, that's a very powerful tool of persuasion. That's why so many folks actually buy infomercials. It's a shame more infomercials aren't **entertaining** and informative...they'd make a LOT more money in product sales if they were. The more entertaining, compelling, and emotional...the more money will be made.

Reach: Nothing Beats Radio

This may surprise you, but radio is a far more powerful media than TV in terms of the sheer number of people it reaches. And while listening levels to traditional radio have slid a bit in the last few years due to increased internet usage, satellite radio and other media choices, over 99% of Americans still use radio every week. Radio is everywhere...at home, in the car, at work. And, it's highly targeted. If you want to reach a particular segment of the population that is more likely to sample your product, chances are that there's a radio station that programs to that audience segment. Later in this book, I'll show you the specific target demographics for each radio format.

Of course, the internet has had a devastating impact on print medium; the bulk of newspaper readership is now among Americans over 55, and magazine circulation is also declining. One advantage newspapers and magazines do share with radio is the power of targeting: if you appear in a newspaper's sports section, predominantly men will read your message. If you're interviewed in *Cosmopolitan*, you'll become known to a primarily young, female consumer.



TV has less local programming, may involve travel costs

Here's an example of why being on TV is a much bigger pain than doing radio interviews. My friend Billy Ray Cyrus is a country singer and actor. We've known each other for almost twenty years now, since I was a nighttime radio personality in Huntington, WV and Billy and his buddies were the house band at The Ragtime Lounge in the same town. This was way before *Achy Breaky Heart* made Billy Ray a household hunk and shot him to country music stardom.

Billy is a great looking guy and his music videos are always a large part of his appeal to his female fans. He caught the acting bug doing those videos and appeared in several TV shows and movies, including the critically acclaimed David Lynch movie *Mulholland Drive*. Several years ago, Billy was offered the lead in a PAX TV series about a country doctor who moves to New York City to practice medicine. Billy Ray accepted the lead in *Doc* and the show became the highest rated series in PAX Television history.

As much as Billy enjoyed doing the show, and as great as it's been for his career, there was a huge drawback. Like many TV shows and movies, *Doc* was not filmed where it's set. So, this show about a country doctor in New York City was actually filmed in Canada! That's a far cry from Billy's beautiful Tennessee home, and a million miles away from his wife, Tish, and their children. He flew home at every possibility, and Tish and the kids visited Billy on the set, but the fact was that if Billy was going to star on that TV show, he had to travel to do it.

To do TV interviews, it would be the same for you. In order to do TV you almost always have to travel to their studio and endure all of the headaches that go along with this process. To do a radio interview you rarely ever have to leave the comfort of your own home ... you get to do your interview on the phone! On top of that, the radio station will almost always call you. You don't even have to pay for the long distance call. That's pretty amazing. If you do choose to take part in an in-studio radio interview, it might be with your hometown station. Or, you can schedule radio interviews for whenever you're in a particular city. Every city and town in America has local radio stations that do local programming. Many smaller cities don't have TV stations, and most TV stations produce very little local programming in-house.

Plus, if you are in the radio studio, you can show up wearing anything you wish...no make up, no hair stylists, just you and what you have to say are all that matters. And what if you're uncomfortable with your personal appearance or can't afford nice clothes? Don't laugh! This is a real consideration for some people. Obviously, radio interviews are the choice over TV if either of these is an issue for you.

By the way, Billy Ray Cyrus never got the chance to be *Semi-Famous* in his career. He went from being a local nightclub performer doing three sets a night 4 nights a week to being whisked from concert to concert on a private jet and living out of a suitcase for years. His face was everywhere, his song *Achy Breaky Heart* became a cultural phenomenon and he suffered a terrible case of over-exposure.

I did a show once with him during the height of ‘Achy Breaky Mania’ where 100,000 people showed up, totally overwhelming the event planners and security. The fans were pushing and rocking Billy’s tour bus and nearly turned it over. This would’ve hurt him badly and likely crushed the fans behind it. Pretty scary stuff. And, the toughest part of all was that Billy Ray has a whole more to offer than novelty hit and looks that will stop a girl in her tracks. He’s a VERY talented singer-songwriter, much more James Taylor than Weird Al Yankovic. It’s taken Billy years to get critical acceptance from his peers in Nashville, and he’s worked really hard to overcome those incorrect stereotypes. Many people still think of him as ‘The Achy Breaky Guy’. But, with a lot of effort and a willingness to stretch beyond the way people perceive him to be, Billy’s recent CD’s and his acting career have given him a nice career extension. And it couldn’t happen to a nicer, more genuine guy. I’m proud to call him my friend.



A bad case of the nerves...

A research study found that many people would rather die than speak in public. Unbelievable, isn't it? If you're one of those folks, writing a column for your local newspaper or magazine is the best option. And, if your choice is whether to do radio or TV, think about it. Which would you rather do? Talk on the phone from the comfort of your own home or have some reporter stick a microphone and camera in your face and broadcast your shaking, stuttering, white-knuckled likeness to laughing people who happen to tune in? This is not to say that you should tell a big TV show that calls to interview you, "Call back next year, I'm too busy doing radio right now." Work on your public speaking and confidence levels with a talent and media coach for when those opportunities present themselves. Great talent coaches can also be immensely helpful in working with you on your radio interview skills as well.

Conclusion: In most cases, start with radio

It makes the most sense for the majority of beginning media personalities to start out focusing on radio. It's less expensive and much more accessible than TV or print. Start with radio, and expand your focus outward to include other media. But, as I said earlier, 'fish where the fish are.' If you know the local newspaper editor and he's offering you the chance to do a free weekly column, jump at it and leverage it into doing radio interviews.

As you may have gathered, radio is my passion. It is my love, second only to my wife (and sometimes, she disagrees with that priority structure). And to my wife and others, my love for radio is hard for many people to understand.

It has very little of the glamour of television. It has none of the lasting impact of film. It is one of the most disposable media we have. And it is often used in the background – we listen to the radio while we're doing other things, like driving, eating or even watching television. It's a utility, like the lights or heat...you turn it on and just expect radio to be there.

However, radio is the most pervasive entertainment and information source in our lives. As I mentioned earlier, over 99% of the population listens to radio at least once a week. That's more than any other media source, including TV, newspaper and the Internet. Radio has a special place in our lives. It's everywhere.

And, when it comes to advertising, radio is at its best when it is building a brand, and building that brand over time. You shouldn't expect one appearance on radio to make or break you and your message. The good news? You can screw up an interview or two and it won't harm you too much. The bad news? You can do terrific interviews, on national shows, and it may still take time for the audience to even know you exist. There are exceptions. Alex, the gentleman who wrote the book about speeding tickets, worked for months to get an appearance on The Howard Stern radio program. He finally secured it, and after his one 15 minute segment with Howard, he sold \$40,000 worth of his book from that interview alone. But, that's the exception rather than the rule.

Use the media to get known.

Repetition of your name, your product's name, or your organization's cause are the right goals to have. It's human nature to think that when we appear on television, in the newspaper, or on the radio, that the population will be driven to do your bidding. It's not going to happen. As a young radio announcer, I hosted many live appearances at local car dealerships practically begging for listeners to stop by. Often, none did. Why? The dealership didn't **have a unique, compelling reason for busy listeners** to drop what they were doing and rush to the live radio broadcast. But, when the dealership did things right (free food during lunch hour, 0% interest, beautiful spokesmodels showing off the sports cars) listeners came in droves.

You need to have reasonable expectations about what your appearance on radio is going to do for you. It may take lots of interviews and appearances on lots of radio stations for your message to be felt unless you have a really compelling product. Fortunately, there are over 12,000 radio stations in America. And every one of them has a show just waiting to talk to you and help make you *Semi-Famous*.



Who listens to what?

A list of the top radio formats for key demographic groups in the 18-54 year old age brackets.



Radio Demographics ...Who Listens To What

Age 18-24

<u>Format</u>	<u>% of Listeners</u>
Top 40	18.5
Urban	17.5
Adult Contemporary (AC)	13.6
Album Rock	10.9
Modern Rock	8.9
Country	8.0
Spanish	6.9
Classic Rock	4.1
News/Talk	3.5
Urban AC	2.8
Oldies	2.1
Religious	1.0
New AC/Smooth Jazz	0.9
Classical	0.3
Big Band/Middle of the Road	0.1

Age 35-44

<u>Format</u>	<u>% of Listeners</u>
Adult Contemporary (AC)	16.6
News/Talk	13.9
Country	9.8
Album Rock	9.4
Classic Rock	8.1
Top 40	6.6
Spanish	6.4
Urban	6.2
Oldies	5.8
Urban AC	5.0
New AC/Smooth Jazz	4.1
Modern Rock	3.1
Religious	2.4
Classical	1.0
Big Band/Middle of the Road	0.6

Age 25-34

<u>Format</u>	<u>% of Listeners</u>
Adult Contemporary (AC)	16.6
Album Rock	12.1
Top 40	10.7
Urban	9.8
News/Talk	9.3
Country	9.1
Spanish	7.7
Modern Rock	6.7
Classic Rock	6.0
Urban AC	4.0
Oldies	2.4
New AC/Smooth Jazz	2.0
Religious	1.7
Classical	0.6
Big Band/Middle of the Road	0.2

Age 45-54

<u>Format</u>	<u>% of Listeners</u>
News/Talk	19.6
Adult Contemporary (AC)	16.9
Oldies	12.3
Country	10.8
Spanish	5.6
New AC/Smooth Jazz	5.3
Urban AC	4.6
Classic Rock	4.4
Urban	4.2
Album Rock	4.1
Top 40	3.4
Religious	2.8
Classical	2.2
Big Band/Middle of the Road	1.7
Modern Rock	1.2

Format study courtesy of the Radio Advertising Bureau and Arbitron



As you can see, certain radio formats target certain groups of listeners.

You should first target those stations whose listeners are most likely to be interested and entertained by what you have to say. If you're promoting a book about health care for older Americans, don't try to get an interview on a radio station that plays the latest and greatest hip hop and rap tunes. If your topic is sports-related, don't try to get booked onto the morning show of the station that plays love songs. **Fish where the fish are.** Some topics are entertaining and informative to certain people; other people could care less. Take the book on senior health care to the markets' easy listening or all-news station. Take that sports topic to the young male targeted rock station...or better yet, the all-sports talk station. Radio lets you specifically target your content, thus making the 'pitch' more subtle and more entertaining all at the same time.

Also keep this in mind. You can always "change up your pitch" to fit the radio station who's listeners you're appealing to. I work with a psychologist, Dr. Katie, who does radio, TV and print interviews all over the country and even overseas. When Katie appears on a young female targeted Top 40 radio station, she's likely to chat about the latest romance for Britney Spears or J Lo. When she's on a country station, it's about relationships with children and families. On the rock stations, the dialogue might turn a bit more risqué and deal with guys and their dating lives. At the end, Katie always wraps up by talking about one of her products (CD's, books, etc.) and why it's just right for that particular stations listeners. So, target your presentation to the available audience.

How do you find out what radio stations target which listeners? Build a station database or purchase one. Do internet research. A great website to find out station information is www.radio-locator.com. Ask your friends in a particular city. But definitely do your homework before you ever make contact with a station.

KNOW THE SHOW



**As a morning radio personality, consultant and talent coach,
I've heard tons of interviews with guests who go on a radio
show and sound like a fish out of water.**

The host and guest don't mesh. Nobody calls in. The questions are answered poorly, and the effect is boring radio and lots of tune-out. All that can be avoided. How?

Take the time to understand not just the radio station, but the show you're appearing on. For most music stations, you'll be a guest on the morning show. For talk stations, it'll be a particular hosts program. Find out what that host or shows goals are and why the show is on the air. Don't even pitch yourself to a show or station until you're sure you'll be relevant to their target audience.

You'll be wasting your time, and a valuable opportunity to be on another station and another show where you can be effective. Plus, you'll burn a bridge in a very small business. Air talents move a lot, from station to station, and they'll remember the bad experience. Plus, they network with other talent and pretty soon, you could have a big red 'X' by your name before you ever even get on the air.

Remember, every show on every radio station is on the air for one reason: it gets better ratings than anything else the radio stations programmers could think of to put on the air. If the ratings slip, the show could be gone and will get replaced with another show that gets better ratings. Don't fight the show's reason for existence – embrace it.

So what does this mean?

Radio shows have to fill their time with something entertaining: music, chatter, current events, humor, commercials and yes, interviews. But any show is only going to go for the interviews that will sound great to their audience, will tickle the host, and will make the show hum. Air talent and show producers will use any excuse to say no to a pitch that they don't believe will sound good on the air.

That does not mean that if your product doesn't relate directly to the show, you have no chance to get it on the air. It means, as I said earlier, that you have to tailor your pitch to match the show. Before, we talked about how Dr. Katie tailors her pitch to particular station formats.

Here are some examples of how to tailor yourself and your pitch to particular types of shows:

1. If it's a political show, make sure you include politics in your pitch – and don't avoid completely disagreeing with the host's position. Every opinionated talk host loves to mix it up. Look at Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh; they're at their best when they're jousting with someone who has an opposing view.
2. If it's a morning radio show, remember that you're asking for a piece of the most expensive 'real estate' on the air. More people listen to radio in the morning than at any other time. Stations win and lose...live and die...on the strength of their morning show. You'd better have a great reason for approaching that show.
3. If it's a weekend specialty show, know that your product or service must have some relevance to the show's subject matter. It doesn't have to be exact, but it has to relate. Here's an example: if there's a weekend home improvement show on a talk station and you're a financial planner, it may seem like an unlikely fit. But, if you cast yourself as an expert in helping homeowners decide what kinds of home equity loans to get – because they are a great source of funds to add enhancements to their homes-then you might just be able to score that interview.

And remember to investigate the basics:

- the show's air time
- whether it's live or taped
- whether they do in-studio live interviews or prefer the phone
- where the studios are located
- whether or not the show is local or nationally syndicated

A morning show producer friend at a successful major East Coast market station once told me to my amazement:

"Every day I field calls from people who don't have a clue where (his city) is geographically in relation to the rest of the state, or who have no concept of what type of guests my format of radio station is looking for. And, if you hire a PR firm to book you, don't expect them to know the answer. I can't tell you how many times I've had a PR person say to me, after they've pitched me on a guest, 'So what is your show all about?' What do you think their chances are of getting on the show? Nada."

Not good, masked man. Tonto smell trouble.

Never pitch a show (or station) cold. Find out what the show is all about. Find out how long it's been on the air, what its' target audience is, and what time it's on the air. Listen to the show either on the air, or over the internet if the station offers an online feed. Have someone in the market tape the show and mail you the cassette ahead of your interview. Be prepared.

I can't overstate the importance of **listening to the show in advance**. You'll get a feel for the dynamic of the host and the callers, the time available for your segment, the other on- and off-air team members and the interplay between them and the host and how you'll fit in with all those variables. In many smaller markets, you'll be 'carrying' the show host who may be somewhat weak and inexperienced. You'll need to know that too, so that you'll take a more controlling position with the interview.

Don't just listen for a few minutes and think you know everything you need to know: they may be doing a special show, or a remote, or a new segment that doesn't quite work the way the rest of the show does, or they may have a guest host on. Give it a few hours or days. Try to listen the way normal listeners do: in the background, while doing other things. Live the experience you would if you were in their listening audience.

20 Things You Need To Get Started Doing Media Interviews

1. A Great Topic or Entertaining or Informative Show Idea

Whatever it is you are promoting, you need to make it, or the subject matter that you are going to talk about, entertaining, informative, useful, or controversial. The more of these you can incorporate, the better. And remember, your on-air performance or topic may, or may not, have much to do with what you are ultimately promoting. Here's an example: Lets say you are the spokesperson for a Republican Political Action Committee that's trying to promote Republican values. Not too many radio hosts are going to want to talk to you. You have a boring political agenda.

But what if you have lots of good juicy stories to tell about the President Clinton sex-capades and other scandalous improprieties while in office? Now hosts will beat a path to your door. You have something their listeners want to hear about...scandal, controversy, sex and lies. And in between the juicy stories, you'll be throwing in your Republican values and no one will mind.

Here's another example. Don Tolman started a company called 'The Brain Garden.' He sells healthy packaged fruits and nuts and other goodies. Way too boring to get radio interviews, right? Well, Don has a very unusual gift. He has a photographic memory. He can memorize an entire page in 2 seconds flat. So, Don does radio interviews about his memory and blows people away. The next question out of the host's gaping mouth is of course, "Don, how do you do this?" He goes on to share a few simple memory exercises and tells them that it has an awful lot to with getting the proper nutrition to the brain ... which of course is what he sells.

What are your topic ideas? How can you make them unique, compelling and entertaining? Use the space below to brainstorm:

2) Media Coaching and Training

Listen to tapes of your interviews and self-critique. Have media professionals (just make sure they're qualified) review your press kit and other materials. Practice, Practice, Practice. And if at all possible, especially when you're getting started, hire someone to help you get your media strategic plan together.

If they can also critique your on-air appearances, that would be doubly helpful. There are only a few folks around the country that do this well, so beware of people who may pass themselves off as having more knowledge than they do.

You can contact me at www.allenmediastrategies.com for assistance with finding a strategic planner.

Use the space below to brainstorm:

What qualities are you looking for with your media coach? What are your 'growing edges'?

What kind of personality do you work best with: blunt, gentle, assertive, aggressive, nurturing, etc.? This will help you find and select the correct media coach.

What type of strategic planning can you do right now?

3) A Great Press Kit

This is your first impression, your key to the *Semi-Famous* door. Design it to grab the attention of the host or producer. Don't scrimp on this; if it looks cheap, shows will likely take a pass on you. Here's what it should include:

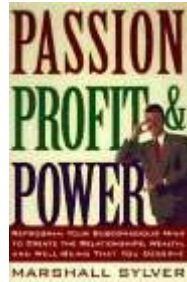
- Both Electronic and Hard Copies
- Who you are. A short, entertaining bio.
- What you want to tell his/her audience
- How their listeners can benefit from you being on the show
- Your contact info
- What you are promoting
- Sharp, sturdy housing: a high quality, matte finished, double pocket portfolio. If at all possible, put a color graphic/photo/book cover, etc. on the front cover of the portfolio to get their attention.
- Your Business Card:
Good portfolios always have a business card slot. Put all your contact info on the front, and more details about you on the back. Then, if the producer/host pitches the rest of your kit and keeps your card, they'll remember more about you.
- Press Release:
Usually, if the producer keeps only one page, this will be the one. Make sure it's one page and really jumps out at them. This (and every page in the kit) should have all your contact info on it...phone, email, fax, cell, etc. Try to include a small photo of you or the product with a caption, and a 'bullet box' quick read. Look at examples of other great press releases or contact me at www.allenmediastrategies.com for specifics on what a great one page press release should look like.
- Ordering/Contact Info:
This can list things like your toll-free order number, your website, the price of your book, product or service, any special offers for the station's listeners and any other contact information that you feel is appropriate.

- **Sample coverage request:**
Ask for a tape; it usually doesn't happen, but it can't hurt. Just a quick line that says "a sample copy or tape of any coverage mailed to us would be greatly appreciated. We will gladly cover any costs incurred." This is then followed by your address.
- **Sample Questions:**
A list of sample questions for the host to ask you during the interview. Hosts and producers love these! When I was a morning air talent, the interview guests who sent me sample questions almost always got interviewed. I knew that they'd be prepared, entertaining, and best of all, they were making my job easy for me!
- **Controversy Sheet:**
More than anything else these days, producers and hosts are looking for controversial topics. Why? Because listeners get involved in the controversy. They call in and argue. They vent. They get angry. They tell their friends, "You won't believe what they were talking about on the radio this morning." They may not agree, but whatever they do ... they listen. There's a great statistic out there that says folks who love the Howard Stern show actually listen to him for an average of an hour every weekday morning...a full hour! Who has time for that? And, the folks who hate Howard, the ones who think he's a pig and despise his brand of shock jock radio...those folks listen for an hour and a half! So if you can talk about a hot topic, do it.
- **Testimonials & Clippings:**
Magazine or newspaper reviews or articles about you and your subject, and MAJOR newspaper or magazine articles that may not mention you specifically but that do cover your topic. These show the producer your topic is newsworthy. Talking about love and relationships? Use a USA Today or Maxim Magazine article about the topic to prove your point. Also include a few thank you letters from other producers or hosts. Those let prospective hosts/shows know that you're a good interview.
- **Use a great envelope:**
Put your press kit into a colored, big and odd sized (10 x13, for example) mailer. I favor using colored envelopes to help them stand out. A cardboard-sturdy envelope is best, so that your stuff doesn't get mangled in the mail. And finally, if you can, hand address the envelope and put a note on it that says 'Requested Materials Enclosed' to increase your chances of the envelope getting opened, especially if you've called a station and someone has actually said "send us your stuff".

4) Have a Catchy Name, title or phrase that you can associate with what you are promoting

This is important because many people will hear your interview on the radio while they are in their cars. If your buzzword(s) are memorable, they will remember you later, if they're not, they won't. That's one of the reasons why hypnotist Marshall Sylver's *Passion, Profit and Power* was so successful. The name was catchy, easy to remember and meaningful.

Use the space below to brainstorm a catchy names, titles, or phrases. Think of as many as you can. Solicit input from others. Remember, there's no such thing as a bad idea in brainstorming.



5) Get a Toll-Free ‘Vanity Number’ and an easy to remember website address

Make sure neither can be duplicated by multiple spellings. Don't make listeners/readers/viewers work too hard to reach you. Give them easy to remember contact/order info. The toll free phone number should either spell something that ties into your topic or be a number sequence that is easy to remember. A huge amount of radio listening, especially in the morning and afternoon while folks drive to and from work, is in-car listening. Very often, folks won't be able to write down your website address or phone number, so keep it simple and easy to recall.

Use the space below to write a list of catchy phone numbers and domain names that you would like to have. Then, eliminate the ones that are already taken.

6) Ability to Accept Credit Cards

If you are selling something (as opposed to just promoting a cause or agenda) you've gotta be equipped to take credit card orders. 90% of the orders that come in for most interviewees products are paid for by credit card. Don't lose the 'impulse buy' because you're not equipped to accept credit card transactions.

Use the space below to compare companies that set-up credit card accounts. Remember to ask for any other fees that will be included for initial set-up, as well as monthly and per transaction fees. Compare and contrast the customer service level you receive, because your customers will likely receive the same type of service that you did.

7) Someone to answer your phones

Even if you are primarily sending listeners to your website, you'll miss out on impulse sales from people with cell phones, as well as folks who don't have internet access for whatever reason.

You may think that you or your staff can handle taking orders after you have done an interview, and in many cases you may be right. But if you do a big interview, you could miss out on a ton of sales revenue.

Use the space below to begin organizing your phone system. Remember to include temporary staffing agencies, friends, call centers or 'reception' services.

8) Someone to fulfill orders

Again, if you're just getting started you and your office staff may be able to handle it. But as your business grows, you'll need a fulfillment house. There are several out there and pricing varies. For both the answering service and the fulfillment house, take time to connect with the operators. They're going to represent your company and be your sellers/closers. Make sure they're doing a good job. Send them samples of your product and autograph it for them. Make them fans, not just order takers. Send them written thank you notes. Tip them if possible. They're your front line.

Use the space below to compare companies that can help you fulfill your orders. Remember to include all services provided as well as cost and the level of customer service you received in your initial inquiry.

9) Some sort of credentials can be important

Medical advice is easier to swallow if there's an M.D., an R.N. or another set of initials following it. One of the best credentials you can have to get an interview is to write a book. It can be self published, and many are. But the fact that you've written a book on a subject goes a long way towards validating that you're an authority on a subject in a host's mind. Plus, it can generate sales for you.

Use the space below to list your credentials. If you don't have credentials, list qualities or skills that you possess and can use to present yourself as an expert. Look into the feasibility of starting a group or organization on the internet that you can appoint yourself 'the head of', to add validity to your credential list.

10) Small market start

If you've never done interviews before, start small. Look for smaller market stations where mistakes won't be so quickly judged. It's like on the job training. Think of those interviews as baseball players think of the minor leagues; a place to build your skills and work the kinks out on the way to 'the show'.

Get a map and locate at least 10 small towns within 300 miles of you. Then, go to www.radio-locator.com and look them up to find out if they have a radio station that might interview you.



11) Good, Clean Phone Line

Sounds obvious, but it's not. Don't do interviews on your cell phone, which could drop out. Disable call waiting, so there are no clicks or beeps (for most phone systems, dialing *70 before you dial a number disables call waiting for the duration of that call). Don't use a cordless handheld; you may get static. Make sure no one else at home or in the office can pick up an extension while you're on the air. Don't use the speakerphone function. If the station is calling you, after you've answered the phone, ask the producer or host to hold on for just a second. Then click over to the other line just as you would if there were a call on the other line. You will hear a dial tone. Then click back over and do your interview. Now any incoming calls will receive a busy signal because you just tied up the second line.

Practice good phone technique; disable call waiting. Have people you talk to on the phone judge the audio quality of your voice and phone line. Check the different phones in your home or office to find the best quality.



12) Learn how to work the microphone for in-studio interviews

When you make an appearance on television, there are dozens of people working behind the scenes to make your image look better. There are makeup people and camera people and writers who pre-interview. In radio, things are much looser. Usually, the show host is running all the equipment. Two tips: first, don't sit too far away from the microphone. All mics in radio studios are to be worked close up, about a fist length away from your mouth. And don't touch it with your hands like singers do, you'll make loud banging noises on the air. Second, try to talk "across" microphones. Don't talk straight into them; try to talk across them at a 45 degree angle. This minimizes the popping noises we generate when we say words with plosives in them, like P's and B's.

If you've never been to a radio station, call your local station and ask for a tour of the studios. Pay special attention to how the announcer uses the microphone and studio equipment. Get a feel for what it's like inside a radio station.



13) Ordering/Contact Info Cards

You need to make up some index cards, that have information on them like:

- The name of your organization, product or book
- How it or you can be obtained or contacted
- Pricing information

Make them in a light color, and send a couple of them to the station along with a confirmation letter for the day and time of your interview. On the confirmation letter, ask the host/producer to put one of the cards in the studio and the other at the front desk with the receptionist. Then, callers who didn't catch your phone number or website who call the station later to get your contact info can find out how to reach you and buy your product. As a former air talent, I can tell you it happened EVERY TIME our morning show had a unique, compelling guest on the air.

Type up sample contact/info cards on a variety of different colors of index cards to see which color and what font and font size are easiest to read from several feet away (like announcers and receptionists will). Jot down the verbage you'll use on those cards below.

14) A call recording device that you can record your phone interviews with

You can then go back later and critique your performance, or send the tapes to your talent coach for a critique. Plus, you should listen to the interviews that generated more orders and figure out what you said that made a difference. Self critiquing is essential to perfecting your presentation. You can get these recording devices at most electronic stores like Radio Shack.

Make a trip to Radio Shack and experiment with different systems that are in stock. Also, look on line for different devices. www.hellodirect.com is one place you should check. Compare and contrast devices. You can make your notes below.

15) A nice thank you letter to send after your interview is very important

Radio station hosts rarely get these, so you'll really stand out. Make it brief and be sure to tell them that you appreciate the opportunity to be on their show and that you look forward to doing so again in the future. You should ask them if they know anyone else that might be interested in interviewing you, and if they would be so kind as to pass along your contact info to those people. Let them know that if they're members of any radio guest exchange bulletin boards that you'd sure appreciate it if they'd post your info there too. Also, remember to tell them that you are available if they ever need an emergency guest. Finally, it's always nice to send them a complimentary copy (personally autographed) of your product if possible.

Go to your computer and type up 3 different 'generic' thank you letters now. Have them done and ready to go at a moments notice. Then, they won't feel so cumbersome to write and send after interviews.

16) A media contact database

These can be cumbersome, but they're absolutely essential. You can buy them, or you can build them. You can get some info from the web and more from calling the stations and build it into a sort-able database program like Excel. Include columns for:

- Call letters
- Dial position
- Station 'slogan'
- Station audience target
- Station format
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Fax number
- Station contact name
- Station contact email address
- Station website address
- Station activity (when you've contacted them, been on the air with them, etc.)
- Other info

Set up a blank excel database now to plug in this information. Get sample data from the internet. Visit www.radio-locator.com and station websites to get started. Also, email me at burke@allenmediastrategies.com and I'll send you several stations database information free of charge.

17) Find a quiet room where you won't be disturbed

Make sure no one will be knocking on the door, walking in to distract you or try to chat with you while you're on the air. No background noises that can distract from the interview...dogs barking, babies crying, alarms that may go off, honking car horns, etc. can really steal focus and the host could very well bail on you if it happens. Print up a sign like the one on the next page to put on the closed door to the room where you're doing the interview.

**Quiet,
Please!**

**Radio
Interview
In Progress**

**DO NOT
DISTURB**

18) Pay attention to the time

Don't ever be late calling in for an interview. Always answer the phone when shows call you. Never avoid their calls. I occasionally do guest shots for a friend's radio interview in England. He often calls when he has less than 30 seconds before we go on the air, because he knows I'll answer and be prepared and ready to go. And don't ignore the time once you go on the air. Radio and TV stations work in tight time constraints; you're a guest in their house, so don't monopolize the time. Make it easy for show hosts to wrap up a segment when they're ready.

Practice your time/timing. Synchronize your clocks to read the 'real' time, not an estimate. Purchase one alarm clock with a battery backup. Set that one for morning show interviews; the battery back-up will cause the alarm to sound even if your electricity goes off during the night due to a storm.

19) Smile when you talk

It really does change the tone of your voice on the air and makes you sound much more pleasant and approachable during your interview segment. Have fun when you're on the air; make it sound like you're hanging out and chatting one on one with your friends. And one-on-one is key: never address *the audience*...make a one-on-one connection with your listeners.

Practice recording your voice into a mini-recorder. Notice the difference in inflection and how it makes your voice sound. Work on your diction and focusing your message away from addressing a group and into addressing the message in a one-on-one style.

20) Remember that hosts often will not know much about your field of expertise and will sometimes ask questions that are completely irrelevant

This is where you need to be able to subtly shift your answer to the central theme of the area you WANT to talk about. Practice this with some colleagues before your appearance. Have them role-play as radio hosts, asking questions that are not quite on point. See if you can gently guide the answers back to relevancy. But be careful, if you don't do this very subtly and with finesse, you'll just sound like an opportunist. Politicians are great at this; it's the art of the spin and re-focus.

Call three different friends and try the re-focus exercise. Tape the call so that you can work on improving your skills in subtly shifting the topic.

Bonus Tip

21) Last-Minute Availability

If you can, let producers and shows know that you can fill in at the last minute.

Veteran show hosts have a list of guests in our back pocket that they know they can call if they have a last minute cancellation. The guests that make that list are those that they know can always be counted on for 15 minutes of entertaining radio in a last minute pinch. If you can do this, you've got a great chance of repeated bookings. But don't offer yourself as this kind of pinch-hitter if your schedule doesn't normally allow you to do this. Remember, you'll have to be able to think on your feet and give great radio whenever and wherever you happen to be. Make sure your name and all numbers in the talent and the newsroom's Rolodex. To use the financial planner example again, make sure the air talent knows that you are available to comment on what affect Alan Greenspan's latest talk on interest rates will have on home buyers, etc.

You've now got tons of great information to get you started; real life successes to model yourself after, a media goal-setting checklist, the top 20 talk radio topics, suggestions on your ideal media mix, how to create a great press kit, 21 things you need to get started doing media interviews...even a FREE "Do Not Disturb" studio sign!

Now...go out there and become *Semi-Famous!* Still have questions? Get in touch and let me show you how.

Here's to your success!

Burke Allen

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About The Author

Burke Allen brings over two decades of radio experience as an top rated air talent and morning show personality, Music Director, Program Director, Operations Manager with major broadcasters like CBS/Infinity, Bonneville and American Radio Systems. His success record of directing radio stations and their talent includes #1 finishes in markets like Orlando, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Savannah, Charleston and many more. For the past several years, Burke has served as a Washington, DC based broadcast consultant for radio stations both domestically and internationally, where he is a part of the nation's most respected broadcast consultancy Alan Burns and Associates. He also teaches radio performance skills as a tenured faculty member of the Connecticut School of Broadcasting's Washington DC campus and has an ownership interest in radio broadcast properties.

In his career, Burke has worked with many '***Semi-Famous***' and '***Really Famous***' personalities in crafting their message and taking it to the public. He's worked closely with top talent including syndicated urban radio personality Tom Joyner, TV, movie, and radio personality Jay Thomas ("*Cheers*", "*Murphy Brown*", "*Mr. Holland's Opus*"), country music sensation and TV star Billy Ray Cyrus ("*Doc*"), *Partridge Family* star and recording artist David Cassidy, Grammy nominated artist Jim Brickman ("*Valentine*"), best selling authors Homer Hickam ("*October Sky*") and Armin Brott ("*The Expectant Father*"), TV personality Chris Booker ("*Entertainment Tonight*", "*MTV*", "*Howard Stern Show*") and dozens more.

Burke created and was the Executive Producer of motivational speaker and Las Vegas entertainer Marshall Sylver's top rated program on CBS Radio's KMZQ, which resulted in over 2,000 attendees at each Sylver personal develop seminar. Allen has also be instrumental as media consultant for national radio personality and psychologist Dr. Katie's marketing blitz of dozens of successful radio interviews, daily radio vignettes, TV and print appearances and personal appearances in markets all over the U.S. (www.drkatie.com).

Burke lives in suburban Washington, DC where he enjoys being ***Semi-Famous*** by hosting his own weekend radio show at Washington station WARW, flying small planes, motorcycling, being an active part of his church, but most of all spending time with wife Cristi and kids Cristin, Michael and Burke Allen II.

Testimonials

Here are a few letters from folks just like you who've taken the path to "Becoming Semi-Famous" with Allen Media Strategies one-on-one help.

"Burke Allen is a wonderful guy to have in your corner. He's a creative, think-outside-the-box kind of guy who has tons of connections that he shares with his clients. More importantly, Burke is a true ally--someone who truly values his clients' success and does everything he can to achieve it--and a great motivator".

Armin Brott, syndicated newspaper and radio personality and author of best selling book series on fatherhood, including *The Expectant Father*, *Fathering Your Toddler* and *The New Father*. www.misterdad.com

"This is a short note to thank you for your encouragement about the seminar. It all went off very well. We have made lists about ways to improve things for next time, and most of those items have to do with logistical details rather than content. The students all expressed that they had received good value for their money, and they all had a good time.

You will be interested to know that I am using the logo which you had designed. I used it on my PowerPoint introduction, the name tags, the CD labels and the promotional materials. It looks great!

I made a conscious effort to be an entertainer in addition to being a teacher. There is still room for improvement in that area; much of the humor and entertainment came up in an ad hoc manner as I responded to questions or situations as they developed. I likewise interspersed the teaching with lots of stories showing how the legal principles applied in real life. Thanks for your help and good thoughts".

Dave Guinan, attorney, asset protection expert and public speaker. www.daveguinan.com

"I have been so pleased working with Burke Allen. His knowledge of the field, his insight and his genuine sense of caring for my success is amazing. Burke has been able to discuss my career goals with me and help to keep me focused on the goal while not getting stuck or diverted by the daily 'stuff' that can alter the course.

I think every professional entertainer, or speaker should have Burke on their team."

David Parker, award winning children's entertainer and author of "The Best Me I Can Be" children's book series. www.hellodavid.com

Burke, I just wanted to thank you for your consistent and helpful coaching. As you know I had a desire to do "something" to be semi-famous but did not know what. You helped me sift through many ideas until settling on a topic for a book "How to sell your house in 72 hours." You helped me find my identity as "Mr. 72 Hours" and got me on the radio.

It was much more work than I had anticipated but you broke it down into bite size pieces by giving me homework every week and holding me accountable. Even when a personal crisis came up and I tried to quit you were right there with "tough love" making sure I stuck with it. I respect you so much for that because I had already paid you and told you I did not expect anything else from you. Yet you called me and talked me into continuing on. You truly went way above and beyond the call of duty.

You made sure I got my first radio interview as promised even though it took me many (many, many) more months to develop my product than we agreed upon. I can honestly say I never would have done it without you. You are the very embodiment of a good coach; you were knowledgeable and informative while coaxing ideas out of me, and perhaps more importantly, you were patient yet persistent in getting me to follow through on those ideas and get it in writing. (Getting me to sit down and write is no easy task!) I had it in me and I knew it, but I would never have gotten my book together and gotten interviewed on the radio without you. You have found your calling and I would STRONGLY recommend you to anyone who needs help getting a "rough idea" polished into a fine "gem stone" ready to be presented to the public.

Thanks again Burke!

Nathan Big, Chicago real estate investor and developer of the "Sell Your House in 72 Hours" book and informational program www.mr72hours.com

"Thanks Burke; you really know your stuff!"

Marshall Sylver, Motivational speaker and best selling author of "Passion, Profit and Power". www.sylver.com

"Thank you so much, Burke. I recommended you to an ex-astronaut who has a new book out this fall.. Hope he contacts you. You're the best!"

Homer Hickam, New York Times best selling author of "Rocket Boys" which was made into the major Hollywood movie "October Sky". www.homerhickam.com

“Working with Allen Media Strategies and Burke Allen was an amazing ride. With Mr. Allen's guidance and direction, I was able to quickly learn the ins and outs of the radio world and create an amazing media package.

I was given invaluable instruction on how to present myself and my products to perspective radio stations who would be interested in having me on their shows. Using the tools and media package that Mr. Allen helped me to develop, I secured a morning drive-time spot every Tuesday morning on a mid-sized radio station within a very short time.

In addition to being given the gift of the firm's years of experience in the world of media, I also continue to received the personal benefit of having access to the firm whenever I am in need of advice or council on an upcoming event or project. It's like being part of a family. Time may pass but the relationship with Allen Media Strategies remains strong and lasting.”

Roxie On The Radio, psychic www.roxieontheradio.com

“Burke Allen has been an awesome asset to me and has provided the information needed for me to get started in and expand my business. He has a network of businesses that can be of assistance to people who are getting started, expanding or whom desires more exposure in any business enterprise. I have found Burke to fulfill his commitment to me on every occasion and has provided service that goes over and above what is expected. Burke is a delight to work with and is dedicated to my success and the success of all his clients.”

Education expert “Mister One Million” www.mronemillion.com

“With only acceptance, non-critical support, and mirroring my actions as his methods, Burke Allen’s coaching ignited my dreams, and showed me how to realize them. He taught me the importance of unswerving commitment and extraordinary faith in order to create a bonfire from a mere candle. Thank you....with all my heart, thank you!”

Dr. Katie, psychologist and relationship expert www.drkatie.com