

TOP TIPS FOR BEING A GREAT GUEST



Top tips for being a great guest – Girls Around Town



You've been invited to be a guest on a radio programme. You're thrilled and perhaps a little bit nervous, especially if you're a radio 'virgin'...

Just as there's an art to hosting a show, there's an art to being a great guest. As presenters, it's as much in our interests as it is in yours to make sure you get the most out of the experience, so here are our **TOP TEN TIPS** to help you be a dream guest – for any radio opportunity, not just on **Girls Around Town**.

#1 Relax and be yourself

You were invited on to the show because of who you are, to share your story or your expertise. We want you to relax and be yourself so we'll do our best to put you at ease.

But don't just take our word for it, have a look at some of the **things our guests say** after they've been on the show. Notice the common themes running through all the comments? Our interviews are fun, they're relaxed and we're **very** friendly!!

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#2 It's called a 'show' for a reason

You don't need to be too serious and display all your knowledge all at once. We like you to be entertaining as well. But that doesn't mean you have to crack jokes, just let your personality and humour shine through.

Interview shows are thoughtful and substantive but if the conversation doesn't entertain listeners on some level – if it doesn't make them laugh, make them cry, get them fired up or angry, excited or motivated, inspired or thoughtful – they'll switch station or switch off.

Spoken word content is consumed in a different way from content in articles, magazines or websites. Radio consumption is active and immediate. And while there might be a podcast or listen again feature, don't rely on listeners going back to it. Make the most of your live opportunity.

#3 Be comfortable talking about your subject

We want you to be at ease talking about your subject and give you the airtime to do just that. The nightmare guests for us are those who give one-sentence (or even worse, one word) answers or those who drone on without drawing breath.

#4 Think small chunks of information

Serve up your expertise or stories in digestible, easy to understand morsels. Think three steps, five habits, four tips... not only is that good for the audience, it helps us guide the show and establish a good flow of give and take in the conversation.

#5 Allow for listener familiarity

Radio listeners generally go with what is familiar and comfortable. They tune in to programmes like GAT to hear a conversation.

It helps if you listen to the show before you are due to take part in an interview so you can be aware of its format and the way it flows – particularly for commercial stations where there are ad breaks to fit in and possibly all sorts of other commitments to work around.

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#6 Learn something about the presenters

Check out the hosts' blogs and social media pages ahead of your interview. Not only does it put you at ease if you feel you know something about them before you meet them in the studio, it also lets you reference them as people. For example, if relevant, you might say "I saw the story you posted on Facebook, June, and it reminded me of..." or "You made a similar point on your blog, Fiona ...".

If you sound like you're the presenter's friend, you put the presenter at ease. You fit into his or her show. And you make your appearance more comfortable and enjoyable for the audience too.

The audience always enjoys a conversation between friends a lot more than a one-sided presentation. And if you connect with the host – and thus with the audience – you're more likely to be asked back again too.

#7 Show the listeners some love as well

Help the audience feel good about themselves while you inform or educate them. Reference them in the conversation by saying things like "Your listeners might already know about xxx, Tina ..."

#8 Learn from listening to others

Listen to radio interviews and take note of what you found engaging and what turned you off. Note what worked and use it.

#9 Educate – Inform – Entertain – Inspire

Whatever your story or your area of expertise, think about how you can incorporate these four pillars of a good interview into your airtime in a memorable way. Facts and stats are great but we learn and remember through stories, so have a stack of stories and examples you can draw on.

Make your notes in bullet points rather than narratives. Listeners can always tell when you are reading aloud and unless you're doing so for a valid reason, such as quoting from an article or book, it doesn't make for good radio.

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#10 You are the expert on you and your subject

You are the expert so, although the presenters will have a list of questions, be prepared and able to guide the discussion or conversation to the points you want to get across. You'll know the important things to mention, they might not.

Some presenters (like the GAT team) will send you an interview guide or questions in advance but others won't. Taking your own list of questions to give to the presenter can be helpful – they might not use it but you can for your own reference.

So how do you guide the conversation in the direction you want to go? Say something like “That’s a really interesting question, Sue, I’m glad you asked it and I’ll come back to that in a moment if I may. First, it’s important to understand/share with your listeners....”, then come back to the earlier question.

Or if you don’t want to answer that question at all, you could say “That’s an interesting question, Sue, I’m glad you asked it. But the question that I find most people ask about this is...”

As long as you’re polite and still seeking to educate, inform, entertain or inspire, then the presenter usually won’t mind.