



June 2007


JUNE 13 Meeting

Meet the Media



Producers, interviewers and columnists often hold the key to your success. How do you effectively approach them? How do they choose what makes a good segment or story? Learn directly from the powers-that-be what they are looking for in a guest, interview or article and what kinds of PR materials make them sit up and take notice; how to successfully pitch an article and what turns them off.

Our panel of local radio, TV and newspaper professionals will share insights on how to create a newsworthy spin to get you on the air and tips to giving a successful radio/TV interview.

Meeting location: The Lodge at Des Peres, 1050 Des Peres Road, Des Peres, Mo 63131. Doors open for networking at 6:30 PM, meeting begins at 7:00 PM. The formal meeting concludes around 8:30 with networking continuing after the meeting. For directions to the Lodge, visit our web site and click the link. www.stlouispublishers.org 

In This Issue



1 Meet the Media

1 Four Tips to Get Talk Radio Hosts Interested in Your Book
by Marsha Friedman

2 Does Media Coverage Translate Into Sales? By Fern Reiss

3 Why Hire a Publicist? By Laura Clark

4 Business 101 for Authors and Writers By Bill Collier

5 SLPA Anniversary Don't Miss This Event!

6 Bits and Bytes

Feature by Marsha Friedman

Four Tips to Get Talk Radio Hosts Interested in Your Book

Talk radio interviews are one of the bases of a writing homerun. In fact, they're custom-made for non-fiction authors who want quick, affordable national exposure for their titles.

Let's face it, where else can you:

- Kick-off a coast-to-coast publicity campaign in less than three weeks?
- Create promotional "buzz" for your book at the grass-roots level?
- Reach America's greatest urban markets—Boston to LA—from the comfort and convenience of your own home?
- And, talk directly to fans and fans-to-be?

Publishers and best-selling authors understand all this. They know the marketing and promotional value of appearing as a guest on talk radio. Here are some tips to help you.

TIP #1: Stay Current

First off, you need to follow the news. What are people talking about? What is the media saying? What's the buzz? Why is this important? Because, in case you haven't noticed, talk radio is all about current events. Current events in politics, in sports, weather, health, culture. So when you know what's current, **you can package your message to fit the news...**making you an attractive guest for a talk show. Your job is to scan the network and cable news channels, the newspapers, look at news Websites, and, most importantly, monitor the talk radio landscape. Take time to listen to some local and/or national talk shows, hear what they're talking about - get a feel for the rhythm of it. Most of all—get a pulse of the public listening in.

TIP #2: Tie-Ins to the News

I mentioned "packaging" your message—that's a key. As you follow the hottest stories in the news, think of ways you can tie the message of your book into them. Look for controversy or big names, big money or even relationship issues... These are always tantalizing topics for many talk show hosts (and their listeners). Developing a good angle for your book that's newsworthy means you might even be able to get on the air with your novel—we've had success doing that a number of times.

continued on next page

Does Media Coverage Translate Into Sales?

It's wonderful to get media coverage for your book or business. But even if you're successful in getting publicity in magazines and newspapers—how can you guarantee that your publicity will translate into sales? Here are five ways to up the odds that your media coverage will translate into sales:

Target the right publications and media.

Getting media attention, by itself, is no guarantee of sales, particularly if your media attention is in the 'wrong' media. While it's probably true that there's no such thing as bad publicity, there definitely is such a thing as ineffectual publicity: If you're a vendor trying to target homewood floors manufacturers, an article in "Homewood Floors Magazine" will go straight to your target market and probably will result in more sales than a generic article even in *The New York Times*. So think carefully about what your market is reading and listening to, and target those specific outlets. (A side benefit is that those publications will probably be easier to break into than more high-profile publications.)

Be sure your distribution is set up and seamless.

There's nothing worse than getting the perfect media attention, and sending thousands of potential buyers out to stores in search of your book or product—and then finding out, belatedly, that your book wasn't available to be purchased. If you're going to go to all the effort of going after the media coverage, be sure your distribution is set up and ready to roll. Otherwise, you're wasting your time and energy.

Make sure the publicity you're getting ties into your product.

A lot of people end up pursuing media attention for the sake of media attention. And it's true that any publicity is a good thing. But if the media attention you're getting has nothing to do with the product you're selling, or if you make it too hard for people to make the connection to your product, then that is sure to diminish, if not completely curtail, your sales.

Be careful about word of mouth.

Regardless of how good your 'official' publicity is, companies are made and lost on their reputations. So be sure that your product, and company, stay immaculate. Try to address problems early and respond to customer complaints promptly. The mark of a good company is not that they don't have problems from time to time—it's inevitable—but how you respond to your customers over time.

Keep the buzz going.

Remember that regardless of how much publicity you garner, the public's memory is very short. So however good your publicity is today, be sure that you're also keeping an eye on tomorrow. The better you are at keeping your company and book's 'buzz' going, the more successful your publicity, and your sales, will ultimately be.

So get out there and rustle up some publicity. And then be sure you reap the sales that you've earned.



Fern Reiss, CEO of PublishingGame.com/Expertizing.com, is the author of *The Publishing Game: Bestseller in 30 Days* (book promotion), *The Publishing Game: Find an Agent in 30 Days* (traditional publishing), and *The Publishing Game: Publish a Book in 30 Days* (self-publishing). To learn how to get better media attention for your book and business,

sign up for Fern's free Expertizing email newsletter at www.PublishingGame.com/signup.htm or register for her Expertizing Publicity Forum at www.Expertizing.com/forum.htm

Four Tips to Get Talk Radio... *continued*

TIP #3: Pitch Your Topic, Not Your Book or Yourself

As you develop your message, keep in mind that radio hosts are interested in what you can do for their listeners, not what they can do for you. **They want an interview, not an infomercial for your book.** So, when pitching to hosts and producers, put emphasis on the issue you want to talk about on the air, rather than on your book. The fact that you've authored a book gives you credibility "currency," so spend it wisely when pitching your cause. There's no need to worry...once on the air, you'll be given plenty of opportunity to plug your book during the interview.

TIP #4: The Right Press Release Formula

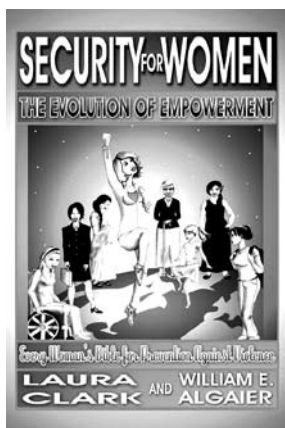
Nothing is more important than the press release itself—it's your key to the media's door. The quality of your press release has everything to do with our success in booking guests. You want to make sure your headline is enticing—it's got to grab the media's attention. The text of your release should elaborate on the subject matter and what the "on-air" conversation will be about. It's always good to include a couple of juicy or provocative quotes. Also include a short, but impressive bio, and 5 to 10 questions you'd like the host to ask you.

There's plenty more to learn, but these few tips can help jump-start you into the world of talk radio. 📖

Marsha Friedman is a Literary Publicist based in New York City. For more information or to subscribe to her newsletter, visit www.event-management.com

Why Hire a Publicist?

It is 6:55 am in Fort Myers, Florida. Sleep deprived, I take a moment to wonder if the cheap motel room I slept in the night before had bed bugs. It seems a trivial thought, as I am about to break the law to get to the CBS WINK studio on time. The studio, which broadcasts to the entire Naples area, is in the middle of the block and the road is closed at both ends due to an elaborate construction project. While negotiating a seriously rugged dirt road, I am rehearsing my excuse: "What 'Road Closed' sign, officer? I didn't see any sign." My choices are to test my rental car's absentee 4-wheel drive feature or find the legal way to get to the studio but be late and possibly miss the interview. All this stress and effort for a 3 minute spot.



When I hired a publicist, I took a total leap of faith. She found me, actually. She had heard about my latest book (*Security for Women, The Evolution of Empowerment*) and was excited about it. We spoke and she told me that her style is different from the big PR firms in that she does all the work herself so nothing slips through the cracks. At the time, I was looking into PR firms and talking with another local woman who was affordable yet not

necessarily the right fit. I knew I wanted to land some national press, as "Destination Oprah" is not the easiest of quests and one must come fully equipped with all the proper credentials. However, I also had serious reservations about the financial commitment and the contractual obligations that are required when one signs with a publicist.

I knew from my year-long journey as a proud SLPA member that there is so much to learn in every respect about publishing and marketing one's books. I had come to a point where I had decided to be honest with myself about what I know I can do and want to do for my books versus what I cannot do well enough or do not want to do. For me, website design and courting the press are two tasks that I gladly hand over to experts. Yes, it is expensive, but my logic is that I am investing in a stock—the stock of me (one of those "it takes money to make money" kinds of ideas).

Since January of 2007, I have been booked on: the St. Louis NBC and CBS morning news and on talk radio with FOX; on the CBS Morning News in San Francisco and Naples; and on NBC in Miami. The idea is to build up press in the various local markets and then work our way into the national markets. I should clarify

that my ultimate objective is not simply to sell books (though being on Oprah would certainly help with that!). I own a business that provides security training and consulting. I am also in the process of booking more professional speaking engagements on security related subjects, thus any press I accumulate supports my professional growth in addition to boosting book sales. Interviews help boost my credibility as an "expert" in the field.

I have learned some tricks for giving interviews:

- Take charge and steer the interview in your chosen direction versus relying on the interviewer to take you there.
- Learn to be concise or sound-bite your way through because most interviews last only 3 to 5 minutes.
- If you want to look good on T.V., wear a ton of make up (I mean really gob it on).
- Be prepared to be distracted; these sets are like carnivals sometimes. (In Miami I shared the set with a performance artist who was flinging paint onto a canvas while spinning it around, two women with little dogs that were to be auctioned off for charity, and a woman from "The Big Read," not to mention the R2D2 camera robots that randomly start moving around the set as though possessed. It was a noisy environment and I had to tune it all out and focus on the task at hand).
- Be ready for anything! You seldom get a list of questions before the interview (I have been caught off guard more than once by what was asked).
- Review your interview tapes for lessons learned. You will not always get it right, but you can always improve.
- Put your interviews on your website! It is an easy way to add interactivity to your site and to promote yourself.

I am happy with my decision to have hired a publicist. If you are thinking of doing so, I will extend one caveat. For those of you who are writing fiction, you know how competitive a market you are in so be sure that your book is truly unique and makes an interesting story to be aired. My book is non-fiction and is on a topic that is in the news all the time, thus my publicist positions me to comment on events that occur to which I can speak with a unique angle. Also, make sure you get a specific idea of what press you will receive for your money. I have heard many a horror story about PR firms that talk up their services but remain extremely vague (especially in their contracts) about what exactly they will do for you. Hiring a publicist is an expensive venture and eventually that money has to come back to you, one way or another. It takes time, patience, and trust. I have not seen a dramatic boost in book sales yet but I am making more headway in my business and the credibility I am earning is paying off in a variety of ways on a daily basis. Plus I am meeting all sorts of people to whom I would have never had access.

I made it to that Fort Myers studio on time and had one of my best interviews to date (probably due to the adrenaline rush of

continued on page 6

Business 101 for Authors and Writers

Whether you like it or not, writing, producing and selling a book is a business. You may not have thought about it in that way when you first got the idea to write a book, but that's the way it is. You may as well come along peacefully and make the most of it.

As such, you owe it to yourself to give yourself the best possible chance of success. This means... yep, you guessed it. You have to become a businessperson.

A creative writer and a business person in the same body? Is that even physically possible? It is. Others have done it, and so can you. Let's take a brief look at what it means to be a "business person."

Keep Business and Personal Records Separate

Your book business needs its own records. Period. First and perhaps most importantly, many of your business expenses will be tax deductible. (By the way, I'm not a CPA, so consult your tax advisor for his or her advice.) And, it just makes plain old common sense to be able to analyze your activity separate from your personal activity.

This can be as simple or as complicated as you like, but I recommend simplicity. For a very small operation with few expenses and few sales, a ledger book may do. With any sort of volume at all, however, you'd be better off using your computer. QuickBooks is an affordable, easy-to-use, and proven accounting software package, but there are many out there—even some "freeware" versions that cost you nothing. Do your homework, ask others what they like, and select a product that works for you.

Consider opening a business checking account and obtaining a separate credit or debit card, just for business purchases. This makes it especially easy to track your enterprise's finances. If you go through the line at the store and have 3 items for you personally and 2 for the business, make the clerk do two check-out transactions. Yes, it is a bit more work to do all this but absolutely is worth it in the long run. When you figure in the tax deduction, think of it this way: Uncle Sam allows you to purchase business products and services at a discount.

It's probably overkill at first, but as your business grows you may want to set up a business "entity" of some sort... limited liability company (LLC), corporation, etc. You'll want to discuss this decision both with an attorney and your tax advisor, because it brings both legal and tax implications with it.

Speaking the Accounting Language

Happily, you won't need to be an MBA or CPA. You won't even need a business or accounting degree. But you will need to have a grasp of basic accounting and business concepts.

You have many ways to gain some entry-level business education. Most community colleges offer adult education classes in business, accounting and related areas. So do many local school districts. These classes are generally inexpensive, are taught by folks in industry in layman's terms, and are held evenings and weekends. This is a great way to get the information you need.

In the meantime, here are five terms you should understand: Sales, Cost of Goods Sold, Gross Profit, Overhead Expenses and Net Profit.

Sales (also called Revenue) is basically the amount you charge and collect for your products. Let's say your book sells for \$20 retail, for \$12 to bookstores and for \$9 to Amazon.com. In a given month you sell 25 books at retail price direct to readers, 25 to bookstores and 50 to Amazon. Your total sales that month come to \$500 retail + \$300 to bookstores + \$450 to Amazon, for a total monthly sales figure of \$1250. Do not confuse your sales with profit—which we'll get into below. The total number of books sold is 100.

Cost of Goods Sold is the price you pay for the books. Let's assume in our example that your cost per book is \$3.

Gross Profit is the difference between your sales and your cost of goods sold. You sold 100 books at a cost of \$3 each, so your cost of goods sold is \$300. So, take your sales figure of \$1250 and subtract your cost of goods sold of \$300, and we get \$950 Gross Profit. Do not confuse your gross profit with net profit—which we'll get into below.

Overhead Expenses are those costs that contribute to the business other than the direct cost of goods. This includes marketing costs, office supplies, business-related travel expenses, and so on. Continuing with our example, let's say you had total overhead expenses of \$400 this month.

Finally, we're down to **Net Profit**—also known as the "Bottom Line." (Net Profit is literally the bottom line on a Profit and Loss Statement, and that's where the phrase "the bottom line"

continued on page 5



comes from.) Net Profit is calculated by subtracting Overhead Expenses from Gross Profit. So, \$950 minus \$400 = \$550 Net Profit. Congratulations! Your business earned a \$550 profit for the month!

Before you get too excited and rush out to spend this money, don't forget that you'll owe tax on that money! So, really there are two Net Profit numbers to be concerned with: Net Profit Before Tax and Net Profit After Tax.

Here's our example:

Sales.....	\$1250
minus Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 300
equals Gross Profit	\$ 950
minus Overhead Expenses	\$ 400
equals Net Profit.....	\$ 550

Finally on the subject of speaking the language of accounting, I'll mention that there are three main financial statements for any business. They are the Profit & Loss Statement (also known as the "P&L" or the "Income Statement"), the Balance Sheet, and the Cash Flow Statement. The P&L reports activity... sales, expense and profit for a given period of time, such as a month or a year. Our example above is a simple P&L. The Balance Sheet reports what you own and what you owe... as of a specific date. Profit does not always equal cash, hence the need for a Cash Flow Statement. Because this is a brief introductory article, I'll refrain from explaining why. Just know that cash is the lifeblood of any business. No matter what, don't run out of cash!

Putting it All Together

There are hundreds of books and websites out there about small business, so there's no shortage of available advice. I'll simply leave you with these final thoughts:

- Spend most of your time in marketing-related activities - developing sales, reaching out to customers, and so on.
- Focus on free and low-cost marketing strategies.
- Keep your expenses under control and conserve cash.
- Never stop learning. Take classes, read books, ask for advice and learn from your own mistakes.

Being in business is difficult but you can be successful if you approach it armed with a bit of knowledge, common sense, some self-discipline and a dose of optimism. Most of all, enjoy the journey. 📖



Bill Collier is a St. Louis-based business coach, consultant and speaker. He is the author of the book *How to Succeed as a Small Business Owner... and Still Have a Life*. His website is www.collierbiz.com, and his email is bill@collierbiz.com.

Don't Miss This Event!

Mark your calendars NOW for November 2-4. SLPA is celebrating our 10th anniversary with a full weekend of Networking, Publishing and Marketing education at a value only St. Louis can offer. Full details will be announced in July, but we have firm commitments from these nationally-known publishing industry experts, who will lead us in a series of sessions designed to help you develop and fine-tune your marketing programs and your media presence.

Brian Jud, President of Book Marketing Works; **Penny C. Sansevieri**, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc. And more...

As we did last year, we'll be extending an invitation to attendees from all over the region. **New this year are Program Tracks.** In addition to the keynotes, you'll be able to choose from among sessions for both new and experienced publishers, and you'll have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one consultations with Brian or Penny. We're inviting vendors again for networking and there are plans in the works for an Anniversary Gala on Saturday evening that we hope will attract attendees ranging from our founding members through today's members.

The weekend will include sessions on Marketing Strategy, Special Sales, Red-Hot Internet Publicity, Book Printing and more. Keynote sessions will be presented by Brian Jud and Penny Sansevieri. We'll also have interactive Book Design and Editing workshops. Everyone will spend time fine-tuning their own Marketing Plan with guidance from Brian Jud. Sunday's sessions will focus on Media Training with Brian and Penny and the opportunity to gain experience by participating in taped interviews.

Brian Jud is an author, book-marketing consultant, seminar leader, television host and president of Book Marketing Works, LLC, helping publishers market and promote their books to increase their sales and profits. His company has a strong reputation for developing Special Sales channels for publishers. He is the author of *Beyond the Bookstore*. Brian is a media trainer, frequent media guest and speaker at publishing events and is the producer and host of the television series *The Book Authority*. In addition, he is the author, narrator and producer of the media-training video program *You're On The Air*.

Penny C. Sansevieri, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and nationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. Her company is one of the leaders in the publishing industry and has developed some of the most cutting-edge book campaigns. Her company researched, developed and implemented the first comprehensive Internet publicity campaign called The Virtual Author Tour™.

There's a lot more to share, but we're still working out the details. For now, just plan to participate! 📖




We Welcome Our Newest Member

David Strom

david@strom.com

www.strom.com

David Strom is one of the leading experts on network and Internet technologies and has written extensively on the topic for nearly 20 years for a wide variety of publications, including holding several editorial management positions for both print and online properties. He is the author of *Internet Messaging* (Prentice Hall, 1998) which he co-authored with Marshall T. Rose and *Home Networking Survival Guide* (McGrawHill/Osborne, 2001). 


Another Networking Group You Can Join

SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) is offering St. Louis authors and publishers a subscription to their FREE monthly newsletter. Sign up at www.spawn.org. (Click on "Free Newsletter.")

SPAWN is an 11-year-old online networking organization for anyone interested in or involved in publishing. SPAWN provides the tools and information you need in order to more successfully publish and promote your writing. You'll find hundreds of articles and resources at the SPAWN Web site. If you have a question related to the publishing industry or your publishing project, one of our experts will respond.


As a member:

- you'll receive a free book of your choice.
- you'll be able to participate in the SPAWN Discussion Group.
- you'll have access to the monthly SPAWN Market Update—an amazingly meaty newsletter featuring important industry news as well as numerous opportunities for authors, freelance writers, publishers and artists. (The June 2007 edition of the SPAWN Market Update includes nearly 80 news bites and opportunities.)

The information and resources you'll glean from just one issue of the 8 to 12-page SPAWN Market update can more than pay your \$45 membership fee. Visit SPAWN at www.spawn.org. 

Why Hire a Publicist? *continued*

my Mad Max adventure of driving over dusty, uneven roads while dodging mud holes, construction workers, and cement trucks). The anchor had actually read my entire book (unusual) so her line of questioning was strong. She even asked me what I would like emphasized during our interview (also unusual). When I left the studio, female producers and camera operators were following me to the parking lot to find out more information on the book. It was the first time that I experienced first hand what it means to create a "buzz" around a product.

Hiring a publicist is still, in many respects, a leap of faith for me. The good news is that I remain optimistic and willing to continue venturing down that dusty, uneven road (doing my level best to skip the breaking the law part). 

Laura Clark is the author of *Security For Women, The Evolution of Empowerment*. She and her writing partner William E. Algaier combine years of experience in security and anti-terrorism training and consulting, U.S. Special Forces operations, and education.

We're not SPAM... be sure to let us in!

Make sure you receive all the timely news updates from SLPA. They'll come from this address: "St.LouisPublishers Assoc"
slpa.newsletter@yahoo.com



Questions About SLPA?



Contact Membership Chairman:
Christine Frank at 314-205-2679 or
Assistant Membership Coordinator:
Linda Austin at 314-822-1170

Next Deadline June 21

Don't be late – no kidding!

Send us news on your new releases or upcoming appearances or anything else you wish to share.

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to
newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org.

SLPA Monthly Newsletter design by SLPA member Peggy Nehmen.
Nehmen-Kodner Design www.n-kcreative.com