

# THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO



# MEDIA INTERVIEWS

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# The Author's Guide to Media Interviews

by Rob Eagar

A few months after my first book was released in 2002, I received a surprising phone call. As I answered, I was stunned to hear the caller say, "Hi, I'm a producer for the *CBS Early Show* asking if we could interview you on our national TV program." I was so shocked that I fumbled the phone and almost dropped it on the floor. I couldn't believe my ears.

"How did you find me?" I stammered. The producer responded, "We were doing some research and ran across your website during a Google search. Could we send a camera crew to your office within the next six days?" I was dumbfounded. The only professional thing I could think to say was "sure." The producer said, "Great, I'll send you an email with a few more details." Then, the call was over.

Six days later, a van loaded with equipment and technical people showed up and knocked on my door. "It's a beautiful day outside, so we've decided to interview you under a tree in your backyard. Is that okay?" "Sure" was my standard professional response. Within 45 minutes, audio gear was setup, bright lights were blazing, cameras were in place, and a famous network correspondent suddenly appeared to ask me a few questions. I tried to stay calm, but the whole experience was surreal. The correspondent asked me a few prepared questions, the crew recorded everything, and the producer said my interview would air in a couple of weeks.

Ten days later, I turned on the television and saw my face and my new book being broadcast across the entire country. I was so excited by the exposure that I thought I had won the lottery! My mom was proud, and my friends couldn't believe it. It felt like one of those life-changing moments.

I braced myself for an avalanche of fame and fortune. My author dream was about to come true. Then, all of a sudden...nothing happened. I woke up the day after my interview and checked my email, but there were no messages. I checked my book's Amazon ranking, but it had barely moved. The next day, the same thing happened again: no emails from readers and no change in my book sales. The next week, same thing happened...nothing.

It took a few weeks to finally accept reality and acknowledge my disappointment. I had landed an interview on a top-level national morning show and completely blown it. At first, I placed the blame on the program producers. I reasoned that it was their fault,

because they didn't ask me better questions, they failed to show my book cover on the screen, they never mentioned my website, etc.

However, as I pondered what had happened, I realized the true source of the problem was me. It was my fault. I blew it, because I went into the interview without a plan. I was too awestruck that little 'ol me was appearing on national TV. Worse, my ego was too inflated to think that I actually needed a strategy in order to maximize the opportunity. I simply assumed that my zeal would be infectious and a national TV interview would rocket me onto the bestseller lists.

Unfortunately, I've discovered that I'm not the only author who has made this mistake. I've met authors who've appeared on national TV or radio. But, for various reasons, their book sales never improved. Like my situation, nothing happened.

Has this same experience happened to you? Have you ever landed a major interview, but blown the opportunity? No boost in book sales...no major website hits...no speaking inquiries...just a congratulatory phone call from your mom.

Worse, are you too easily thrilled with getting an interview that you forget to be purposeful with the precious time you're given? Do you just show up and try to "wing it" with spontaneity, because you hate to practice or sit down and build a solid game plan? Unless you're a celebrity, "winging it" is not going to help you sell more books. Sure, it's fun to tell your friends that you'll be on the radio or TV. But, don't let your ego get in the way of building your author platform.

In this resource, I'm going to explain how to use media interviews to sell books. The problem, however, is that too many authors obsess about getting on big-time shows, such as *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, *NPR*, or a major podcast. Meanwhile, the reality is that the competition to appear on those programs is fierce, which makes your overall chances of success pretty slim. Plus, just because you even get on a top-level show doesn't guarantee that you'll sell more books.

The wise approach is to garner as much media coverage as you can, regardless if it's large or small, and learn how to use any interview to spread your message. If you focus on getting consistent exposure, you can build your platform and increase sales for your book.

To clarify, this session doesn't cover how to get author interviews or connect with online influencers – that information was covered in the previous sessions. Instead, I'm going to spell out how to help maximize book sales and platform growth once you've already booked an interview...even if you write fiction. That's right, novelists.

Everything we discuss will be applicable to any author. Here's a look at the important issues that I'll cover:

- How to prepare for an interview
- How to control an interview – even with a difficult host
- How to sell books during an interview and track results
- Plus, I'll share a secret that the media doesn't want authors to know

Keep in mind that everything I discuss applies to podcast interviews with online influencers as well as radio and TV interviews with traditional media.

Let's start by discussing how to properly prepare for an interview.

## How to Prepare for a Media Interview

There's a common misconception about author interviews that I need to bust right from the beginning. Some authors mistakenly believe that giving an interview is a prime opportunity to teach a large group of listeners. They see the microphone and suddenly think class is in session with a captive audience. However, this mindset presents two problems.

First, your audience is never really captive. They don't have to listen to you if they don't feel like it. For instance, they can turn off the program, pay attention to something else more interesting, or simply let their mind wander. It is your responsibility, not the host's job, to keep an audience riveted on you and your book.

Second, most radio and TV author interviews last less than 10 minutes, which isn't enough time to teach much material. Even if you get interviewed on a podcast for 30 - 60 minutes, it's still not enough time to fully discuss a topic. Plus, people don't want to endure listening to an author who drones through every detail of a book. Therefore, it's crucial to use your brief interview segment to achieve this primary goal:

*Don't teach the audience. Tease the audience.*

I know the word "tease" might seem offensive. You might even think, "It's not right to tease my audience...that's manipulation or shameless self-promotion." If you feel that way, then let's discuss the most ethical action you could take towards your audience.

For instance, imagine you've written a non-fiction book that helps parents communicate better with their children. Or, maybe you wrote a fiction novel about a woman overcoming a deep tragedy. What is the best thing to do for your interview

listeners? Is it wise to overwhelm your audience by trying to cover every teaching point or detail that you can cram into 10 minutes? You can try, but most people won't remember what you say. Thus, it would be wiser to use your interview to motivate people to get your complete message.

If you want to sell more books, it's smarter to use an interview to lead listeners to what they really need most – your whole book. You can throw a ton of information at people during an interview. But, that's like a doctor throwing a box of Band-aids to someone with a serious illness. Band-aids won't cure the problem. Instead, a good doctor forgoes a short-term request, and leads the patient down the full path to get cured.

Teasing your audience doesn't mean that you avoid giving listeners helpful information. On the contrary, you still need to provide helpful nuggets of value or entertainment to make people interested in your book. But, don't try to cover your whole manuscript or story in an interview. Tell the audience only what they need to know, rather than everything you know.

Most authors are shocked at how the time flies during a media interview. So, you must use the brief moments you're given to engage the audience, get them interested in your message, and motivate them to buy your book. How do you do that quickly and effectively? Use this two-step strategy:

1. Develop an interview structure based on a few main points
2. Create attention-grabbing sound bites as answers for potential interview questions

Let's look at each step in more detail.

## Develop Main Points for Your Interview

Since most interviews last only a few minutes, your goal should be to quickly engage with the audience, give them enticing information, and lead them to take action. Most books contain too much information for the author give a "Cliff-notes" review of each chapter. Instead, choose just two – four key points that you want to make sure your audience will remember.

For instance, if you write non-fiction, it's important to establish your expertise quickly to help the audience feel like they can trust you. Share parts of your personal story that capture the audience's attention and boost your credibility. Present yourself as an interesting person who can relate to the problems that the audience faces.

For example, bestselling author, Charles Duhigg, is quick to share his own battles with breaking frustrating habits, which he detailed in his book, *The Power of Habit*. During interviews, he explains how difficult it was to stop eating junk food at the office and gaining weight. But, he discovered a little-known secret that transformed his decision-making process into better results. His story and advice inspire the interview listeners to take similar positive action.

If you write fiction, it's typical to receive questions about what inspired you to write your story. For instance, one of my bestselling clients, Wanda Brunstetter, has sold over 10 million romance novels set in the Amish enclaves across America. She knows that people are fascinated by the Amish lifestyle and the peaceful lives they try to live. So, she wrote stories to capture those situations. When she conducts author interviews, she talks about those elements that tap into a common fascination many people carry in their minds. Why do the Amish choose a primitive lifestyle? How do they select a marriage partner? How do their children interact with the rest of the world?

Regardless of whether you write fiction or non-fiction, you must determine how your book can tangibly improve the reader's life or provide hours of entertainment. Create two or three talking points that explain why. A talking point is a main idea that you want listeners to remember. Don't waste precious time discussing non-essential background information or extraneous details. Keep your audience focused on the fact that your message can make their lives better. For instance, you could break down your information into interesting statistics, tell specific stories about how you help people, recite a useful resource list, or even conduct a brief quiz.

Whenever I conduct interviews for my books, I generally try to cover three main points:

1. Start by sharing my personal story to gain credibility with the audience.
2. Next, I attempt to provide at least one or two helpful teaching nuggets, so that the audience feels like I truly helped them solve a problem or answer a question.
3. In addition, I may discuss current trends in society and explain how my book can be a go-to resource for the latest information.

As you prepare for an interview, consider your book's primary topics and write out three or four main points that can guide you through the discussion. Your goal should be to cover that material before your interview ends.

Don't worry, using this strategy won't make you sound canned. Instead, you will seem organized and feel more confident in front of your audience. It's better to be prepared and risk sounding canned than to "wing it" and blow a great book-selling opportunity. Good preparation gives you the "right" to feel confident.

## Write the Script for Your Interview

Once you've created main points for your interview, the next step is to develop questions that will lead your host to ask about your main points. If you're new to the interviewing process, you may be thinking, "That sounds weird. Isn't the host supposed to come up with the questions?" You might think so. But, in most situations, the hosts are so busy that they don't have time to read your book and create clever questions.

Most program hosts are happy to follow a list of questions that you give them. They may throw in a few questions of their own or cover the issues out of order. But, generally, they will follow the roadmap that you provide.

This is good news, because it allows you to script your own interview and make sure you touch on your main points. It's like the host lobbing softballs and letting you hit them out of the ballpark. The key, though, is to make your interview questions sound conversational.

For instance, don't write "Question #1 – Why did you write your book?" or "What is your book about?" Instead, phrase your questions in a manner that a person would ask during a normal conversation. In addition, don't be afraid to make your interview questions sound provocative or controversial. You want people to stay glued to the program instead of tuning you out. For example, you could write an opening question, such as:

- "As an author, you had an unusual experience 3 years ago. What led you to write about it?"
- "You believe most people look at their relationship problems from the wrong angle. What do you mean by that?"
- "If art imitates life, how does your novel connect with the listener's everyday experiences?"

Most interview opportunities, including podcasts, radio, or TV, will let you script most of the interview by sending questions you create ahead of time. Therefore, create questions that make it easy to talk about the best parts of your book or author expertise. Your interview will only be as good as you plan it to be.

## Answer Interview Questions with a Sound Bite

When I conducted my first author interview, I made the rookie mistake of going into too much detail trying to give a thorough answer. I talked on and on with long, drawn-

out dialogue. Then, I tried to wrap up my answer at the end with a clever statement. By that time, however, the audience was bored and no longer engaged. To them, listening to me was like reading a newspaper with no headlines. They needed something to grab and hold their attention at the beginning of answering a question.

One of the best ways to keep listeners engaged is to speak in “sound bites,” which are pithy statements that grab the listener’s attention or summarize an idea. Think about sound bites like a newspaper editor using a headline to introduce an article. When an interviewer asks you a question, start your answer with a sound bite or the hook from your book. This approach will help keep your audience listening during the rest of your answer.

Logic makes people think, but emotion makes them act. So, a good sound bite helps generate emotion in your listeners, such as laughter, curiosity, or even anger. When people feel a deeper interest in your book, they are more likely to purchase. Plus, some listeners will be hearing your interview while driving in their car or working at their office. Therefore, it may be quite a while before they get a chance to purchase your book. Thus, if you find a way to stick in their memory, then you increase the probability that they will take action later.

If you write fiction, the sound bite or book hook you say can relate to the over-arching aspect of your story, such as:

- What if the first man to walk on Mars realizes he'll be the first to die there?
- What if you had to choose between killing your wife to save your daughter?
- I wrote a story to examine what if a woman had led the civil rights movement rather than Martin Luther King.

If you write nonfiction, your sound bites can reflect counterintuitive teaching points or attention-grabbing questions, such as:

- What if your sex life can get hotter with age?
- Anyone can become totally debt-free in 12 months, no matter how much you owe.
- I've discovered how to help people train their brain to win.
- What if rare rainforest land equal to 31 million football fields disappears each year?
- What if the biggest people-pleaser can learn how to say no without feeling guilty?

If you unfamiliar with creating “sound bites” or developing hooks that grab people’s attention, download a free copy of my e-book on Amazon called, **Mastering Book Hooks for Authors**. (<http://getbook.at/MasterBookHooks>)

## Act Like an Equal to the Host

During every interview, there can be several factors working against you, such as a short time limit, a bossy or antagonistic host, other guests competing for attention, etc. But, there is another factor that can wreak even more havoc on your interview – your own mindset.

When you are new to the media world, it can feel nerve-wracking to sit in front of a microphone. Or, it's easy to fall into a trap of feeling awe that you're getting such a great opportunity to promote your book. That sense of awe can make you feel inferior to the host or that a little ole author like yourself doesn't belong on the program.

When you carry these types of negative feelings into your interview discussion, the audience can sense your anxiety. If you come across as uncomfortable, then the host and the audience will start to feel uncomfortable. Guess what happens? Most people don't buy books when they feel uncomfortable.

How do you overcome these potentially negative issues? Get over your awe of the media, and act like an equal. I'm serious. Purposefully fight any kind of hayseed mentality that makes you think, "Look, Ma...I'm on TV!" or "Wow, I'm on a podcast!"

Here's why your mindset is critical: if you don't believe that you're an expert who deserves to be in front of an audience, then listeners will pick up on your insecurity. If the host discerns your anxiety, then he or she will be put in the difficult position of trying to carry an unpleasant conversation, which is an annoying burden.

Therefore, you must convince yourself that you BELONG on radio, TV, or a popular podcast before you're able to convince other people. Rather than acting inferior, you must view yourself as an equal to the host and the listeners.

The key to acting like an equal is to treat your interview host as a peer. He or she isn't better than you. Instead, you are equals, which means both parties can respectfully share concerns, ask for cooperation, and expect professional treatment from one another.

The reality is that the media industry needs authors like you just as much as you need exposure for your book. Radio, TV, and podcast programs constantly need lively guests with expert content for their audience. Otherwise, they can't continue to exist or maintain good ratings. Likewise, you need a way to promote your message to a large group of people. Consequently, you need each other equally as working partners to make something good happen. Thus, don't cower like a beggar who's simply glad to be there. Conduct yourself like someone who belongs in front of the microphone.

Besides exhibiting the right mindset, another way to act like an equal is to prepare like a professional. This type of preparation includes creating effective questions, sending them ahead of time to the host, and practicing answers to any oddball topics that might arise. You don't need to prepare for every eventuality. But, you want to have a working knowledge of your book and any current headlines related to your subject matter so that you're ready to offer insightful answers.

This may sound corny, but I used to sit in my office and practice my sound bites and interview answers out loud. In addition, I'd use a timer to rehearse how long it took to tell my main points and personal story. I practiced and made adjustments until I could answer any question in less than 60 seconds. Remember that many of your interviews may be live and on a short time frame. So, you can't stumble through your answers and expect someone to edit your comments. You only get one shot to do it right.

As I continued to practice before each interview, my comfort level and confidence steadily grew. I no longer feared the microphone, bright lights, or video cameras. Instead, I felt energized as an expert who could influence a lot of people with my message, because I knew I was ready to offer helpful information.

Likewise, if you want to give a professional-quality interview, practice out loud by yourself beforehand. Only amateurs "wing it," because they're lazy and inconsiderate of their audience. If you take a careless attitude to your interview, your audience will usually respond with a careless attitude toward your book.

## How to Control the Interview Conversation

How do you know when you're a media interview expert? A good way to gauge your interview prowess is the ability to steer a conversation to only the topics that you want to discuss. Just because a radio, TV, or podcast host asks you a question does NOT mean that you must answer. Sure, it's polite to respond to someone's question. But, if the host starts down a verbal rabbit trail, you're not obligated to follow and waste time away from talking about your main points.

Occasionally, you may interact with a host who acts condescending or openly disagrees with your opinion. But, don't let him or her bully you. Instead, sidestep the argument and redirect the question to a subject that you want to discuss. Imagine conducting an interview like steering a car. The host may ask the questions, but you're the one driving the direction of the conversation. For example, here are three different responses you can use when a host asks you something antagonistic or irrelevant:

- “Yes, that’s an interesting issue. But, I’ve found that an even bigger issue is...”
- “I’ll be glad to answer that question. But, first, let me say something about...”
- “You bring up a good question. But, before I leave, I really want to emphasize this point to today’s listeners...”

Remember, you’re the expert, the host is not. Therefore, it makes sense for you to control the flow of information to the audience, rather than a host who probably hasn’t even read your book.

Try this exercise. The next time you’re channel surfing on television, tune-in to CNN or FOX News. When an interview segment occurs, watch carefully how politicians or corporate executives control the interview. These people can take almost any question and steer their answer to the point they want to make. Sometimes, it gets annoying, because they rarely say anything with substance. But, they learned how to stay focused on their agenda, which is your same goal as an author. With a little practice, you can develop a similar ability to keep the conversation focused on your book’s message.

Before I leave this topic, let me clarify that I’m not advocating manipulation or impolite behavior on the air. However, I am stating the fact that getting national exposure for your book is hard for any author to do. So, don’t take it lightly. You probably won’t get a second chance to be on the program again. If you fumble an interview because you were ill-prepared or felt intimidated by the situation, then it’s a disservice to your audience, yourself, and your book sales. Only you can make an interview successful.

## Smile for the Camera

At the beginning of this resource, I shared the story of getting interviewed on the *CBS Early Show*. Up until that time, I had only done a couple of small-time interviews that few people heard. Thus, right after the *Early Show* producer contacted me, my jubilation quickly turned to anxiety. I had never experienced being in front of an audience of millions.

Regretfully, I approached the opportunity like an amateur and never realized the need to create a plan for success. Instead, I worried about what I would look like on camera. At least my wife had the presence of mind to suggest we take a few practice runs. So, I sat in my office one afternoon while she lobbed questions at me.

During our mock rehearsal, however, my wife noticed something strange. She said, “You don’t look poised when you answer the questions. Instead, you look defensive and anxious.” I responded, “What do you mean? I feel confident.” We argued until she

said something that changed my perspective, "Go look at yourself in the mirror." Lo and behold, she was right.

We walked into the bathroom and conducted another practice round. When I watched myself answer her questions in the mirror, I looked awful. (You could also use your smartphone or tablet to record practice video.) I had no idea that the image I was portraying appeared so negative. Without the mirror, I thought I had looked fine. Yet, in reality, my face looked dour, and I appeared uncomfortable. That's when I learned...

### *The Golden Rule for Video Interviews: Smile Constantly*

I don't care if your face hurts or the host insults you. Never stop smiling while you're on camera. You've probably heard the phrase, "the camera adds 10 pounds." I believe that smiling on camera adds 10 times to your credibility, which will help increase your audience engagement. Let me explain what I mean.

Years ago, I watched an interview on *60 Minutes* with a Wal-Mart executive who used smiling to her advantage. She was defending her company's position in a lawsuit over the location of a new store. The reporter from *60 Minutes* was grilling her with harsh, accusatory questions. Yet, during the entire interview, this Wal-Mart official never stopped smiling. She sat with a pleasant demeanor, patiently answered questions, and never once looked perturbed. Even if viewers disagreed with her position, she came across as credible and professional. I found myself liking who she seemed to be as a person. It was a strange interview to witness, but that scene reinforced the power of smiling on camera.

Likewise, always smile on camera during your author interview. Oddly enough, smiling can even help improve your podcast and radio interviews as well. Even though people may not be able to see you, your smiling demeanor will still translate into what they hear. Hopefully, you'll never be questioned by a hard-hitting reporter from *60 Minutes*. But, even if it happens, you'll be ready to hold your own.

## **How to Sell Books During Your Interview**

Appearing as an interview guest in front of a large audience can be a wonderful experience and a nice ego boost. But, the primary goal isn't to have fun talking about your book. The goal is to SELL books. But, promoting your book during a podcast, radio, or TV appearance is one of the hardest steps for many authors to take. Nobody wants to come across as a sleazy used car salesman hocking their product.

How do you turn audience listeners into book buyers in a tasteful manner?

The simple answer is to give such an entertaining or engaging interview that listeners can't help but want a copy of your book. But, that's easier said than done. Plus, you can't always control the behavior of the host or the way people perceive you. But, there are two steps you can control that leverage the odds in your favor:

1. Create artificial scarcity for your book
2. Offer incentives to build your author email list

### Create Artificial Scarcity for Your Book

Most people tend to hesitate buying books until they have a legitimate or pressing reason. Worse, authors always face an unseen problem that can cause potential buyers to stay on the fence:

*Books are always available online. Thus, buyers can always wait.*

Your book is always available, which poses a big problem to creating a sense of urgency in the mind of the reader. Anyone can purchase your book at any time on Amazon and other retailers. Therefore, if people don't feel an immediate need to purchase your book, they can always sit on the fence and decide to buy later. That indecision can cost you a lot of lost book sales.

When a product is always available, you must overcome people's apathy by creating a reason to buy quickly. You can do this by artificially heightening a "fear of missing out" also known as F.O.M.O. If you develop the fear of missing out, you can move people from feeling indifferent to feeling excited to buy. That process is within your control.

In other words, when you market a book without creating FOMO, it's like letting your customer drive the car. In contrast, when you create FOMO, then you take the steering wheel and drive the car. You always want to be in control of the sales process. If you market your book using a willy-nilly, hope-and-pray approach, then good luck selling many books.

Believe me, I learned this lesson the hard way. For several years, I conducted interviews and tried to wow the audience with free advice. Results were so-so and nothing seemed to work no matter what I said on the air. Then, I ran across a book called *Launch* by Jeff Walker. Jeff's book hit #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and he is known as the king of selling products online. As I read Jeff's book, I came across this quote:

*To create a well-executed launch, you absolutely need to build scarcity into that launch. There has to be some negative consequence if people don't take action and buy before the end of the launch (for instance, the price might go up after the launch). If you make sure there's always some scarcity built into your launch, it will take your results to a completely different level.*

Suddenly, the light bulb went off in my mind. Jeff was right. Scarcity is one of the keys to creating a fear of missing out. If people think something good is about to disappear, they will naturally feel more motivated to take action.

Since almost every book can be purchased on Amazon at any time, availability is never scarce. This reality puts authors at a disadvantage when trying to generate new sales. People can always postpone their purchasing decision to a later time. Without scarcity or the fear of missing out, most people may never buy at all. How do you overcome this inertia?

*Create something that is scarce and combine it with your book  
to create a sense of urgency.*

Here's the amazing secret: you can artificially manufacture scarcity for your book whenever you desire. Create an item or an offer that people would really want. Then, make that item disappear within a limited time, such as a special price, exclusive bonus content, chance to meet the author, a contest to win prizes, etc.

As you conduct your author interview, tell people about the scarce item or offer that will soon vanish. Pause in the middle and end of your interview to tell listeners, "I've got a special offer for everyone listening. If you buy a copy of my book by this date, I'm giving away this special bonus \_\_\_\_\_. But, you must act now before it disappears."

This appeal is especially easy to make if you're running special incentives during a book launch and giving interviews at the same time. When I manage book launches for my top clients, we develop free bonus content or an exclusive webinar that is only available for a limited time. Access to the bonuses or the webinar is given when a reader purchases the author's book, goes to the author's website, fills out a short form, and uploads a picture of their order receipt. This type of process makes it easy for an author to "turn on" and "turn off" artificial scarcity without additional expenses or extra labor.

If you're not in the middle of a book launch, you can still create scarcity by offering an incentive and telling listeners that it will soon disappear. Use the same process that I

just described above to manage delivery of your incentive when readers provide their purchase receipts.

When you attach an enticing incentive to your book that could soon vanish, you naturally heighten people's desire to buy your book. Now, you are in control of the sales process. Below are some examples that any author can use to create artificial scarcity for a book:

- Drop the price for a short period
- Offer a limited number of signed copies
- Offer exclusive bonus content, novella, or short story
- Offer private Q&A session with the author
- Host a "ticketed" webinar on a specific topic

During your interview, remind listeners that your scarce item or unique offering that is about to disappear. Explain that you'd love for everyone to enjoy this special opportunity, but they must act now before it goes away. State a specific time limit, such as "only 24 hours" or "good through the rest of this week" to amplify urgency.

Here's the bottom line. If you want to drive book sales directly from an author interview, then you must be either incredibly famous, uniquely charismatic, and write a one-of-a-kind book. But, if you don't possess those characteristics, and most authors don't, then the best way to spur immediate sales by creating artificial scarcity.

Take charge of your author interview and lead your listeners into feeling a desire to purchase your book because something good is about to disappear.

## Offer Incentives to Build Your Author Email List

Let's be realistic. The majority of people who hear your interview aren't going to immediately buy your book – even when manufacturing artificial scarcity. That's normal for most authors. But, there's another option that can still produce a positive result: entice the audience to join your author email list.

If you can't win the short-term book sale, then win the long-term opportunity to build your email list and market your books repeatedly to people in the future.

Thus, during the middle of your interview, encourage the audience to visit your author website and receive a free incentive to join your email list. It's no small consolation for someone to give you their contact information and invite you to stay in touch with

them. You may not sell a book today. But, if they become an email subscriber, then you increase the odds that they'll buy from you in the future.

Building a large email list is a key component to growing your author platform. For example, set a goal of trying to add at least 50 – 100 new subscribers per interview. Those numbers represent a reasonable target if the program where you appear reaches an audience of 1,000 or more listeners.

Your success getting email subscribers is usually based on how many times you tell listeners about your incentive during the author interview. When I give interviews, I like to tell the audience that I have a "free gift" waiting for them at my website. That way, I sound like a generous-minded person.

Try to mention your offer at least twice to maximize the response. Work it into one of your answers when you respond to the host's questions. Then, mention it again at the end of your interview before wrapping up. Tell listeners to go to your author website to receive your free gift.

Also, the more generous your offer, the more people will respond. For instance, offering a free e-book will get a better response than giving away a short article.

When listeners visit your website, make sure it's easy for them to see the free offer on your home page. If they arrive to your site and can't find your free offer, then you'll look like someone who is trying to pull a sleazy bait and switch tactic. For instance, create a signup box on your website home page that says, "Sign-up for my newsletter and get my (insert the name of your freebie)." Once people fill out the form, you can deliver your incentive on the "thank you" page or have it automatically sent as a "welcome email" for joining your list.

By now, you might be thinking, "Why go through all of this trouble?" Well, it would be nice if everyone listening to your interview ran to their local bookstore and bought a book. But, that's not going to happen. However, if you motivate people to provide their contact information, then you increase the odds that they will buy a book in the future. Take the long-term view and use interviews to build a consistently growing email list.

### **The Media Secret that Authors Aren't Supposed to Know**

Here's a little secret that some radio, podcast, and TV programs don't want you to know. They do not want to mention your author website address. In fact, some hosts

will refuse to say your website out loud. I find this mentality ridiculous, especially when they're getting authors to appear for free on their programs.

The rationale behind this position is that some programs make a lot of revenue by charging for advertising space on their website or podcast episodes. If they can boost their website's "hits" and "visitor" statistics, then they can charge more money for advertising space. So, they're scared to mention your website, because they don't want their audience to avoid their website and go visit yours.

Fortunately, there's a way to get around a host who is unwilling to help. Use your freebie item that I just mentioned to your website address in the middle of the conversation. When you offer something for free as a helpful resource, it's hard for the host to prevent you from talking about your website during the interview. In addition, you come across as a nice generous person who wants to help the listeners.

Take charge of your interview. Prevent selfish hosts from hurting your book sales by proactively driving the audience to your website to get a special incentive. Once people arrive to your site, take steps to sell books through artificial scarcity or entice them to join your email list with a free incentive.

## How to Track Results from Your Interview

The obvious goal of any media interview is to sell books. The problem is that it can be difficult to monitor this result. If you're a traditionally-published author or self-published using a third-party company, you will never know how many listeners went online or to a local bookstore to purchase your book. However, there are secondary statistics that you can track.

For example, check your book's Amazon sales ranking before and after your interview. If you see a marked improvement within 24 hours, you can assume that your interview had a positive impact.

If land a major appearance on a national level program, you can ask your publisher to monitor their sales figures and provide a sales update within a week or two.

On the other hand, if you self-publish using Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) system, you can monitor your book sales in real-time and check how many purchases occur right after a live appearance or a recorded interview.

Finally, if you happen to sell books directly from your author website, you can examine the success of your interview by checking for increased visitor traffic to your online store and the amount of orders placed on your site.

## Helpful Tips for the Day of Your Interview

When the big day arrives to conduct an interview, use the following tips to help remain composed, relaxed, and comfortable:

1. Take a sheet of paper and print out your interview questions with accompanying sound bites. Keep this piece of paper in front of you during the interview. The host won't mind if you have a cheat sheet, and the listening audience will never know. Use it to help calm your nerves and keep you on track if you forget a particular point.
2. On your cheat sheet, write down the host's name and the program's title. This will help overcome an awkward moment in case you suddenly forget your interviewer's name. I learned this lesson the hard way when I did three different interviews back-to-back and got the host's names mixed up...it wasn't pretty.
3. Keep a glass of water nearby in case your mouth gets dry or you start to cough. There's no worse feeling than getting nervous in front of the microphone and leaving yourself stranded without any water.
4. If you're conducting an interview by phone or video from your home or office, remove any potential audio distractions, such as background noise, call waiting features, text chimes on your smartphone, or audible email notifications on your computer. Otherwise, your interview may get repeatedly interrupted by annoying sounds that make you seem like an amateur.
5. If you take live questions from listeners during an interview, remember to repeat the question aloud and express empathy towards the listener. If someone poses a difficult question, such as assistance with a complex personal problem, don't feel obligated to provide an answer. Instead, mention that you understand their question and suggest a resource where they can get more information.
6. Never say "my book" during your interview. This may sound like a no-brainer, but it's a classic mistake that too many authors continue to make. Whenever you conduct an interview, always say the full title of your book (you can skip the subtitle). If your book happens to have a long title, then mention a condensed version. But, never say "my book." Why?

People usually need to hear your title at least 3 – 4 times before they can actually remember it. Moreover, you can't expect everyone to listen to your entire interview. Some people will tune-in for the beginning but leave before you've finished. Others may not tune-in until your interview is already in progress.

For example, if 1,000 people listen to a radio interview, it's plausible that 30 – 50% never hear the entire segment. Therefore, if you don't repeat your book title several times, most people won't remember it. Saying your title a few times throughout the interview helps it stick in the listeners' minds.

7. Finally, strive for success – not perfection. It's okay if you forget part of an answer or get flustered for a moment. It's not the end of the world. Your audience knows that you're human. Nobody expects you to be perfect. Gather yourself, make a joke, or laugh out loud to regather your composure. Then, relax and remember that you've got a great opportunity to enjoy discussing your book with a large audience. As an author, what could be better?

## Summary

Use the information provided in this resource to take on the media world with confidence. You now know how to prepare for an interview, control the discussion, sell your books, and turn listeners into customers. Don't get complacent and waste the opportunity that interviews offer to capture hundreds, if not thousands, of new readers.

Conduct yourself like an expert, regardless if you write fiction or nonfiction. Above all, act like an equal to the host. Use the opportunity to entertain, educate, and challenge the listener. Then, use the principle of artificial scarcity and generous incentives to spur book sales and build your author email list.

There is no better way to market your book for free than appearing on podcasts, radio, or TV. Use the power of interviews to exponentially grow awareness of your book, connect with new readers, and turn readers into fans.

I wish you all the best on your author journey!

To your success,

Rob Eagar

## About the Author

Rob Eagar is one of the most accomplished book marketing experts in America. He's personally coached over 600 authors, consulted with top publishing houses, and helped clients hit the New York Times bestseller list three different ways, including new fiction, new non-fiction, and backlist non-fiction. He even helped a book become a New York Times bestseller after 23 years in print!

Rob's consulting firm, Wildfire Marketing, has attracted numerous bestselling authors, including Dr. Gary Chapman, DeVon Franklin, Lysa TerKeurst, Wanda Brunstetter, and Dr. John Townsend. In addition, he's consulted with imprints of the world's best-known publishers, such as HarperCollins, Hachette, and Simon & Schuster.

Rob's professional-level instruction can be found in *The Author's Guide* series, a collection of books dedicated to teaching authors essential marketing skills, including:

*The Author's Guide to Email Marketing* <http://getbook.at/AuthorEmailMarketing>

*The Author's Guide to Marketing Books on Amazon* <http://getbook.at/MarketBooksonAmazon>

*The Author's Guide to Write Text That Sells Books* <http://getbook.at/WriteTextSellsBooks>



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