

# HOW TO BE A GREAT PODCAST GUEST

ONE STONE

creative



EARN MORE FANS. GET MORE INTERVIEWS

# INTRODUCTION

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So, you've got yourself a podcast interview! Congratulations. Podcast appearances are a fantastic way to grow your audience and your business.

At One Stone Creative, we work with LOTS of podcast hosts – and their guests – to make sure that the shows we produce are of the highest quality and get the most traction.

Want to know something that might scare you a little?

If one of our hosts has a guest whose interview sucks – we don't let them run the episode.

That's right. We don't air bad episodes, or at least we don't air them as is.

Being interviewed for a podcast is not a guarantee of being AIRED on that podcast – and that's exactly as it should be. If you're going to get the opportunity to share your ideas and viewpoints with the host's audience (their most precious resource!) then you need to bring your A game.

There are things you should do Before, During and After a podcast appearance to make sure that you're the kind of guest hosts LOVE to have on the show.

Let's talk about them.

## BEFORE THE CALL

- Your Audio Environment
- Your Personal Sound
- Technology Setup
- Mic Technique
- Research
- Inner Game

## DURING THE CALL

- Play to the Audience
- Provide Value and Insight
- Tell Stories
- Share Offers (Respectfully and with Permission)

## AFTER THE CALL

- Plan to Promote
- Ask for or Create Swipes
- Refer the Host and a Friend
- When you Don't Have to Share.

## YOUR AUDIO ENVIRONMENT

Start with an acoustically acceptable room. If you have lots of reflective surfaces, such as hardwood floors and bare, painted walls, you'll need to improvise. These reflective surfaces will cause your audio to sound like an empty gymnasium. If you have art, hang it on the walls. Put down a rug and if the room is empty, add some furniture. Anything that will absorb the sound as it moves around the room will work, even if it's a thick blanket draped over a tall ladder.

Another important thing to consider is the ambient noise in your home. It's easy to become accustomed to background noise like refrigerators and heating and air conditioners. You stop hearing them, but your mic – and your audience – won't. Sit in your room for a few minutes and really listen. Alternatively, if you've already got your mic set up, hit record and be silent. You can SEE the noise. It's probably not possible to turn off your fridge, but you can turn off the A/C as you record.

Other common audio offenders are dogs, lawn mowers, airports, the neighbor kid with the jacked muffler... You don't have a lot of control over these but do what you can to minimize the problem. If you're recording solo, let the noise pass, then start the sentence over. Schedule recordings and interviews when you know you have the best chance of a quiet ambience.

## YOUR PERSONAL SOUND

Would you believe that clothing can be noisy? Avoid fabric that makes noises when you move (cotton is best), and if you're recording in a squeaky chair, swap it out. Does your desk groan? Do you have a habit of tapping your fingers or shuffling papers? All these noises are distracting for your listener and take away from the message you're trying to share.

The other stealth noise you probably haven't considered is mouth noise. You normally don't hear it when people speak because your ear isn't as close to their mouth as a microphone will be. The most common culprit of mouth noise is dehydration, so the day you're going to record, start hydrating early and often. Water is best, and make sure to avoid creamy things, especially dairy products. You'd be wise to skip the spicy foods, too; there's nothing worse than a bad case of indigestion when you're trying to have a conversation.

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## TECHNOLOGY SETUP

Give your equipment a test run about 15 minutes prior to the conversation. Ensure your input is your microphone and not the built-in one on your computer. Record a few seconds of yourself talking so that you can test your audio levels and make sure you aren't too loud or too quiet.

You don't need a top of the line microphone to sound good in a podcast - but the better your setup is, the better you'll sound! Audiotechnica, Shure, Blue Yeti and Snowball are all solid brands - but if you're not ready to invest in a microphone, then a good quality headset mic is fine. Just make sure to test ALL of your options, and log into the call with the best one you have.

If possible, make sure you have a wired internet connection. Dropping in and out of a call does not good audio make. If you can give yourself a trial run of the platform you'll be using (Skype, Zoom, Zencaster etc) with a friend, you'll be much more comfortable and confident when it's time for the call. In any of these systems, there will be mic input options - practice making sure you're using the right one!

## MIC TECHNIQUE

Record yourself speaking. It doesn't really matter what you say because we'll be listening to how you say it. Take a look at the audio file. If you notice a lot of dynamic changes - i.e. the volume of your voice spiking in some place and barely audible in others - that means you aren't keeping a consistent distance from the microphone. It also means that you might not be leaning toward the mic during soft speech and backing off the mic when you're louder. So much of recording good audio starts with the person speaking. Practice and time will refine these skills.

Do you notice a lot of popping? It happens on words starting with 'p' most frequently. This means that you're talking directly into the mic. To combat this, get a pop filter! Also, instead of speaking directly into the mic, turn your head off-axis slightly so that your breath is passing just beside it instead of into it. As a speaker, practice making your p's and other plosive-sounds less poppy. You'll catch it as you edit and refine your skills over time.

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## RESEARCH

If the show has been around for a while, listen to some previous episodes – 10 is a good number. You should also try to be aware of what else is going on in the host's business. Do they blog? Have they written anything about the topic you're going to be discussing? Read it and be ready to reference it during your conversation.

Does the host have partners they do business with, folks they engage with a lot on social media, or sponsors? Look into them as well. Many hosts are very strategic about the topics they cover on their shows, and if you put in the effort to have a good sense of what their overall business is DOING, you'll fit seamlessly into their strategy, and help them grow.

You should ALSO research the audience. What can you find out about them? Which episodes get shared on social the most? Which blog posts get commented on? You'll want to make sure that you're sharing information the audience will find valuable, so look at what they have responded well to in the past.

If finding this information is challenging – you can absolutely ask the host to share their favorite past episodes and other non-podcast materials with you.

## INNER GAME

How you approach a call has a BIG impact on your delivery. Remember that even if you're nervous you never *sound* as nervous as you think you do. Pauses aren't as long as they seem. NO ONE has to hear a recording unless you want them to. Record standing up if it makes you feel more confident. If you don't feel confident, then speak the way a confident person would speak.

Be mindful of your mood; it will come through in the episode. It helps to watch something funny or meaningful – adjust your mood to improve your delivery. Unless you're saying something sad, try to speak with a smile. We can't see it, but we can feel the shape of a smile in your voice.

Listen, really listen, to your delivery. Remember that authenticity and vulnerability are the secret sauce of audio. Do you sound like you're reading or nervous? That's okay – you'll get better with time. But remember to live what you're speaking, and breathe life into your words with honesty.

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## PLAY TO THE AUDIENCE

Your job as a guest on someone else's podcast is to bring value to their audience. That is first and foremost. Your second charge is to do it in a way that is interesting and thought-provoking. If you have a natural sense of humor, great! But that's not necessary. Be honest and authentic.

Because you've done your research, you KNOW what kind of content the audience likes, and the sorts of conversations that happen on the show, and if you can reference other episodes, then loyal fans will eat it up.

Sometimes a host will give you a set of questions in advance. When that's the case, think about your answers, and even practice them a bit - but don't memorize them - sounding like you're reading takes away from the experience for a listener. You might want to prepare some bullet points for yourself - but that should be the extent of it.

If you don't have questions going in - don't worry! You've been asked on the show (or you've pitched yourself to it!) because you're the expert in your industry. Make sure the information you're sharing matches the level of knowledge of the audience. Aiming over people's heads doesn't make you look smart - it makes you look elitist.

## PROVIDE VALUE AND INSIGHT

You should approach a podcast guest appearance as an opportunity to help and connect with a new audience. Don't be afraid to be bold, and don't be afraid to disagree with the host!

Back your arguments and ideas up with facts: personal experiences, research, history - whatever you can to add to your own credibility, and convey to the listeners that you know your stuff, and they can trust you.

There's no reason that the host's audience can't become YOUR audience too. Not by having an agenda and self-promoting yourself until everyone hates you (and chooses not to air the show - just saying, more on that later) but by providing real, actionable and thought-provoking information that will make people WANT to hear more from you.

You're not just like everyone else, right? Make sure what you share on podcast appearances reflects that.

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## TELL STORIES

Stories are magic. Think about your own life, your own turning points, and make anecdotes of them. Every good story has a set-up, rising action, and the payoff. The situation, how it gets worse, then the punch line. If you spend time crafting good anecdotes, you'll always find a place for them in interviews, and in life!

For real - make a list of your own best stories and anecdotes. Write them out. Practice saying them, and before a call, think about which ones might be relevant to your conversation.

Be willing to talk about difficult things. Honest and authentic audio is compelling. On the flip side of that, you know where your lines are, and you shouldn't feel bad about not allowing a host to goad you into revealing more than you want to. Remember: podcasts are pre-recorded. Politely decline from answering, and likely, it'll be removed in editing.

## SHARE OFFERS (RESPECTFULLY, AND WITH PERMISSION)

This is a really big, and really important one. If you're using podcast guest spots as a marketing and promotion strategy - you're doing something right! It's a really good one. Podcast listeners are loyal, and they remember people they hear on their favorite shows.

But it's also really easy to go overboard and try to hijack the host's audience and show for your own purposes. Hosts (and producers) can smell this a mile away, and you'll be aggressively rejected. (And probably talked about to OTHER hosts.)

So - how do you make an offer well? There are a few strategies. If a resource you happen to have created comes up naturally in conversation, feel free to mention it! The host may decide to link it in the show notes.

You can also ask the host in advance if you can create something special for their audience - like a giveaway, training, or report. Many hosts LOVE being able to offer this kind of bonus to their listeners, and you might just get a yes. ALWAYS ask first.

Finally- most hosts will ask how listeners can get in touch with you. Make sure any link you provide is easy to remember.

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## PLAN TO PROMOTE

All things being equal, you should promote the episode shows you're on. It helps the host, and it demonstrates that you're a quality guest!

Standard promotion would be sharing the episode once it's live on your social media accounts. Remember to tag the host, and anyone you think would be interested!

Teasing the episode that will be coming out in a few days is a great way to generate interest, and you can share more than once after it has been released.

If you want to level up your promotion, then you can email your list with a link to the episode, and if you REALLY want to make the most of this great piece of content someone else produced for you ;- ) then ask for an embed file and put it directly on your own site, with a blog post extending the ideas you talked about.

If you put some effort into promoting a podcast episode (many guests don't bother) you'll make a fantastic impression on the host.

## ASK FOR OR CREATE SWIPES

If your host is very well organized and a great marketer, they'll provide you with a set of swipes. These are pre-written social media shares, graphics and emails that you can copy-paste into your own accounts.

Swipes are awesome. They aren't \*quite\* as good as you writing in your own voice for your own audience - but they can be an amazing help if you're busy but still want to promote.

If no swipes are forthcoming (and they're usually not, unfortunately!) then you can make yourself a little swipe file to use after the episode airs. Pre-write your social and email sharing content and schedule it soon after your call so the ideas and feelings are fresh in your mind, then relax, and prepare to engage with listeners on the day of release.

Sometimes you won't be alerted about your post until it's live - then just do your best. :-)

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## REFER THE HOST AND A FRIEND

You know what's even better than a great podcast guest? A podcast guest who cares about the host and wants to see them succeed!

That means networking. If the host of the show has a business, then try to think of someone you could refer to use their services. If you've been on another podcast that you think the host would be a good fit on, make that introduction as well!

Likewise, if there is anyone in your personal network who would be a great guest on the show you were just on - hook them up! Spending a few minutes nurturing your network and making the kinds of connections that might lead to more business for everyone is both a lovely thing to do - and a power play. (There's no harm in asking for referrals as well - especially if you've just given a good one!)

## WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE

Now, it is NEVER actually obligatory to share an episode you've been on once it's been aired. It's generally considered best practice, however. It's the nice thing to do, and it helps your own status and your host's audience grow.

But of course - there are exceptions.

If the topic REALLY isn't a fit for your audience - say you were talking about something from your day job, and your own audience is for your own business - it's completely appropriate for you to not bother people who won't be interested in what you have to say. (But like - maybe email your mom and a few colleagues with the link, eh?)

The other reason you're off the hook from sharing is if the finished quality of the episode isn't good. Not every host edits in post (although they SHOULD) and since you did your homework to sound as good as possible, if the host doesn't and there's echo, reverb, room noises or someone sounds like they're in the bottom of a well... you don't have to share anything that makes you look unprofessional.

Just like the host's audience is their most precious resources - so is yours!

Protect it from bad audio.

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# ONE STONE

## creative



AUDRA  
CASINO

MEGAN  
DOUGHERTY



## ABOUT ONE STONE CREATIVE

One Stone Creative was founded by Megan Dougherty and Audra Casino in 2017. We're a strategic multi-media agency focusing on podcast production. We work with experts and entrepreneurs who want to challenge and uplift their industries. Your message is our speciality, and if you have something important to say - we can do the rest.

## WHAT WE DO

We take your ideas, your expertise and even your content archive and turn it into high-quality multi-media content campaigns that help you grow your business. We're a concierge-style service and can handle everything from drafting to deployment.

### PODCAST PRODUCTION

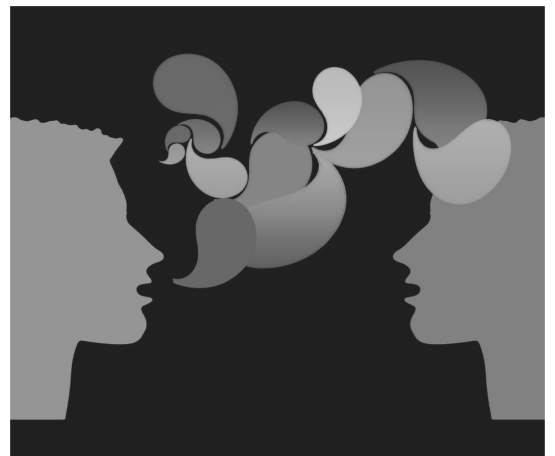
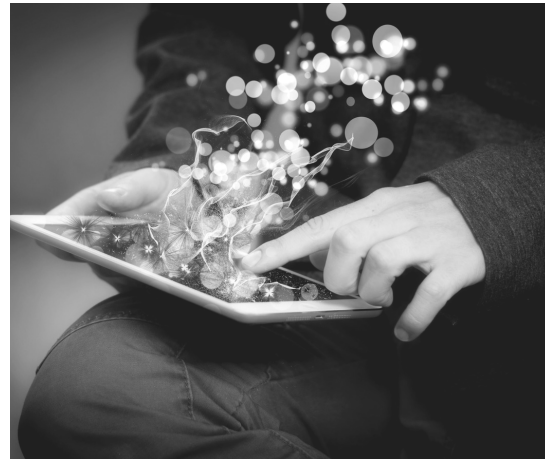
- Podcast Launches
- Ongoing Production
- Takeover (when you're tired of doing it all alone)

### COURSE CONSULTATION AND PRODUCTION

- Webinar or Course Review
- Course Production
- Course Development

### CUSTOM VIDEO AND ANIMATION

- Animated Video Bumpers
- Sales and promotional videos
- Book and entertainment trailers



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