

15 Minutes to Shine - How to Make the **Most** of Your On-Air Interview



So, you're an up and coming artist - you've done a few gigs and you have some credits to your name. You've grown in your craft, people are talking a lot about you and your talent and now...you've been asked for a radio, television or virtual interview! Great! Congratulations!

You've made it!

All your hard work has paid off and now the media wants to hear more from YOU. This is your chance to share your thoughts and ideas about your projects, build your audience/customer base and strengthen your brand. Take this opportunity to share your story and talk a little bit about who you are and what inspires you.

If you've been asked for an interview that means people are already interested in what you do. Your job now, is to *give the people what they want* and what they want in this case, is a piece of you; to relate to you and maybe even see themselves in you. It's your one chance to plug yourself and your cause (if you have one), big up your mates and leave the audience with something to remember you by. Oh, and by the way, if you're lucky, you'll have less than 15 minutes to do it!

Too many people look back on their early interviews and wish they had said something more or something different altogether. Don't be that person. Trust me. I know first hand. That being the case, I've put together 12 tips for giving an awesome interview where you can walk away feeling accomplished, empowered and like the star you know you are!

Shown here are some photos taken from my appearance on The Mike Bullard Show - Toronto 2004



1. Know your objective. What *exactly* do you want to get out of this interview? Know what you want going in because I guarantee you, the interviewer certainly has an agenda of their own and chances are, it's probably not the same as yours. The media answers only to their sponsors - *not you* - so don't wait for them to ask you the perfect questions. Focus on getting your

information out no matter what's being talked about or where the conversation goes.

2. Have a strategy. Some interviewers aren't that great at their job. Practice answering weird/off topic/strangely worded/joke questions or comments in a way which always brings the topic back to the information you want to deliver about your work/performances. Don't expect they've done their homework on you either. Give them more information than asked and expand on your answers.

3. Know your Non-Negotiables. What's the information you know you *absolutely must talk about in this interview*? My advice is to share this information as soon as you can. Sometimes interviews get cut short and you want to know that you can rattle off your vitals fast, cool and easy before the host says 'thank you' and moves on to the next interview or commercial break. Stay ahead of the game and be ready with your contact details, social media platforms, upcoming performance dates, shout outs, big ups, catch phrases, mottos or whatever last words or impressions you want to leave with your audience.



4. Meet people where they're at. Is the interviewer excited about you? Get excited with them! Are they conservative and quiet? Put on your cool charm. Interview hosts tend to appeal *first* to their audience base and if you can match them somewhat then you'll both be on the same wavelength. This will make the interviewer feel comfortable chatting with you and the audience will more easily relate.

5. Take YOUR time. Literally! *Take the time which is rightfully yours.* Some interviewers make the session all about them and their antics/persona. In this case, you might find yourself fighting to get a few words in! *Don't let that happen.* You've worked hard to make it up until this point and you've got lots of people who want to hear what you have to say so - be politely aggressive if you need to be and make yourself heard.



6. Don't let the interviewer put words in your mouth! Even if they guessed the precise phrase/words you were going to say, do not accept their answer as yours. It may seem like the host is only trying to help but you don't need it. Take a moment, reply with 'no' and say something else that's true for you. Don't be manipulated into taking on someone else's view in place of your own. You're an independent thinker and creator of your own plan.

7. Never answer with 'you know'. What this really means is *you don't know what you're talking about* and you're trying to pawn the answer off onto someone else (see tip #6). In stead, take a moment to think about what you truly want to say and be confident in your delivery.



8. Recall 1 or 2 interesting stories about you/your project. The audience wants to know about you and oftentimes, a past incident which you think is irrelevant or boring is quite interesting for others to hear. Did something funny, scary, unique

or otherwise impressive happen to you? How did this incident help you/teach you/prepare you for the industry? Did you overcome an insurmountable obstacle? Did you get a stroke of crazy luck? Looking back, was there anything you would have done differently? An interesting story may be the only thing the audience remembers about you. Make it a good one.

9. "Tell us, what's next for you?" Have something prepared for this question even if there is no specific 'what's next' to talk about. Talk about a long-term goal or an ideal path for your career. Don't have one? Get one and practice talking about it.



These last few tips are general rules of conduct for *any* meeting. I shouldn't have to mention them but...I will.

10. Be on time. Save being fashionably late for the A-list stars. They can afford to annoy their host and delay the work day...and they know it. Interviews happen on a timed schedule and being late could cut into your air time! Besides that, your reputation is everything and you don't want to be known for being careless with people's time.

11. Greet everyone in the studio/on set. Shake hands/acknowledge the room and introduce yourself. First, it's rude not to and second, you don't know who else might be in the studio. Executive producers, writers, other talented artists and future decision makers will remember how courteous and personable you were when they first met you. At the end of the day, this is a business atmosphere and people want to work with those who are professional *and* talented.



12. Be grateful. There are many artists who would love to be in your shoes. Be grateful they asked you. Having a sense of gratitude will give you an attractive demeanor and chances are you'll attract even more to be grateful for.

I coach actors, writers, directors, on-air personalities and performers on how to give a dynamic and compelling performance. Email to register for classes or to book your private session. Contact: ingrid@ingridhartcoaching.ca