



Beyond the Book®



BRIAN FEINBLUM, PLANNED TV ARTS

M: Welcome to a podcast of Beyond the Book, a presentation of the not-for-profit Copyright Clearance Center. Copyright Clearance Center is the world's largest provider of copyright compliance solutions, through a wide range of innovative licensing services and comprehensive educational programs for authors, publishers, and their audiences in academia, business, and research institutions.

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KENNEALLY: Hello, and welcome to another edition of Beyond the Book. I am your host, Christopher Kenneally, Director of Author Relations for the nonprofit Copyright Clearance Center, welcoming you to a program that's going to take a look at a special aspect of publicizing your book, and that is the radio tour. We have joining us today an expert on that field, as well as just generally about publicity for authors and publishers, Brian Feinblum. Welcome, Brian.

FEINBLUM: Hi, Chris. Thanks for having me on.

KENNEALLY: It's a pleasure to have you here. And Brian comes to us from New York City, where he is the Chief Marketing Officer and Vice President for Planned TV Arts, and has been promoting best-selling authors, self-published books, motivational speakers, and influential trade associations since 1989. A sample of the media appearances that he has scheduled for his office includes – well, just all the top ones: *Oprah*, CNN, *USA Today*, the list goes on. He has also served as head of publicity for several book publishers, so he knows it from a number of different angles. And recent Planned TV Arts clients include several publishing houses – Harper Collins and Random House – as well as comedian Jeff Foxworthy. I understand, Brian, you're also a published author and working on a book about ethics and values, which perhaps you could tell us about a little bit towards the end of things.

FEINBLUM: Sure.

KENNEALLY: But as I mentioned at the top, we want to focus on the radio tour. And I suppose for somebody on a limited budget, as well as somebody who might not want to have to deal with air travel these days – and nobody enjoys that – the radio tour has an attraction. You get to jet across the country just by telephone.



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FEINBLUM: Oh, yeah, it's terrific. I mean, just to give you some quick background, my company, Planned Television Arts, we trademarked the radio tour about 20 years ago. We obviously didn't invent radio, but we invented a creative way to use it, especially in terms of promoting a book.

What we do with radio is, you can do interviews by phone, you don't have to travel anywhere, and we schedule typically about 20 interviews in one morning. So from 7:00 AM to noon, an author can be on with radio stations across the country virtually nonstop.

And of course, there are other ways to do radio. You can do radio phoners in the middle of the night, in the middle of the afternoon, weekends. There's lots of radio out there. I think it's the best medium to promote a book. It's at least the most cost-effective. And there's so much out there in terms of radio that it would be foolish not to pursue it.

KENNEALLY: And I love radio myself. I was in radio some years ago. I think it's a wonderful medium. It's a great medium for people who want to do something else while they're absorbing that information. So you can be in the office, or you can be washing dishes, or you can be driving the car. It really doesn't matter what you're doing, with the radio on, you're getting some information along with the rest of what you're up to, and that's a great way to reach people.

FEINBLUM: Absolutely. One of the trends in book publicity over the last 10 years has been certainly to travel less. It used to be people would go on a road tour, 10-city, 20-city, 30-city road tours, spend a lot of money and time doing that. Now, of course, with the Internet, with phones, with other things, you really don't need to do that. It's not the best way to promote a book any more. So radio is a great component because it's timeless. You can do it at your convenience, 10 minutes here, 10 minutes there, you can dedicate a whole morning to it. You don't have to travel, as you pointed out. You can do this in your underwear. It doesn't matter. As long as your voice is clear and you can speak coherently, which most authors can, I think it's just a great, great medium.

And with radio, one thing that I find is encouraging, the media landscape has been changing. We read every day, newspapers and magazines have been losing circulation, television shows are losing viewers. Online avenues are increasing, more people are spending time online. With radio, what we found is that there actually has been a recent increase in the number of listeners to radio, but they're listening for fewer hours. So more people are exposed to the medium, but they're listening to just a little less than they normally do. But it's a great area, because you're in your car, or you're walking outside and you have a Walkman or whatever,



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you're in the house – it's easy to have the radio on. And I find that you do get millions of listeners out there who might be interested in your book, and you only need a small percentage of those listeners to go onto your Website or to buy your book to make a big impact. And it's a great medium.

KENNEALLY: Right, and certainly while online taketh away, it also giveth. I know for myself that with some of my favorite public radio programs, to be able to get them by podcast gives me a tremendous amount of freedom, because I don't have to be listening Friday night at 7:00, or I can listen when I want to when I'm doing my workout. And I'm a dedicated listener, so when I'm making that kind of a choice, I'm actually raising the level of quality, if you will, for the message. I'm bringing myself there purposely rather than casually, and I think that that means I'm a more attentive listener.

FEINBLUM: Yes.

KENNEALLY: Lets just talk about what makes radio different in terms of how the author delivers his or her message. You have to talk about the book, there are some basic talking points that you may have regardless of whether you're talking to a print journalist or a TV journalist or whomever. But what should you be thinking about as an author when you are speaking on the radio or to a radio journalist?

FEINBLUM: Yeah, that's a good question. The coaching tips that I often give to my authors and clients is the following. One, they should see the radio interview as an opportunity to promote their book. What that means is, don't blatantly come off as an infomercial where you're selling the book and telling people buy my book. At the same time, do not do the opposite, which is to kind of keep talking, giving out a lot of information, but it's not quite focused to guide people to take an action step. And some authors are so passionate about what they wrote about that they don't realize they're giving away the store in the interview. You want to give just enough to tease people to say, I like this author, or I find him interesting, or I want to know more. If you can get them to think at the end of it, I want to know more, they're going to at least go to Amazon, check out the book, or go to your Website, or go into the bookstore and touch the book if it's there.

So my advice is keep your answers short, no more than 30 seconds per answer. Everyone has ADD. Mention the name of your book several times. Don't just say, oh, in my book I wrote about this, or the reason I wrote my book was blah blah blah. You want to give the exact title – you know, in my book, whatever the name of it is, say the title.

KENNEALLY: Or if you have a Website, try to get the URL in, I would –



FEINBLUM: That's right, mention the Website. And, again, it's the way you mention it. You don't want to sound too salesy, where, oh, and by the way, you can buy my book on ww dot dot whatever. You want to say, I have resources, I have free tips, I have a downloadable chapter, I have something – some reason you should go to that site, other than just blatantly saying, you can buy my book at this Website. If you do that, then I think people will go to your Website out of curiosity.

And we usually encourage our authors to give away something, at least during the time of the radio tour. Give something away on your site that you normally don't give away. Maybe there's a missing chapter, maybe there's a free resource guide, maybe there's something, an audio something or other that you can just e-mail to people who go to your site. As long as it's something that's not costing you any money, but if it's perceived value to the person getting it, that's what I would suggest. So those are some of the basics.

KENNEALLY: Right. That sounds really helpful. But what about trying to say something particularly pithy, you know, to be able to craft the sound bite. Do you have any tips on that?

FEINBLUM: Sure. I mean, it depends on the subject matter of the book. So maybe talking about nonfiction, or even fiction. If you can relate to something that's in the media, that's already going on, I think that's helpful, because now there's more relevance to what you're tying into. And I think you make a good point. There are many ways to say something that give people a sense of feeling or emotion. I think that's what you want to play on. And the best way to do that, probably, is whatever point that you make, think – try and quickly give an example of it. So if your book is about how to lose weight, you don't want to just say, yeah, and you should eat vegetables and you should exercise three times a week and whatever, because everyone knows that anyway. You want to give a passionate story, maybe about how you lost 50 pounds, or how you had a problem, something that gets into the emotional mindset of the listener is what you're trying to tap into.

And really, that's all that advertising and sales is, tap into their emotions. Look at all the car commercials out there. How rare is it that they actually tell you how many miles per gallon you get, or that the car is safe, or some other important feature? No, they're selling you on the – you know, it's fast, and it's colorful, and it's smooth, and it's the car that you want, it's all the things that you shouldn't judge a car by, but that's what they're selling you on. And to some degree, a book is the same way. Even though your book has substance to it, you've got to sell it, I think, in a way that appeals to people's needs, desires, fears, just like a politician would.



KENNEALLY: Well, let's talk about what makes a radio tour effective. And at the top of our piece here, you said you could schedule an author back-to-back interviews all morning long.

FEINBLUM: Yeah.

KENNEALLY: I've been through that myself, and I know that one thing I tried to keep in mind was, I didn't have to say something different every single time.

FEINBLUM: True.

KENNEALLY: I had to say it well the first time, and then just keep saying it again and again, because it was new to the next person. If I was talking to Boston, great, and then I'm on to New York, they hadn't heard it in New York. I suppose that's one thing to do. But how do you help authors prepare for that kind of marathon interview?

FEINBLUM: Sure. Most authors like that type of setup. A few will say, wow, that sounds daunting, I have 20 interviews? And they get overwhelmed. But most love it, because they recognize, once they get on the air and they feel comfortable after the first interview, they just want to keep going. There's such adrenaline flowing. I suggest to them that you should have five points that you want to make for every interview. No matter what they ask you, you're going to get those five points across. Once we identify what those five points are, I tell them to type them out 20 times, and during the course of each interview, as you make a point, cross it off.

And these points shouldn't be word for word. You're not reading a script. But if one point was, oh, I've got to make sure I mention the title of the book and something else relating to that, once you say it, cross it off, so that when you get to the next interview, you start with a clean slate. And, as you pointed out, they haven't heard you before, so you start with the same level of energy, same emotion, and say the same points over and over, because it'll be just as relevant the first time as they are the 20th time.

I also try and caution them, no matter how good or bad they think they did on an interview, realize when the next interview begins, it's a fresh start. So take nothing for granted, and don't let whatever happened in the past interview weigh you down on what's going on.



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Now, some of this might be easier said than done, but I find most authors catch on to this. They realize that these opportunities are very valuable, and they act accordingly.

KENNEALLY: Well, just because I can't help but ask, since you work with so many recognized authors and famous names and so forth, any fun war stories to share with us about such a radio tour from your own treasure chest of stories?

FEINBLUM: Gee, I'm not sure if I could always reveal those stories. But I find that – as you point out, we work with a bunch of great people, from the authors of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* to people like Suze Orman. You know, in every industry and every genre, we've worked with some best-selling authors and some leaders. I find that authors who've never done this before, they're not quite sure how it works, so I always recommend they should actually listen to some talk radio if they haven't yet, just to see what it sounds like, see if you can pick up on what people do or don't do that they should be doing.

KENNEALLY: Well, I think that's probably the best advice that I would second, because I remembered hearing an outtake of a show by Laura Ingraham, and some author had gotten on the show, and early on in the piece – and, my God, Laura Ingraham has millions of listeners, and –

FEINBLUM: Sure.

KENNEALLY: – whatever you think of the politics involved, she's got a tremendous presence and a great personality, a great brand. And this particular author let her know within the first 30 seconds that she had never heard the show before, and barely knew who Laura Ingraham was.

FEINBLUM: Oh, boy.

KENNEALLY: And that was the wrong thing to say.

FEINBLUM: Absolutely.

KENNEALLY: But you certainly should know, if you're going on with Laura Ingraham, you should have an idea who she is.

FEINBLUM: Yes, (inaudible) if it's any kind of national or regionally syndicated show, hopefully you're researching it, your publicist is researching to let you know, (inaudible) what the scope of the show is. But if it's an ordinary local show, even in a major market, most of them tend to follow similar formats. And the one good



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thing about radio is that they – there's lots of different categories. So if you have a business book, there is business radio out there. There's news talk, there's NPR if it's a more intellectual or political topic. And there are all these other formats that are geared towards a very specific demographic. So the one great thing about radio, and maybe similar to the Internet, that you can really segmentize the type of radio that you go after to anticipate that the listenership audience is of a similar demographic to who you think will buy your book.

KENNEALLY: And you can probably do more than one niche or more one than one demo, as long as your message is appropriate.

FEINBLUM: Yes, that's right.

KENNEALLY: If you've got a business message for the business stations, that's great, if you've got an entertainment message for the entertainment shows, that's great too.

FEINBLUM: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, that's one of the things we work on with authors, is how do you take your core message and turn it into – to appeal to five other areas, or other people who maybe initially you wouldn't think that they're your audience, but they very much can be your audience.

KENNEALLY: Now, do you go beyond the US and Canada? Do you reach out to radio, say, in the UK, BBC, that kind of thing, or further than that?

FEINBLUM: No, we just stick to the US and Canada, although our parent company, Ruder Finn, a much larger PR firm, they have offices all across the world. So in theory, we can, but PTA specializes in US and Canadian media.

KENNEALLY: Well, you know, that's enough, certainly. That covers a lot of ground, and, as you say, radio, despite its age – it may be one of the oldest technologies out there – it's the one that seems to be the most vibrant in so many different ways.

FEINBLUM: Yeah.

KENNEALLY: Brian, it's been a pleasure chatting with you, and appreciate your insights, and we hope to have you back to tell us some more about some other aspects of publicity for authors, because I think increasingly, authors are taking charge of their own publicity, and if they're not doing it on their own entirely, they certainly are much more of a partner with the publisher in this.

FEINBLUM: Oh, absolutely. And I appreciate you having me on. I would just like to encourage everyone to consult our Website, plannedtvars.com, and there's



information about radio and information about myself. I'd be glad to help anyone out who has a question or needs help.

KENNEALLY: Well, we certainly, as I say, appreciate your taking the time today, and again, we will look forward to having you with us.

On Beyond the Book today we've had Brian Feinblum, who is the Chief Marketing Officer and Vice President of Planned TV Arts in New York City. This is Chris Kenneally, and we look forward to having you back on Beyond the Book very soon. Always check out what we're up to at www.beyondthebook.com.

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