How to Prepare to Be a Podcast Guest

Written by Sam Glover

So you've been invited to be a guest on a podcast. Congratulations! Should you accept the invitation? How will you sound? What will you talk about?

We'll cover those topics in this post.

1. Should you be a guest on this podcast?

It's tempting to just say yes to every opportunity, but at a bare minimum you should listen to a recent episode or two so you know what you are getting into. Here are some things to consider as you listen:

- Do you like the podcast? Is it a show you would actually want to listen to? Or that you think your target demographic might listen to?
- How is the audio quality? Does it sound professional or amateurish?
- What kind of sponsors are on the podcast, if any? Are you okay with being associated with them?

It's also okay to ask how popular the podcast is. Podcast hosts should be able to give you an idea of the number of downloads your episode is likely to receive. They should also be able to give you an idea of the kind of person who listens to their podcast. Put those together with your own target client or referral source profiles and you should be able to get a rough idea of how effective your appearance will be.

Of course, it's also okay to just say yes and see how it goes, as long as you know what you are getting into.

2. Will you sound good on this podcast?

I've recorded a few hundred interviews for *The Lawyerist Podcast*, and most of my guests assume they will just call in to their interview with their cell phone or Skype me with their computer mic. Which is why we do a sound check before every episode. If we didn't, our show would sound like crap.

You should care about the impression you make on someone's ears at least as much as you would care about the impression you make face to face. Assuming you've got your audio sorted, prepare yourself to be a good guest.

3. What will you talk about?

If you already listened to an episode or two, you should have an idea of the format. Imagine yourself behind the guest mic. Are you going to get peppered with a series of pre-written questions? Or will you be having a casual conversation?

Every host has a different approach to pre-recording prep. Some come up with detailed outlines and lists of questions. Some don't do much more than mention a general topic. I don't like to do too much prep with my guests because I don't want to feel like we are trying repeat a conversation we already had with the mics off. As a host, I read or listen to anything relevant beforehand, then we take the first 10–15 minutes of every recording session to come up with a few bullet points together with my guest, then start recording.

If your host has a process, work with it. If not, I recommend doing a version of my process on your own. Come up with 3–5 sub-topics you want to address based on the host's general topic, assuming they provided one. For each, what are the two or three points you want to get across?

Do the same thing for yourself, so that you know what you want to say when you get a chance to talk about yourself. Whether your host introduces you or asks you to introduce yourself, what's your "elevator speech" introduction? What are the two or three things you want listeners to know about you? Then plan to move on. You should focus on being interesting, informative, and entertaining, not on promoting yourself.

Finally, what are a few takeaways you want someone to get out of your interview? In other words, if they learn nothing else, what do you want them to take away from the time they have spent listening to you?

4. Pitching podcasters

What if you haven't been invited but you want to be on a podcast? I get a fair amount of pitches, and here's my advice based on my own experience:

- Don't hire someone to pitch for you. Nearly all of the pitches I get from agencies are pretty awful and go right in the trash.
- Part of the reason those pitches are so bad is that the person writing them has obviously never listened to our podcast. **If you want to be on a podcast, listen to at least a couple of episodes before you send a pitch.** (See #1, above.)
- Send a friendly, personal email to the host or producer. Do the exercise above and tell them who you are, what you'd like to talk about, and what listeners will take away from it. (See #3, above.)

- If you have previous experience as a podcast guest, news clips, or writing on the subject, include links.
- Include links to your social accounts such as your Twitter profile and LinkedIn page.
- If the host or producer doesn't think it's a good fit, accept that it's probably not a good fit. Move on for now. Whatever you do, don't get pushy.

If you got nothing else out of this post, here's what you should take away from it:

1. Listen to a podcast before you agree to be on it or try to pitch the host on having you as a guest.
2. Care about how you sound, and make an effort to sound great.
3. Identify your "talking points" ahead of time to make sure you give listeners something to take away from your interview.

Good luck with your next podcast appearance!

About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.