

BULLET POINTS

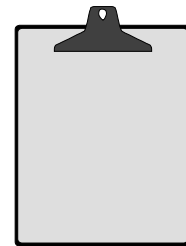
Personal Appearances 101

Ladies and gentlemen, it's Star Time—time for you to get out of the studio and into the public to mingle with the people, press the flesh, and let your listeners put the name and the face together with the voice. Promotions and events are a huge opportunity for you to make new fans and to solidify relationships with old fans and clients. They're a huge responsibility too because you ARE the radio station when you appear in public. The entire brand is on your shoulders and it's up to you to put on a great show and fulfill expectations.

There is a system to staging a successful promotion. We're going to talk about how to prepare ahead of time, what to wear, take with you, how to act, what to say, what not to say or do, how to work the crowd, how to work the client, how to manage problems, and how to make your exit.

- **How to prepare ahead of time.** First you need a checklist. Have someone make up a template. Use it and make sure everyone who is scheduled for this event has a copy of the checklist. Include the journalism of who, what, when, where, why, plus any special instructions anybody needs to know.
 - ✓ What is this—a programming promotion, a live concert, a client event?
 - ✓ Why are we doing this? What is the purpose/goal of this promotion? Is there a client to schmooze?
 - ✓ When is it—the date and exact start and end times. Include required arrival time if different from the event start time.
 - ✓ Where is it—the exact location with clear driving directions from the station.
 - ✓ Who goes from the station (talent, promotion, programming, sales, engineering, interns). And who is the primary contact on site? Who is the backup? Get names and numbers.
 - ✓ What is being done to make the station and the talent look BIG? Success is much greater if the station's presence and the talent look like stars. Are there big banners with the station/talent name? Is there entertainment support for the talent (girls in bikinis, fans of the show, stanchions to square off the area where the event is to take place)?
 - ✓ Add any special instructions: Remember to take the giveaway guitar, take the BIG banner, etc. Is there a PA system for the event? (Even in scenarios where no PA is needed to be heard, most talent will feel more comfortable with a microphone in hand. It establishes their role.
 - ✓ All persons should meet before the appearance begins. This meeting can be in the car right outside the client's location 15 minutes before or in the conference room a day or two before, but it needs to happen.

- **What to wear.** This depends on the station's format, on what your audience looks like, and to some extent on the venue. If you are manning a booth or table, you can be a little more casual. Wear cool station gear if you have it. If it's a concert, put on more flash because you want to be seen all the way in the last row. Better to dress up than dress down. And whatever you wear, make it clean—laundry-wise as well as PG-13.
- **What to take with you.** You need a central location for all the stuff that you normally take to remotes or onsite events. Let's call it a "Go Box." Before you head out, open the Go Box and make sure it contains the following stuff:
 - ✓ Your event checklist
 - ✓ Duct tape (you can't be in the music business without it)
 - ✓ Bumper stickers, buttons, flyers, whatever free station goods you usually distribute or special goods you need for this particular event. Take more stuff than you need—you can always bring back what you don't use.
 - ✓ Business cards if you have them
 - ✓ A fully charged cell phone (yours or the station's) loaded with all important contact names
 - ✓ Extra pens (ink and big Sharpie) and a notebook or legal pad
 - ✓ Bottled water
 - ✓ Gas, a map, a credit card, and cash.
 - ✓ Camera
 - ✓ DAT or minidisc recorder
- **How to act.** Arrive early and stay late. Be on your best professional behavior. We do promotions to get votes, to cement important relationships, to increase the love. You are a rock and roll politician and your job is to shake hands and kiss babies. No drugs, no alcohol, nothing that momma wouldn't be proud of.
- **What to say, what not to say.** You are a representative of the station. If you have any issues about station policy or format or anything at all, an event or promotion is not the place to air them. In public we put on a united front. Same goes for competition. No bad mouth, only good mouth. We do our fighting behind the scenes.
- **How to work the crowd.** Don't stay in one spot and wait for people to come to you, move through the crowd and greet as many people as possible. Touch them, smile, thank them for listening to the station, and tell them we couldn't do what we do without their support. THIS IS THE TRUTH. Don't let any one fan monopolize your time, and should you encounter a listener with a negative attitude, don't let that person make you lose focus. Be polite, move on and quickly adjust. Remember, he's in the minority.
- **Good beginnings.** It's a good idea if there can be some sort of icebreaker that makes it easy and natural for air talent to engage visitors when they arrive. This can be a prize wheel, a door prize drawing or a fun contest in the store the talent can direct visitors to when they enter.
- **How to work the client.** When you first get to the site, immediately find your contact and tell them you've arrived. If the contact is the client, spend an extra minute and put some star power on him. Let him know just how much you and the radio station appreciate his support. Bring him



a little extra something from the station—tickets, CD's, whatever you have. It's so easy to go that one extra step and the impression you make can be so valuable.

- **Take pictures and get sound to use on the air.** In this day and age of cheap photography, have a digital camera to take pictures of the talent with fans and FAN'S KIDS. Grad email addresses and send them a copy. It's another thing that can be done cheaply, and flashing cameras make it look like a lot is happening. Take a DAT recorder or similar device with you to tape sound you might want to use on the air the next day.
- **What to do when things go wrong.** When things go wrong, which they will from time to time, you have to improvise and fix them. You can't say, "That's not my job" if the promotion assistant runs late or his car won't start. The show must go on, and YOU may have to run everything yourself. Know how to do that? Now you remember why you packed the cell phone...
- **How to make your exit.** Find the primary contact and thank them again for the opportunity to work with them on this event. Unless you're excused by your colleagues, do your part and participate in the load-out. Run the check list in reverse, making sure you have everything you came with minus the stuff you gave away. Be sure to make a mental note of the highlights of the promotion so you can share them with the PD when you get back to the station.

We'll close with this is important point: **when you appear at a station event, you are the radio station.** You are the General Manager, the Program Director, the Marketing Director and the CEO all rolled into one. **Be sure to act like it.** We're counting on you to be a pro. Thanks for all your hard work.

By John Silliman Dodge and Stan Main



Writing Tip: Punching Up Those Promo Liners

Promotional copy is frequently written from the radio station's point of view when it will connect better if it is written from the listener's point of view. Instead of writing in very tentative or complicated terms write in a more streamlined and positive way.

- For example, no one really cares what a radio station "wants" or "wants to do." "KLPZ wants you give you a... or KLPZ wants you to win a..." is better written as: "Soon you will have a great opportunity to win from KLPZ" or "tomorrow morning, someone is going to win a brand new car on KLPZ, and just for listening, it can be you!"
- Write all promotional copy with the assumption the listener is going to win. "You **could** win \$1000 **IF** you can answer the question of the day" is better written as "You **are** going to win \$1000 **WHEN** you answer this easy question of the day."
- "Stay tuned for all the details of this fabulous promotion." The word 'details' is too busy and complicated sounding. Instead use language like "In minutes KLPZ will tell you how easy it is to win and what you need to know to claim the prize."

Writing promotional and ad copy emphasizing the positive and from the point of view of a busy listener will make your writing better on the radio.

TOPICAL SERIAL CONTENT IDEA

“**The Intern**” --- a take-off on the current Donald Trump TV show *The Apprentice*.

Hire 5 personality plus interns for 4 weeks. They show up each Monday and find out what their task is, then Friday they come back and perform. Listeners or hosts then vote off the ‘worst’ one each week. (“You’re *fired!*” like Donald Trump.) The show can check in with them daily to see how they’re doing. (Give them the producer’s numbers in case they need help.)

Potential intern tasks for 4 weeks:

- ✓ Book a guest
- ✓ Come up with a song parody
- ✓ Do a game
- ✓ Promote the station



Reward the winner at the end with tickets to a concert, a station trip or possibly hire them as an actual intern.



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