Lessons Learned as a Radio Talk Show Host

When Albuquerque radio station KKOB 770 AM wanted to bring on a radio talk show eight years ago, they talked with Bob Daniel, Firm Administrator for Pulakos CPA’s PC. The firm saw a great opportunity, and a deal was struck. Bob’s first show was December 1, 2007. At the time of his North I-25 presentation, Bob had done 181 shows.

**“Let’s Talk Business New Mexico”** is the only radio show in New Mexico dedicated to serving the local business community with news, information & a discussion forum people can use to get results for their companies. The show airs Saturday mornings from 6:00 am to 7:00 am.

In addition to being on air, Bob is Executive Producer for the show. He is always looking for appropriate new guests for the show (more below.) Bob’s co-host is Brad Steward, Pulakos’ Managing Shareholder.

The Lessons Learned:

1. Don’t be too prepared. If you are too scripted, it will sound like it.
2. On the other hand, be prepared to fill “dead air.” Guests sometimes freeze and the host has to punt.
3. No politics
4. It’s hard to talk by yourself for an hour. There is synergy with two or three people. One 4th of July, Bob had no guests and he thought he could cover the hour by himself. Wrong. At the first break, his producer signaled that it wasn’t working. They switched to a recording of the Declaration of Independence.
5. When you are on live radio, you can’t go back. There is no back up, so the host has to be prepared to handle any situation that comes up. You can’t stop the clock.
6. The “Dump” button is your friend. Hosts use it when they need to cut off a windy or contentious caller. Would that life had a “Dump” button, Daniels remarked.
7. The 10-second delay is your friend. If a caller starts to go out of bounds, the host can cut the person off before the offending comments go on the air. In one instance, Bob had a former mayor of Albuquerque as a guest, and a caller started to berate the mayor. Bob managed the situation thanks to the delay and the Dump button.
8. Know that things are going to change and embrace it.
9. Always be prepared -- with lots of notes
10. Always have a back-up plan
11. Don’t take yourself too seriously

Bob is always looking for new guests, new thoughts, and new opportunities for the show. “Everyone has a face for radio,” he quipped. The show generally is broken up into four 15-minute segments, although, on occasion, they will devote the entire hour to one set of guests for a deeper, meatier discussion.

He provided some tips for potential show guests:

1. He wants the interviews to sound like a lunch conversation.
2. He works to help guests sound like experts.
3. Guests must be very focused.
4. Get rid of jargon.
5. Get rid of numbers – listeners won’t grasp them; they will hear BIG numbers. Keep it clear and simple.
6. Know the importance of story -- keep it good, clear, and short.
7. There is no such thing as an easy business. Listeners like to hear what it takes to run all kinds of businesses.

In the interests of disclosure, Bob stated that his firm pays to be on the air and receives discounted advertising rates.

Curious about back shows, or want to hear one again? Go to <http://www.letstalkbusinessnewmexico.com> and click on Show Archives, or go to <http://www.pulakos.com/about-pulakos-cpa-s/on-the-radio>