

When I joined Women in Publishing last June to learn how to market a book, we were told to pick a couple strategies to help build our audience (in other words, our email list). I chose to do one author swap (short-term ROI) and one podcast interview (long-term ROI) every month. (ROI=Return On Investment.)

An author swap is when two authors with similar audiences (readers in the same age range with comparable tastes and interests) do advertising for each other. You may have noticed that my monthly newsletter contains a “Shout-Out” on the last page where I mention the book of an author friend. She does the same for me! Not only do we provide useful information to our readers, we connect each other to a new audience. I just love Win-Wins!

Author swaps are easy. Once you’ve found someone with equivalent “numbers” (followers, email addresses), simply provide each other with a book cover and a blurb, then add your personal opinion and send it out with your next newsletter/email. You can also use these to post for each other on your socials.

Podcast interviews, on the other hand, require a greater time commitment...14 to 20 hours, at least for me. I am a control freak, so I tend to go overboard. But I want to provide an interview that I myself would find interesting and entertaining. Why bother doing a podcast only to put people to sleep? Nobody likes the two-minutes-then-click-to-another-channel. My first podcast had over 900 views within two weeks!

For my very first podcast interview, I followed WIP’s advice, and chose a new, relatively unknown podcast channel by a fellow member of WIP who was eager to host me. What do they say about “getting your feet wet?” For me it was “getting your microphone, testing acoustics, and setting up your backdrop.” Then the real work began.



Take my advice and don’t believe the podcast host when they tell you, “Don’t worry! We’re just going to sit down and have a conversation.” I have had enough experience in the media to know: that is what it is supposed to LOOK like. But there is a lot of preparation involved in pulling off a successful podcast.

People want to hear stories. Several stories. Personal stories. You are a storyteller, so put that talent to use! What is your host going to ask you? You can figure this out by watching several podcasts they have done. If you are still unsure what questions might come up, simply ask the host ahead of time. If they are vague (probably because they are too busy), subtly send them an email with your own ideas for the discussion.

Every podcast is different. They have different themes. The first podcast that hosted me was all about leadership. I prepared five personal stories about leadership in my own life that somehow related to the theme of my book. Because the host offered to promote my book during the podcast.

Here is how my time invested added up:

2 hours to research podcasts in general and pitch to the chosen podcast (see webinars for pitching podcasts!)

2 hours listening to their previous podcasts (one before I am invited to the podcast, one after setting a date)

4 hours brainstorming ideas and writing up five emotionally moving stories to tell (shoot for being humorous and informative)

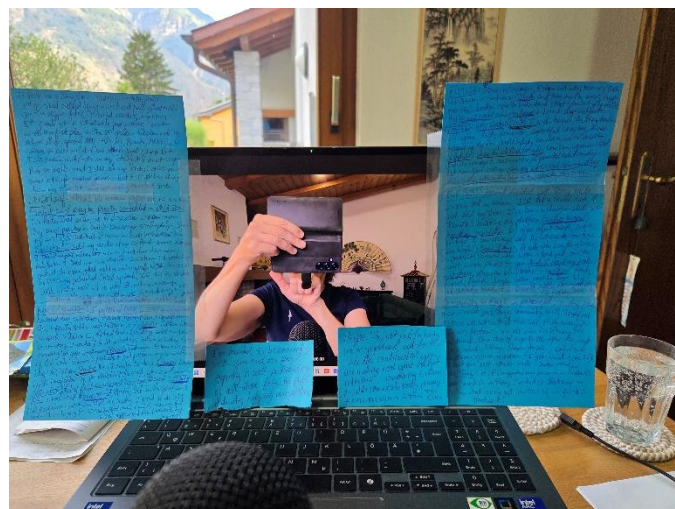
6 hours memorizing and retelling those stories aloud (2 hours each day, the three days prior to the podcast)

2-6 hours after the podcast to help promote it

I would love to pretend that I didn't prepare for my podcasts, that I was a naturally gifted speaker. Like those people who claim to have written their bestselling novel in three months. But I don't mind working hard for success! I believe you get out of it, what you put into it.

I used blue notecards (blue was all I had, yellow is better) to summarize key points in my stories, practiced reciting those stories without looking at the cards, then taped them onto my screen (where nobody but me could see them).

Thanks to my Lyme disease, my memory isn't what it once was, and having those cards within my field of vision (so it didn't look like I was reading off notes) was like a security blanket. If I drew a blank, I knew which story card was where, and I could glance casually in that direction and see a word that would bring to mind what I wanted to say.



If the host asks something that stumps you, just fall back into one of your prepared responses. Use a gentle segway, such as “You know, I was just thinking...” and take the conversation in a direction that makes you comfortable. Afterall, you are the guest. You should be treated like one.

And, remember: the podcast host will be editing your interview. If you need a minute to think, tell them that. Stop for a few seconds, take a drink of water, study your cards, then tell them you are ready to continue. Your audience won't see or hear the difference. Personally, I ran through both podcasts on adrenaline, no breaks needed. I'm still learning to slow down!

What I learned the most from this one was: don't change the subject too quickly so that the host has to go back to something you said earlier. Keep your stories as short as possible, then take a breath and let the host speak. (Don't be one of those people who repeat themselves. Redundancy is extremely boring!)

You will have your own way of preparing. This is what works for me at the moment. The picture here is from my second podcast. It was aimed at fellow authors and people in the publishing industry. A completely new audience! I dressed differently and told completely different stories addressed to the “pain points” of my fellow authors...all which related somehow to the book I was promoting.

My second podcast with Sharissa Bradley won't come out until November because she is changing her platform. You'll surely hear about it in my November 26 newsletter. I think it went well.

I chose to do podcast interviews to build my audience because I felt it would prepare me for speaking engagements for my debut novel (due out in 2028). But I have found there are many other benefits:

- 1) Podcasts help define your brand, meaning your identity. Who are you? What do you stand for?
- 2) They build a fan base because they are personal. Some people watch or listen and think, “I like her.”
- 3) If you can connect on a heart level with listeners, they will want to know more about you.
- 4) They make you look professional, thus lending you credibility. You “are” someone.
- 5) By sharing your links and freebies during the podcast, you can grow your email list.
- 6) Usually, however, the results of a podcast are the long-game. You can use it on your website and in future advertising. You can refer people to it if they want to get to know you better.
- 7) You also build a relationship with the podcast host. Which means, they may want you back! It's free publicity for your next book!



And it is not over until several weeks after it has been posted! Be sure to make the most of all your hard work! Use the graphic your host supplies to announce the episode BEFORE it goes live. Then repost when it does. Anything you do, any contact you make in the next couple weeks, be sure to add: Hey, have you seen my podcast interview? Be sure to get the episode linked to your YouTube channel, and add the cover art and description somewhere on your website. I am currently still working on those last two, because my host was a newbie and has moved on to new episodes and left me hanging. Patience is a virtue!

Finally, be sure to track your podcasts (and what stories you told when, so you can keep things fresh). Even if you are camera-shy, I highly recommend doing a few podcasts. Because when your book makes it big (or even if you are holding a small get-together at the local library) you will eventually be speaking in front of people. Practice makes...better, if not perfect! Good luck! And let me know how it goes!

[Link to this podcast.](#)