

NOTES ON BREAKING DOWN HOST-COPY

I think the biggest misconception with hosting is that people think “Oh, it’s so easy.... I just have to read this little piece of paper to the camera, and I’m a host!” Well, you are right on a couple of fronts: you do just have to read that little piece of copy on that plain piece of paper with black type to camera. Easy, right? Well, yes, it’s easy for some people, but not so easy for most. If you are reading this right now, you are probably saying “Yeah, that’s it – it’s so easy. Just read the copy to the camera – but why do I get so nervous, scared, fast, etc.???” What hosting really comes down to is that it’s a balancing act, and I’m going to give you the intellectual aspect to hosting and the tools you will need to balance the next time you have a host opportunity.

When you read host copy, there are a few things to be aware of - 1) What is the show? 2) Be Aware of the Balancing Act! 3) Transitions....

What is the Show?

What is the creative, what is the concept, what is the network, what is the demographic? I think there are only a handful of working hosts out there who actually think about who they are talking to when they read copy, and it is those few hosts that get that that end up working the most.

Be Aware of the Balancing Act!

After you know who the network is, what the demographic of that network is, you have to find a way of taking that copy and plugging in to that particular audience. It’s easy to talk AT your audience with the copy, but can you talk TO them?

Some things that I find useful is to imagine your audience, really imagine those individuals you’re talking to. Once you can visualize and maybe personalize those audience members with someone personal in your life, you can have an easier time with picking up that little piece of paper and actually have a CONVERSATION with your audience.

Transitions

When you look at your copy, you might have 4 or 5 different beats. I describe these beats as the arc of the copy. There is always going to be a OPEN of the show. You might be TOSSING it to another host in the studio or field. You will have a TEASE AND TOSS to commercial. And then there is the CLOSE. Those are what I like to call transitions in the copy. Think of it as you are the driver of the copy so the host is driving the show, and just like when you drive a car, you speed up, slow down, put your blinker on when you need to make a hard right turn. I know my analogies might be a little crazy, but stay with me because it will make sense the next time you pick up a piece of copy. The same thing holds true for reading host copy.