

Ralph's Guide for Regional TV Visits

APPOINTMENT PREPARATIONS:

- Contact information - one vital key to success is having the name, phone, email information for your key contact at a given TV or Radio station. Make sure the agency or you get this. Get backup cell phone for the key contact, etc.
- Address information - Be sure to have the exact address for the studio. Call the switchboard ahead and ask for major landmarks and/or cross streets. Be sure to get full address including zip code for address as this may help if you are using GPS.
- Special Entrance - Be sure to find out (especially for very early a.m. engagements) if there is a special studio entrance you are to use. Also, you'll often find that they will ask you to show up, and use a metal call box phone with a special number to reach either the floor producer and/or studio tech who will come and fetch you. Knowing this data up front will save lots of time and stress.
- Table and electric outlets - GCI is very good about this now, but be SURE that each TV station understands you need a table and power for your demos, and set up time. Tip: Ask the station if they have a roll around table they use for visiting cooks -- one that has a cover that allows it to be a show and tell table. And, ask about electric outlet(s).

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Hotel - Always try to book yourself into a hotel as close the first early a.m. TV engagement as possible. A great tactic is to call the station's switchboard operator and ask for a nearest hotel recommendation.
- GPS - Always get car with NeverLost if you can (you don't want to be late because of being lost).
- Or, sometimes, for a super early engagement, I'll use a Taxi to ensure I get the location...but be prepared with cross street location information for the driver as they don't go to TV stations often.

DEMO PREPARATIONS:

- The Golden Rule - NEVER create a demo for live TV that requires you to actually "run" something with a mouse. Well, NEVER is too strong, but avoid it.
- Looping demos on screen are best. What TV "wants" is movement, color and visuals.
- These rules apply to desktop, laptop and handheld demos.
- Always bring at least one or two power strips with you. Good for hotel recharge (see below) and great at the studios that may give you a single extension cord.

PACKING TIPS:

- Plastic Zip bags for small items - this is a winner tip on two levels. Helps keep you organized, and the TSA agents love being able to see the items quickly. Also - makes it so easy to load and unload quickly and sort out items.
- Laptops - Often you'll tour with multiple laptops. So, sometimes I make bubble wrap slip cases using clear plastic strong packing tape...like an envelope. That way I can stack two or three laptops in a single tote or backpack. Thin foam sheeting material is good too.
- Desktops - This is a big challenge. I've done two ways:

- One:
 - one hard-shell suitcase with foam inserts for the CPU (you might be able to "pad" with clothes)
 - one suitcase for rest of your clothing and to store a padded small LCD monitor
- Two:
 - Traditional Anvil hard-shell cases that must be shipped overnight from town to town - this means a "down day" between cities, and risk that shipment does not make it to the next stop

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN TOWN

- Once you are settle in the hotel, leave a voice mail for your studio contact at the first appointment you'll have the next morning. Let him/her know you have arrived in town and are looking forward to seeing them -- why? TV people love reassurance that all is in place, and ready to go. They appreciate this a lot.
- Unpack and test out all demos, and I often leave battery driven devices plugged in all night to ensure they are fully charged for first appearance.
- You may, and I do this, repack your Studio demos into large totes, duffels --- Why? The key is to be able to quickly unpack and set up and get out of a studio. Having your stuff in easy to open duffle or totes makes you efficient. And the floor crew really appreciates this a bunch.

JUST BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR THE STUDIO:

- Wardrobe: general rule is blouse and/or shirts that are solid colors, dark rich colors seem best. No need for suit or sport coat (sometimes I like to wear a sport coat). But the message is casual is okay. You are not a "formal" rep, but a consumer "fun" gizmos and gadgets rep.
- Make up (for men): Be sure to apply some kind of powder or "pancake" to your face before you leave the hotel. Don't assume the studio has a make up artist. Get the "shinny" zones...forehead, nose, and ears.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE STUDIO

- When you arrive at the studio, and you interface with human security agent (vs. the call box model) identify yourself as a guest on the morning news, and your contact is X. This will make security respond quickly to you.
- If possible, make contact with your key contact - or whoever connects with you when you enter the studio to let them know you need time to set up demos. Sometimes, especially if this is the first time you are visiting a given studio, they may not understand that you need set up time and table (see above in appointment prep section)
- Ask if they have posted a page on their website, based on our input, with product listings, prices, etc. and ask if the talent will direct audience at the end of the segment to visit the page.
- Ask the contact who the talent will be that will interview you...and if you can have a moment to meet them before you go on air and chat about how the segment will kick off - i.e. plant opening question from talent to toss to you.
- Make up - if they have a make up artist, they will touch you up (that's wonderful)
- Ask your contact how long the segment will be (very important to gauge your pace - you may have to eliminate items, or just have them on display and selectively highlight)

- Set up during commercials - you will be able to set up demos during commercial breaks. That's why it's so good to have easy access bags, totes, etc.
- Be sure to let the camera crew know what items remain stationary (laptop/desktop) and what you will pick up and hold to show the camera (ask/test how to "cheat" the screen item for best camera angle). This will show the crew you are TV hip and they really appreciate this a lot.
- Keep stuff plugged in till just before on air
- In nearly all cases, you and the talent will stand behind a table...so arrange cords best you can to avoid tripping
- Just before going on air, warn talent about the cords. Determine where talent will stand, and where you will be. Best model (imagine standing behind the table with the talent) is to work from right to left.
- Eye contact - you are having a 1:1 with the talent...not the camera...tune out the rest of the world and talk to the talent. Be sure to give them a chance to "insert" comments or questions...but by the same token...keep on target and on topic. The key is to ensure your key "name drop" mission is accomplished.
- Sometimes opening with a non-Intel gadget makes it more relaxed - keeps the feel out of the gate from being like an Intel commercial.
- Open with a factoid - I always find that helps. Survey results, etc. are a great way to establish the news value

WHEN YOU LEAVE THE STUDIO

- Pack up as quickly as you can during commercial breaks
- You can sort out your demo gear later in the car or hotel room
- If possible, try to get feedback from the producer - did the segment go well?
- Often, the talent will give you feedback immediately after the segment
- If you get positive vibe, tell them you'd be delighted to come back.