



Tony Garcia's

Global Media Services

Are You Prepared?

Anyone who has been on the air knows the importance of being well prepared. Whether its being prepared to interview a guest, handling calls or preparing for segments of your show, preparation is critical.

Unfortunately, when it comes to syndication, many don't prepare quite as well. That causes frustration and can ultimately lead to the failure of your project. Here are some things to think about when you are preparing for syndication:

Finances: If you're like me, you grew up majoring in Radio and not paying too much attention to much else. It isn't Calculus, but you should understand the costs involved in distributing your show. Once you have established a budget, you'll know the entire cost of syndicating your show. Be prepared to float the show financially for at least two years in order to give the show enough time to find affiliates and audience. The components of your financial plan should include production, distribution, and marketing. Some of these will vary depending on the kind of show you are doing and how you plan to distribute the show.

Production: Are you doing everything yourself? Research, preparation, script writing, show opens and returns, call screening? If not, make sure you budget for the elements you will outsource.

Distribution: Live via satellite? Who is distributing the show and on what satellite? Not every station has access to every satellite. If the affiliate does not have the correct receiver, will you buy it for them? Do you have an alternative? How are you handling Time Zones and automation? Finally, how are you going to get the show to the satellite provider so they can uplink the show? If your show is recorded, are you distributing via FTP? While cheaper than satellite, you still need to budget for it.

Marketing: What happens when you don't advertise your product? Right, nothing. Last time, I talked about developing your point of difference. That's the foundation of your marketing message. What is it that makes your service unique and desirable? Figure out a way to say it in a compelling way, and then market it. That means trade publications, direct mail, and any other method you can think of to reach the target audience. Budget for advertising regularly. I have heard time and again from people who say their advertising doesn't work; only to find out they ran one very small ad one time and got no response. We poke fun at advertisers who don't understand how to use media, and then we make the same mistake.

One final thought: Marketing, especially in Trade publications, isn't a direct response vehicle. It's there to create a baseline for you to build from. Getting you show cleared requires direct, personal contact with your prospects.

Do you need a multi-million-dollar bankroll to be successful? No. In fact the cost of entry in syndication is probably less what you would need to open a Subway (and a lot more fun). But planning for and understanding full cost of producing, distributing, and marketing your program today will save you a lot of aggravation and frustration and help you be better prepared for success.