ESSENTIAL TACTICS FOR AUTHORS

How to Be a Dynamic Podcast Guest — and Sell Stuff

A field guide to turning great interviews into real book sales — the wardrobe, the gear, the questions, and the follow-up that make it work.



AVAILABLE AT AMAZON

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WHAT WE'LL COVER

Eight Moves That Turn Airtime Into Sales

1. **The Product**
   What you're actually offering listeners
2. **The Wardrobe**
   Dressing for instant on-camera authority
3. **The Gear**
   Mic, camera, and audio that sound like trust
4. **The Room**
   Turning your background into sales real estate
5. **The Host**
   Researching the person interviewing you
6. **The Questions**
   Answers that are brief, sharp, memorable
7. **The Call to Action**
   A frictionless path from listener to buyer
8. **The Follow-up**
   Building a relationship after the mic is off

THE PRE-FLIGHT CHECK

A Checklist for Podcast Guesting Success

A Budget

Plan finances for guesting & marketing

Personal Brand

Clarify your image, values, expertise

Product(s)

Offer valuable products people want

A Website

A professional online hub

Elevator Pitch

Communicate value, fast

Social Strategy

Build an audience and engage

A Way to Buy

Easy, secure purchase process

Origin Stories

Share compelling personal stories

Ready Answers

Prepare smooth, confident answers

Host Research

Know your host and their style

Quality Gear

Clear audio, professional presence

Hit List

Target specific, relevant shows

Listener Offer

Create an exclusive incentive

Thank-You Plan

Cultivate the relationship after

FOCUS & PRIORITIZE — YOU DON'T NEED ALL 14 AT ONCE, YOU NEED THEM IN ORDER

1 Perfecting the Elevator Speech



The Value Formula

Keep it simple: “I write [Genre] for [Target Market] to [Result].” Instant, crystal-clear comprehension beats abstract every single time.

EXERCISE

Write your one-sentence structure pitch.



The Elevator Speech

A 30-second summary of your book that grabs attention and creates the desire to learn more about you and your writing. Include an engaging “one meets two” comparison.

EXERCISE

Write your full 30-second elevator speech.

2 Dress Better Than the Room

Establish Instant Authority

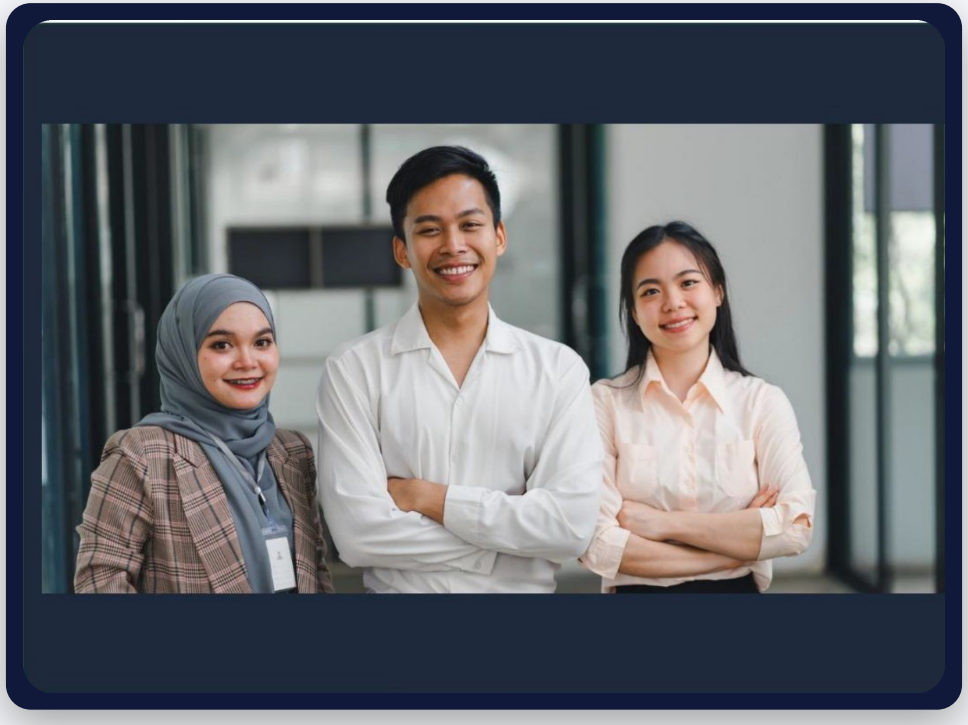
Visual status cues set the tone. Dressing sharper than the default baseline signals professional respect and commands early-stage host validation.

Optimize Camera Contrast

Video represents 90% of a modern podcast's social reach. Sharp patterns, solid dark tones, and clean structure keep you from blending into generic studio backdrops.

Mirror Product Value

If you're selling premium solutions, look the part. Aligning your physical appearance with the cost of your products eliminates cognitive sales friction.



Dress one notch above your host's baseline — every time.

3 Sound Like an Authority

The Recommended Kit



Blue Yeti USB Microphone

Clear, room-filling vocal capture



Shure SE215 Earphones

Sound-isolating real-time monitoring



Logitech C920x HD Webcam

Crisp, professional video presence

3 Sound Like an Authority

Why It Matters

The Dynamic Mic Advantage

Low-cost USB mics capture room echo and noise. High-grade XLR dynamic mics capture a deep, velvety vocal texture that audiences trust.

Eliminate Sound Leakage

Monitor audio feeds in real time. Sound insulation prevents sibilance, lag, and distracting echo — securing a seamless audio environment.

Invest in Lens Quality

Move away from built-in laptop webcams. Crisp, high-definition external cameras frame your micro-expressions and project real production value.



4 Background Placement

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Your studio background is highly valuable digital real estate. Use it to tell your story and drive product curiosity without interrupting the host's conversation.

Cleanly arrange authored books, awards, or minimal brand-related elements behind you. Let the viewer's eyes browse while your voice builds the narrative.



REAL EXAMPLE

5 Know Your Interviewer

Pre-Interview Intelligence

Spend 15 minutes listening to past episodes. Document the host's pet peeves, preferred speaking style, and signature questions — tuning into their rhythm prevents conversational clashes and creates immediate chemistry.

Create Joint Narratives

Reference past guest ideas and host comments. Mentioning specifics shows genuine respect for their catalog and transforms a standard guest pitch into a collaborative, memorable episode.

RESEARCH TOOLS

- Web Search
- ChatGPT

5 Know Your Interviewer

Ready-to-Use Prep Prompt

CHATGPT PROMPT

“You are going to be a guest on author / interviewer Terry Shepherd's ‘In Conversation’ podcast to talk about your new book. Research the host and prepare a preparation sheet about him for reference.”

Swap in your own host's name and show — then let the model build your cheat sheet.

6 Keep Answers Brief

30

SECONDS

Anticipate & Edit Live

Long monologues kill listener engagement. Predict the core topics of the show, package your key insights into memorable 30-second blocks, and hand the floor back to the host. Brevity builds authority and invites follow-up questions — creating a natural dialogue that holds attention far longer than a rehearsed speech.

EXERCISE

Write scripted answers to the Ten Most Asked Author Questions. Practice them, modify as needed, memorize them — then distill each to bullet points that trigger natural, extemporaneous responses.

PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS

10 Questions Interviewers Most Often Ask Authors

1

Tell us about your latest book?

Open with your elevator pitch: plot, themes, why readers should care.

2

What inspired you to write it?

Share the spark behind the story, topic, or central theme.

3

How did you build your characters?

Explain their motivations, conflicts, and how they took shape.

4

Are characters based on real people?

Talk about real-life influences or autobiographical touches.

5

What's your writing routine?

Describe your habits, creative triggers, how ideas arrive.

6

What challenges did you face?

Tell a short obstacle story that shows grit and perseverance.

7

What themes did you want to convey?

Discuss the deeper meaning behind your story.

8

How much research did it take?

Share one memorable, surprising, or vivid research story.

9

A memorable writing-journey moment?

Use a personal anecdote or reader story to add heart.

10

Advice for aspiring writers?

Start with one clear takeaway, reinforced with a short story.

PRO TIP: PREPARE FOR THE COMMON QUESTIONS, TRACK WHAT YOU'RE ASKED, AND REFINE YOUR ANSWERS EACH TIME

7 Offer Seamless Call-to-Actions

Unique, Memorable URL

Set up a direct redirect mapped to your Amazon listing — your website.com/booktitle. It reduces the path-to-purchase to zero steps.

Exclusive Lead Magnets

Offer a tailored discount, a free short story for email sign-ups, or a custom edition of your book with something extra — an epilogue, or the next book's opening chapter.

Urgency & Scarcity

Frame your offer with time constraints. Let listeners know the incentive is active for the first 100 fast-movers, prompting swift, decisive action.

8 Post-Show Relationship Pipeline

1

Send Gratitude

Draft a personalized thank-you within 3 hours. Reflect on specific moments from the interview.

2

Build a Promo Kit

Provide the host custom shorts, quotes, and branded headshots to simplify their social release.

3

Drive Traffic

Once live, heavily boost the episode to your audience, tagging the host to amplify mutual shares.

4

Leave Reviews

Write an honest 5-star Apple & Spotify review. It triggers long-term goodwill and future referrals.

YOUR BRAND ARTICULATED



BUSINESS IDENTITY

WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?
(Who are you?)

Mission, Vision, Core Values, Story





OFFERINGS & SERVICES

WHAT ARE YOUR PRODUCTS?
(What are you selling?)

Features, Benefits, Unique Selling Proposition (USP)



ECONOMIC DENOMINATOR

WHAT IS YOUR ECONOMIC DENOMINATOR?

Key Profit Metric, Measurement for Growth, Scaling Business Model (e.g., Profit per Customer)



MARKETING STRATEGY

WHAT IS YOUR BRAND MARKETING PLAN?

Reaching Target Audience, Campaigns, Brand Awareness, Sales Funnel

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> "A professional brand is more than just a logo or a tagline—it is the complete ecosystem of how you present your value and build trust with your audience."

THE CORE PHILOSOPHY

Terry Shepherd

Clear Value Proposition

Why Should they Care? Your audience needs to understand exactly what you deliver within seconds of encountering you.

Defined Target Audience

Knowing exactly who you are speaking to—their demographics, pain points, and preferences. A brand designed for everyone ultimately appeals to no one.

Authentic Narrative

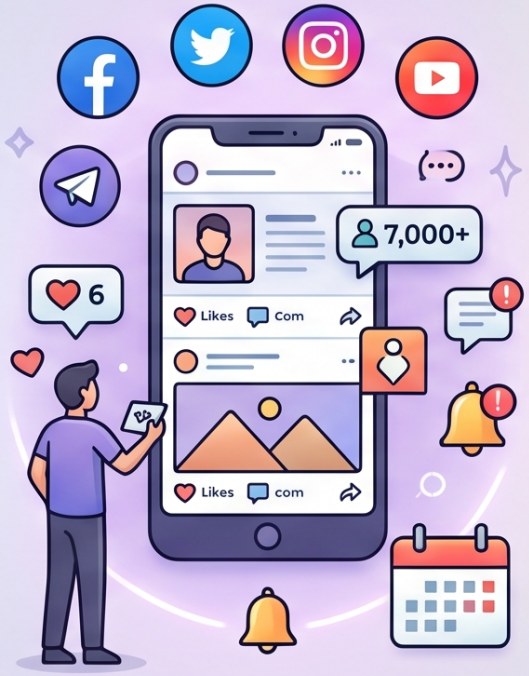
The "why" behind your work. A compelling origin story, mission, or guiding philosophy gives your audience an emotional anchor to connect with beyond the deliverable itself.

WHAT EVERY AUTHOR NEEDS

A WEBSITE (xuni.com)



A REGULAR SOCIAL PRESENCE



ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY

A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO INTERACT WITH YOU (email)



CONNECT WITH READERS (email)

LOTS OF MEANINGFUL CONTENT



LOTS OF MEANINGFUL CONTENT

Terry Shepherd

6-7 Books Per Year







Terry Shepherd

The Business Stuff:
What is your ROI?

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- Writing Time (including revisions)
- Editor(s) Expense
- Cover Design
- Formatting and Deployment - (Cost Per Unit)
- AudioBook
- Marketing - Website/Ads

AUTHOR EARNINGS: THE OVER $20,000 REALITY

(Traditionally & Independently Published Authors)

ALL AUTHORS

(Including Hobbyists, Debut, & Part-Time)



10% - 15%

ESTIMATED % EARNING OVER $20,000/YEAR

Median Annual Income:
$2,000 - $6,000
Includes various commitment levels.

FULL-TIME AUTHORS

(Primary Occupation)



40% - 50%

ESTIMATED % EARNING OVER $20,000/YEAR



INDEPENDENT (SELF-PUBLISHED) AUTHORS



43.8%

Median Annual Income: ~$12,750
(for dedicated minority)

* Consistent releases key*
* Deep backlist is crucial*

TRADITIONALLY PUBLISHED AUTHORS



~50%

Median Annual Income:
~$20,000 - $23,000 (Established Pros)

* All writing-related activities*
* Wide variation by genre & experience*

KEY DRIVERS FOR SUCCESS (Both Paths):

CONSISTENT RELEASES

HIGH-VOLUME GENRES

DEEP BACKLIST

Terry Shepherd

Successful Authors
Spend Most of Their Time
In Activities OTHER than Writing

KEY MARKETING ACTIVITIES FOR AUTHORS



WEBSITE UPDATES

- Regularly Refresh Content
- Maintain Author Bio
- List Book Titles & Buying Links
- Publish Blog Posts or News



SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- Build a Community
- Interact with Readers & Followers
- Share Updates and Insights
- Create Engaging Content



APPEARANCES

- Conferences & Panels
- Book Signings
- Teaching Workshops
- Speaking Engagements



MAILING LIST

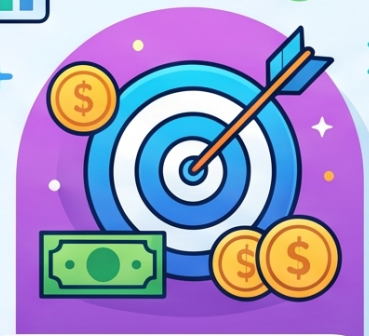
- Build a Subscriber Base
- Send Regular Newsletters
- Provide Exclusive Value

CULLED FOR ENGAGED READERS



EVERGREEN MARKETING

- Reach Schools & Libraries
- Develop On-Line Classes
- Promote Back Catalog
- Sustainable Long-Term Strategy



ADVERTISING

- Utilize Paid Campaigns
- Social Media Ads
- Online Banner Ads
- Search Engine Marketing

GROW YOUR READERSHIP AND SUCCESS

Terry Shepherd

Go Where the Readers Are.
Write in Their Language.

BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND PEOPLE REMEMBER

A personal brand means being known for **ONE** thing by people who've never met you.

TRUST IS EVERYTHING

Every business needs trust to make sales.

Ads cost money. Content builds trust for **FREE**.

YOUR TOPIC = YOUR NICHE

It's the **ONE** thing you consistently post about.

AI | Cooking | Fitness



REALITY CHECK



Not all topics are equal. Some get far more views than others.

WHY SO MANY BUSINESS AND BRANDING CREATORS PIVOTED TO AI:



AI gets a lot of attention right now. If a hot trend overlaps with your niche, **lean into it**.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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15-MINUTE VIDEO VERSION
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THE DIGITAL BOOK
amazon.com — “How to Be a Dynamic Podcast Guest”



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