

Call talkback radio

Talkback radio is a great way reach a large number of people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Be prepared!

Listen to the show before you call in. Check out the fix the system and campaign strategy toolkits, write down one or two main talking points about what you'd like to say before you call but don't read them out on air. Talk naturally!

Before you call:

- Have the radio station's **phone number ready**.
- **Find out about the show** – find out which calls work and what the presenter likes and dislikes.
- **Think about the audience** – who are this station's listeners at home, office workers, commuters, families, teenagers or retirees?
- **Prepare key points** but don't read them out; you want to sound natural.
- **Most stations prefer a landline to a mobile phone**. If you're on a mobile make sure you've got good reception.
- **Once you're in the queue, turn off the radio** – listen via your phone (most stations run talkback on a seven second delay and it is really distracting to hear yourself delayed in the background).
- **When you ring in**, you will first speak to a producer who will want to know what you plan to say. You will then either be placed on hold until there is a slot for you to speak or they might call you back.
- **Stay focused** – don't get caught daydreaming in the queue.

When you're on the air

- **Get to the point quickly**. Have your written points nearby as a prompt, but resist the urge to read them out. You'll probably only get about 30 seconds on air.
- **Speak slowly and clearly**. Being on air makes many people nervous. Breathe deep and wait for your turn to speak, don't interrupt.
- **Keep it friendly**. If you're polite even in the face of a presenter or guest who's being abusive, you will come off better for having not taken the bait.
- **Convince the listener, not the host**. It's the presenters job to be provocative – don't take the bait. Take a moment; think about different ways you could reply and what would sound best for the listener.
- **Avoid unduly personal comments** about the host, guest or other individuals. What you say about someone on air, even in the heat of the moment, may be defamatory.
- **Don't just rant or let off steam**. Be constructive and give listeners information about why this matters and what should be done about it.
- **Relax and be natural**. Don't think of it as an interview, but a conversation.
- **Wait until the announcer/guest has finished speaking** before you speak again. If you try to interrupt you may not be heard.
- **Don't overstay your welcome**. You don't have to stay on air for as long as you can. Make your point as clearly and concisely as you can, then be ready to say goodbye.