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# 10 Questions with ... Mark Zito

**1) Some people get discouraged or enlightened with the business when they actually step out of it for a while. Tell us your observations from the outside.**

I'm pretty young, so I haven't ever been out of the business for an extended period of time. However, I will say this: Anytime I'm not doing a show, I feel lost. I love the feeling of being behind a microphone and entertaining people. And, when I don't have that to look forward to as part of my day, I don't think I'm living up to my potential.

**2) Do you plan on sticking with the radio industry?**

No doubt. I've wanted to do this since I was in 7th grade, and now I finally have the opportunity to make a full-time run at it. I have no family and I have no children. If I don't follow my dream now, when am I going to be able to do it?

This little story might sum up my desire best: I've wanted to work in radio since I read Howard Stern's "Private Parts" when I was 13 years old. But for as much as I wanted to read that book, I knew my Mom felt just as passionate about me NOT getting my hands on its 447 pages. So, when I went to the library, I took out two books -- John Grisham's "The Firm" and Howard's autobiography. I switched the covers, threw the Howard jacketed law thriller under my bed, and read the book in two days. My Mom still thinks "The Firm" is the funniest book I've ever read ... and I've wanted to be in radio ever since.

**3) What is the next job you'd like to obtain?**

I'd like to host my own show or work as some type of producer on a program. I'll go anywhere and work with anyone. I don't say that to be flippant, but rather because since I'm just leaving school, I'm still really looking to gain experience and learn while working in my first full-time position.

**4) How are you finding the "courtesy level" at places you've applied? (Callbacks, e-mails, rejection letters, etc.)**

Apparently, a lot of PDs and GMs follow the golden rule of "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." I've been applying for a lot of jobs over the past couple of months, but have yet to hear anything back. It's okay, though, because I have a lot of experience with rejection after trying to date numerous sorority girls over my four years at Syracuse.

**5) Are you finding salaries/benefits lower than you ever thought, about the same, or have you seen some pleasant surprises?**

As a kid just leaving school, the answer to this would probably be: All salaries are lower than I thought and everything costs more than I thought it did in "the real world." Like, is there a support group I can join for sticker shock? In fact, I didn't even know things like haircuts, food, and deodorant cost actual money. Um, where are my parents?!?

**6) With consolidation there are definitely fewer jobs. How do you separate yourself from the pack?**

It's all about branding. My age group is different because it's been instilled in us since we were young that we HAD to make ourselves a brand -- and had to stand out to employers. Part of this is the teaching method and attitude that everyone is special, but part is also that the job market is shrinking, and representing yourself as a special product is more important than ever before. Personally, I've done this by presenting my work on an interactive website at <http://markzitoforhire.com>.

**7) Are you spending as much time listening to radio as you used to?**

If anything, I'm spending more. I love to listen to all types of different shows and analyze all types of different styles. I think that to be the best, you need to listen to the best ... and sometimes, you even need to listen to the worst. It's all about developing your own style\* and hearing what you'd like to bring to the table (or what you wouldn't) on your own program.

\*Own style can also mean "a style that your boss loves." :)

**8) What has been your biggest career accomplishment?**

To this point, my biggest accomplishment was becoming one of the youngest talk show hosts in the history of Sirius/XM Satellite Radio. In the summer of 2009, I hosted my own show entitled "Mark Zito's College Radio on Satellite Radio." The title was a mouthful, but it was an incredible experience to be heard in two countries.

**9) Having been through all you have dealt with in this biz, what advice would you give people trying to break in?**

I haven't been through much in terms of trials and tribulations of moving market to market ... yet. However, if I had to tell anyone wanting to break in anything, it would be to network, network and network some more. I've had amazing opportunities presented to me because I reached out to some incredible people ... and was lucky enough to stay on their radar.

## **10) Where do you see yourself in five years? 10 years?**

In 5 years, I'd really like to be hosting my own show. In 10, I'd like to syndicate. These may be lofty goals, but I think they're attainable. I've been really successful in college radio, but I understand to a lot of people that's like saying you're the best two-legged player in a game of one-legged soccer players. Yeah, you're good, but look at your competition. It's time for me to get into the real game. I know I can take what I've learned and apply it to the next level. I think it's important to know what you want to do, and a clear set of goals can make anything attainable.

## **Bonus Questions**

### **My favorite new diversion is ...**

-Chat Roulette. I'm hoping to find a wife. So far, it's not going too well.

- Trying to teach my parents technology. Since I live at home for a bit, I figured it was time to bring them into the year 2010. Although, to be fair, my mom just tweeted "Mark, can you come in my room for a second?" and "Mark, how do I updatethis THING [sic]" so I don't think she gets it. We'll get there though.