

What you can learn from John McCain

Do you watch Meet the Press? If so, you have probably noticed that Senator John McCain has been a frequent guest. He's also been on the other Sunday shows like Face the Nation. According to The Washington Monthly, as of 2009, McCain had been on Meet the Press 54 times. Since then, I would say he has been on many more times, making that number 60 or larger.

Other people appear quite frequently too. In fact, based on Sunday show appearances, you would be excused for thinking there are only about 10 senators in the U.S. Senate. Other frequent guests are Senators Lindsey Graham, Chuck Schumer and Dick Durbin. (As an aside, it seems that male senators appear more frequently than female senators...). Back in the 90s, when I first started watching Meet the Press with Tim Russert, the go-to senator was the Senator Orrin Hatch. In fact, I stopped watching MTP because it seemed like Sen. Hatch was always on!

Is John McCain a more important senator than the other 99? No. What he may be is more media savvy. And he is a proven commodity. The Sunday shows know they can count on McCain for making strong pronouncements or taking controversial views.



Sen. John McCain (photo by Medill DC on Flickr)

There's a few PR lessons you can learn from John McCain.

- 1) Be the go-to person on your areas of expertise (McCain's areas are mostly immigration, foreign policy and defense). Some may say this is being a "thought leader."
- 2) Make yourself available and say yes to invitations. (My guess is that MTP knows that it can get McCain pretty much any time.) If you turn down an interview, the producer will simply go on to the next person on the list.
- 3) Have clearly defined, strong messages and/or positions. (MTP knows what it will get when it books McCain.)
- 4) Once you are in, you are in. (McCain does not have to prove anything or do much to get invited on the shows.)

What do you take away from McCain's frequent appearance?