

RADIO FOCUS



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Are You Ready?

Now that the spring book is starting, did you take the time to make sure your station is ready and did you take the necessary steps to make sure you're staying focused throughout the book?

We are always surprised when we first start working with a new client how often the "details" in many areas are overlooked.

So that you're ready, be sure to go through this list and make sure you are prepared.

Music Scheduling

Are the rotations of each category set up correctly? Are they the spins what you set up originally for each category? Be especially sure of the Recurrents & Millennials as many stations don't take the time to move songs on a weekly basis when they do add or work with current music. It doesn't take long to get way off base (fewer spins) in these active categories if you're not careful or if you're trusting someone else on the staff to make it happen.

Every song coded and coded properly

Take the time to go through each category and randomly choose ten titles for each category from all different places in the stack of songs. Scan the history of each of these titles. Rotating though multiple dayparts and multiple hours correctly? Vertical and Horizontal rotations look right?

Probably a good time to run an audit of the system and clean out that hold category, delete titles you'll never play again.

Examine every hour of the next days music log. Check each 15-20 minute segment for era, tempo and essence balance. Nothing is more important; take the amount of time you need each day to make the log great and deliver on your stations expectation.

Audio

Have you critically listened to the stations audio?

Make sure it sounds as good as or better than your competitors and compare it to your direct competitors. Most likely you haven't done this in a while. By the way, how does your audio sound on the stream?

Positioning

All of the imaging freshened? More importantly are you paying close attention to the message you're sending each hour through the imaging. Are you happy with how it's balanced each hour? Put a note in your daily planner so that a reminder pops every 2 weeks to remind you to re-freshen the imaging. Add 20 percent new imaging and remove 20%. Does your station have a local feel, does it relate to the target through the writing of your sweepers and promos? What makes your station compelling?

Spotload

Clarify with sales the station's spotload for each daypart. Work with them to that they respect this maximum number, whatever that is for your station. Are you/they clear on live spots and endorsement policies?

Web Site

Have you been able to unclutter the site? Is the station brand prominent? Are the key usage points easy to find? **Listen live button, artist/title information, key station promotion, morning show content.** While there is no getting around the sales banner ads, don't let them become the focus. Are you checking the site daily, does everything work properly? Are you running monthly stat reports to see where your visitors are going or if any on air strategies are creating web hits? If a new listener comes to your site for the first time, what do you want them to know?

Do you have Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, widgets set up? If not, get on it. They're free from the sites.

Competitive review

Most of us look at our competitors on MediaBase or BDS. That's not enough. Get away from the radio station for a day and monitor all your key competitors. While you're at it, make more time to critically listen to your station.

Your title is Program DIRECTOR, Direct

Make sure everyone on the staff knows their roles and the stations goals.

Direct talent through air check sessions weekly, direct morning talent, daily! This includes anyone who is doing voice tracking for your station.

Is your staff ready to perform each day?

Are you communicating "up" to your OM and Market Manager? No surprises!

Do you have specific ratings goals?

Ratings

Is the market Arbitron SIP correct? Anyone of your competitors not accurate?



The Anti-Creativity Checklist

Here's a question for you: If you had to come up with a checklist that was guaranteed to stifle imagination, innovation, and out-of-box thinking...a checklist designed specifically for people who want nothing to do with change...what would it look like? So we don't get stuck in the "typical" top 10 lists, here are 14 ways to stop creativity from Youngme Moon at the Harvard Business School.

1. Play it safe, listen to the inner voice.

"I'm not going out on the limb"

2. Know your limitations; don't be afraid to pigeonhole yourself

"Don't ask me" "I'm not creative" "I'm not a big idea guy"

3. Remind yourself: It's just a job.

"I don't get paid to come up with ideas" "Nothing in it for me" "When's Lunch?"

4. Show you're the smartest guy in the room. Make skepticism your middle name.

"Here's why that idea won't work"

5. Be the tough guy, demand to see the data.

"There's no evidence that will work" "Has this been in a focus group?"

6. Respect history, always give the past the benefit of the doubt.

"We've always done it this way" "The industry will never accept it"

7. Stop the madness before it gets started. Crush early-stage ideas with your business savvy.

“How are you gonna solve the (INSERT POTENTIAL PROBLEM) issue “What’s the ROI?”

8. Been there, done that. Use experience as a weapon.

“We tried that a few years ago” “You haven’t been around long enough to know how things work”

9. Keep your eyes closed, your mind too.

“I refuse to get caught up in a fad” “What’s this silly talk about social networking?”

10. Assume there is no problem.

“It’s been a tough year, but we can blame the economy”

11. Underestimate your customers.

“They are not ready for that” “They don’t need that”

12. Be a mentor. Give sound advice to the people who work for you.

“Keep your head down and do your job” “I got where I am by not rocking the boat” “leave the ideas to the idea people

13. Be suspicious of the “creative’s” in your organization.

“They don’t understand business” “Who invited them to the meeting?”

14. Finally, when all else fails, act like a grown up.

“I don’t have time for this” “Do you have an appointment” “Back to work people”

Leveraging Facebook Fan Pages

Many stations are active in social networking whether it’s MySpace, Twitter, Facebook or various other social networks. As social networking continues to grow with both the younger and upper demos, we often get questions in the office as to how programming or talent can maximize social networking opportunities.

Communications Value founder Christine Gallagher recently offered these tips to businesses and professionals on using Facebook:

1. The first way to leverage Fan Pages is to set up your page for success.

You need an interesting or compelling title. A tip in this area is to think about using keywords related to your station or morning show—something that you would like to be found for or known for.

You also need to choose a quality, clear photo for your page. Make sure you’ve filled out the “Info Tab” on your page thoroughly with all relevant information about your station or morning show.

“Around here, however, we don’t look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things, because we’re curious...and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

- Walt Disney

2. Leverage your Fan Pages by building your Fan Base.

Be proactive about getting “Fans” especially when your page is new. An easy way to invite people is to use the “suggest to friends” link underneath the picture you’ve posted on your Fan Page.



Facebook will then pull up a list of your Facebook friends and you can simply click on the one's you want to send invitations to.

3. Interact and engage your Fans.

Once you have some supporters or fans of your page, encourage more dialogue and interaction between yourself, your fans and among each other. You can make the biggest impact and emotional connection by simply having some relevant conversations with your fans.

Ask open-ended type questions. Asking people to share their experiences is another great way to begin a dialog with Fans.

4. Provide Compelling Content.

It's easier said than done, but putting in the time and effort into offering consistently interesting and relevant content will naturally encourage interaction because you're giving Fans a valid reason to respond and engage. Spread the responsibility of generating content ideas among a team (or morning show) and link to any interesting articles or blog posts you find on the web that you believe will be of interest to your Fans.

5. Leverage Fan Pages To Drive Traffic To and From Your Blog or Website

To do this, you'll want to list your website in the "Info" section and you'll also want to share links in your updates to your own site.

You can also use an application like "Notes" to enter your blog feed so that it pulls your posts into your page. Add your URL to your email signature and use the free "badges" and "widgets" Facebook and other social networks provide and add them to your website.

To find the badges and widgets, go to:
<http://www.facebook.com/facebook-widgets>.

Taking this action makes it much easier for visitors to your website to simply click on an icon and land on your page where they can become a fan.

Finally, don't try to do too much at one time or you will likely not do a great job with any one social networking site. Choose one or two such as Facebook and Twitter and make your fan pages and social networking a quality experience for everyone.



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