

What's in a great Breakfast show?

There is so much competition for our attention, so many demands on our time; it really is a privilege for the radio station when we choose them over other stations and other media possibilities. It is a privilege that should not be taken for granted.

The challenge for a radio station is that you not only need to get someone to choose you each day, but each hour, each minute, each second. If you are a toothpaste and someone buys your product, they are consuming your product at least until that tube is finished. They cannot just push a button and switch to a different flavour or brand of toothpaste... unlike radio.

It is important that your radio station knows it's position in the market, is clear on what it's trying to achieve, today and beyond. Then that should be souped up to start the day in your breakfast show to launch the momentum needed to thrive throughout the day.

How to get them to choose your breakfast show over and over again:

1. Be Topical

Every day we get up and something is new. The weather is new, the traffic is new, the news is new. Make sure you know what is in the papers, what is in your news broadcast, what people are going to be chatting about when they get to work. Check Twitter, Facebook, or anywhere you know that people are talking and use that to create the framework for what happens in your breakfast show.

2. Make That Relevant

It is one thing for you to talk about the right topics but it is another thing to make sure that it is relevant to those listening to you. A news story about how men are doing more housework now than twenty years ago might be prominent in the news and so you talk about it. But how is that relevant to your audience? A male orientated commercial station needs to approach that differently from a family or faith based station.

3. End In Mind

Before you start talking about something on the air make sure you know where you are going. Whether it is an interview, a phone in talk topic, a duo or solo rave, always know the end before you go to air.

4. Go with 'The Itch'

Sometimes you can know where you are going in a show, in a break, with a topic, in an interview but along the way something comes up. Your guest gives an answer that you were not expecting or perhaps people start calling about something you said in a previous break. If it could be better than what you had planned try and go with it. If the itch is coming, be prepared to scratch it because it will often make more relevant and interesting radio because the direction is no longer based on intuition.

5. All About Them

The best radio usually involves someone other than us even if our egos try and convince us otherwise. They can also say things that you cannot get away with, they can help you talk about the same station liners without repeating yourself, they can come up with funny ideas and creative angles that do not cross your mind.

6. Maintain Balance

Evaluate your show plans for a week, for a day, for an hour. Ensure that there is not too much talk about TV shows but not too little, not too much personal stories from the announcers but having some is important for listeners to connect. For example - do not have all calls and interviews in the last hour of the show and none at the start. Spread it out and keep the balance so you give each listening block the right content balance.

7. Have Razzamatazz

What is in today's show that is so special and so amazing that life feels emptier for missing it? A great competition benchmark can be fun and entertaining but it happens again tomorrow. If there is any sense that you can repeat something like it tomorrow then even though they choose you in principle, it is lacking the razzamatazz that makes them choose you today.

8. Give a gift

The winner is NEVER the most important person of a competition. Most times only one person will win a prize but there are thousands of people who do not win and probably were not even motivated to try. If you want to use a comp to build TSL, do not just do the 8 the caller through and say congratulations. It HAS to be ENTERTAINING and as radio guru Dan O'Day said, "One person gets a prize, give everybody else a gift."

9. On Purpose

Evaluate at the end of each shift your two to three best moments in the show. How many and how often are those two to three best bits things that you planned and how many of those are spontaneous or a guest or caller? If half or more of your best bits are unplanned then your show is not prepped enough and is relying too much on accidents.

10. Sell Well

Many breakfast shows will run promos of little actuality grabs from the show that highlight fun, funny, or interesting moments that will hopefully engage those that did not listen to tune in next time. Make sure that you really understand what bit you are choosing because whatever is in that grab will be the thing that tells everybody what your show is. If you use the wrong grabs you can really damage the perception of the show.

By Luke Holt