

RADIO **INK**

Vol. XXVI, No. 18 October 2011 PUBLISHED WEEKLY

www.radioink.com

**Is Political Talk
Radio Over?**

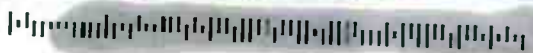
**The TRICK to
Finding
Salespeople**

**WBZ/Boston
Turns 90**

**How to Love Your
Listeners With
Social Media**

Randy's New Vision For Radio

Merlin Media President/CEO Randy Michaelis



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Tommy Austin
Operations Manager
KKCW/FM - Clear Channel
Portland, OR

K103_{fm}



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For speaking proposals and additional information contact Deborah Parenti at deborah@radioink.com

"RULES CREATE GAMES. THE MORE RULES, THE MORE LOOPHOLES I CAN FIND AROUND THEM. WE WORK ON PRINCIPLES. THAT IS AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION."



Cover and Interview photography by Michelle Wenz



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Our Mission: Radio Ink's role is primarily to empower radio management to be more successful by providing fresh, actionable, reality-based ideas, inspiration and education in a quick, easy-to-read, positive print environment.

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B. ERIC RHOADS
FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

What Radio Can Learn From Randy Michaels

Ask anyone about Randy Michaels, and you're guaranteed to get a reaction: People either love him or hate him. That love-hate response is rooted in his brilliance and success as a radio promoter — and in judgment of his sometimes-salacious antics in the business environment. But whatever you think of Michaels, there is much to be learned from him. And his recent re-entry into radio with the well funded Merlin Media once again brings Michaels to the forefront of the industry.



When most radio stations are launched, they're lucky if they get so much as a mention in other local media. But think about how much press and speculation were generated about the imminent launches of Merlin's stations in Chicago and New York. By the time they went on the air, everyone in the press and the community was listening to see what would happen.

Michaels is a master at creating tension and awareness, anticipation and word of mouth. He makes bold statements

with things like letters to competitors — who react in the press, which creates more press. He is expert at getting others to respond and play into his hands. How often do you see other radio stations and companies generating this much buzz?

Michaels has what Bill Tanner used to call "unpredictable predictability." Even though we know Michaels will create controversy and buzz and make great-sounding radio stations that reposition their competitors, we know he'll never get lazy or repeat himself. Randy Michaels reinvents himself every time. He never rests on his laurels.

How often do we reinvent ourselves in radio? How many stations are still playing "the best hits" and programming exactly the same way they were 10 years ago (or more)? Just because you've found a formula that works doesn't mean you never need to reinvent yourself.

Rooted in every radio station Randy Michaels creates is a deep sense of community involvement and entertainment value. He understands that these are two critical success

factors — and if he didn't always live up to that when he ran Clear Channel Radio, his hands may have been tied to some extent by the company's board. But be assured that he knows that local advertising is impacted by being local, not just the numbers, and by having the community feel as though a station is a part of everything in town.

In too much of the industry, this magic has been lost to budget cuts.

Do you think stations would see a dramatic difference in billing if they started being deeply local?

One thing I love about Michaels is his passion for radio. He breathes radio, knows every call letter and transmitter site, knows the history, and has the experience to know what works. I may be naive, but I think it helps the staff get motivated when the boss loves the industry. And when a staff is motivated, that's reflected in everything they do, on and off the air. Randy knows how to assemble a team that will live and die for him.

Remember when radio was everywhere, when radio dominated the media and was all over TV and outdoor? Remember when radio stations were insanely promotional on the streets? These days slashed budgets mean that we're not even practicing what we preach to our advertisers. What would happen if radio actually promoted again? With Randy Michaels back in the business, we'll soon find out.

The biggest complaint I hear from radio people is that they're not having fun anymore. Do you think the people working for Randy are having fun? My guess is, aside from the occasional person who doesn't appreciate the culture (or lack of it), it's probably loads of fun to work in that environment. Michaels understands that radio is more fun than other industries and that if you're stuffy, you'll sound stuffy on the air. What if people across this great industry were having fun again?

Randy Michaels is not Mother Teresa, and I know I'll hear from a lot of people who don't appreciate his style. And I'm not asking you to approve of everything he does. But if you look at what he's really good at, you'll see that he knows how to make great radio and keep things exciting. If more in our industry would return to those basics, we would all reap the rewards. I'm just sayin'. **INK**

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B. Eric Rhoads
B. ERIC RHOADS, CEO/PUBLISHER

THE LAURA INGRAHAM SHOW



NOW OVER 300 STATIONS Ranked **5th** Largest Syndicated Show

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The Michael Savage Show



NOW OVER 300 STATIONS Ranked **3rd** Largest Syndicated Show

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The JERRY DOYLE Show



NOW OVER 215 STATIONS Ranked **6th** Largest Syndicated Show

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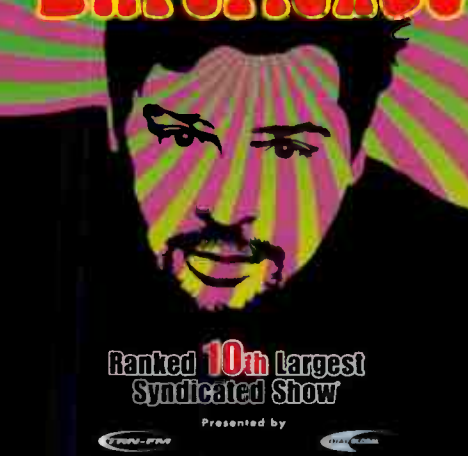
THE RUSTY HUMPHRIES SHOW



NOW OVER 200 STATIONS Ranked **8th** Largest Syndicated Show

TRN

THE MORIGON EXPERIENCE



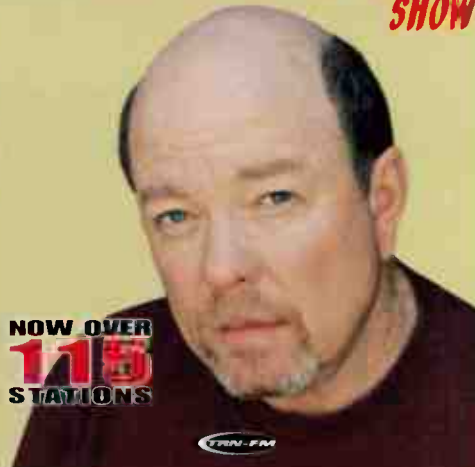
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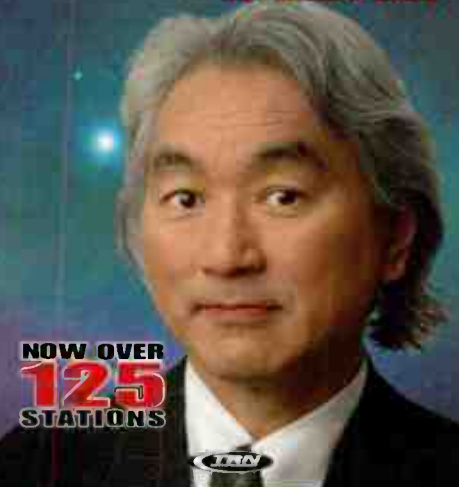
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TRN

The MONICA CROWLEY SHOW



NOW OVER 100 STATIONS

TRN

*According to ALBERS Magazine

ROCKING THE RADIO SHOW

Images from the NAB-RAB-sponsored Radio Show, held September 14-16 in Chicago.



Hey, Bruce, you have any stations left? I can use just a few more. Cumulus Chairman/CEO Lew Dickey with Hubbard Radio President/CEO Bruce Reese.



Kissing up to the new boss? Hubbard Radio Chair Ginny Morris flanked by Hubbard EVP/COO Drew Horowitz and President/CEO Bruce Reese.



Too many years of combined radio experience to count: Detroit Radio Advertising Group's Bill Burton and WBEB/Philadelphia owner Jerry Lee.



Yes, sir, may I get you a glass of water or cup of coffee? Salem Communications CEO Ed Atsinger with Salem SVP/CFO Evan Masyr (l) and General Counsel Chris Henderson (r).



Forced smiles? Wells Fargo analyst Marci Ryvicker told the Radio Show crowd that radio listening is down 6 percent. RAB President/CEO Jeff Haley (l) and NAB President/CEO Gordon Smith don't seem to agree with that assessment.



Pittman brings out the all-stars: Former NAB CEO Eddie Fritts (l) attended Clear Channel Chairman/Media & Entertainment Platforms Bob Pittman's keynote at the Radio Show.



The Radio Wayne winners! Seen here with *Radio Ink* Publisher/CEO Eric Rhoads are (l-r) America's Best Broadcaster winner Greater Media Chairman/CEO Peter Smyth, NRG Media's Pat Schroeder (Streetfighter of the Year), Finger Lakes Radio's Alan Bishop (GM of the Year), Cumulus Media's Connie Cox (NSM of the Year), and CBS Radio's Jenn Donohue (DOS of the Year). Other Wayne winners: Brett Beshore of Clear Channel Radio/Poughkeepsie, for Market Manager, and Jim Antes of Greater Media/Bala Cynwyd, PA, for Sales Manager.



UN TIRING

Don't let the numbers fool you. Sure, we've had **30,000,000** website visitors, **800,000** Facebook fans and over **825,000** have attended our radio affiliate-sponsored live events. Don't be fooled though. We're just getting started.

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* July to August PPM P25-44 † N25-44 †† W25-44



Greater Media Chairman/CEO Peter Smyth poses with (l-r) *Radio Ink* Publisher/CEO Eric Rhoads, Greater Media VP/Corporate Communications Heidi Raphael, and *Radio Ink* VP/GM Deborah Parenti.



Davis Broadcasting chief Greg Davis (l) with daughter Geniece Granville and son Greg Davis Jr.



United Stations Radio Networks President/CEO Nick Verbitsky and his wife, Bonnie, with *Radio Ink* Publisher/CEO Eric Rhoads.



CBS Radio EVP/Operations Scott Herman with Kizart Media Partners Managing Director Sherman Kizart.



Radio Ink VP/GM Deborah Parenti chats with Talk Radio Network President/CEO Mark Masters



CBS Radio/Chicago SVP/GM & Director of Sales Peter Bowen with RAB President/CEO Jeff Haley.



NRG Media President/CEO Mary Quass and Katz Media Group EVP Mary Beth Garber.



Local Focus Radio President Kay Olin at the show with Farber Connection CEO Erica Farber.



Choosing A Voice For Your Pen

A campaign is a series of ads bound together by a set of distinctive identifiers. The most successful campaigns have a style guide that gives their ads “connectedness.” The longer you use a memorable style guide, the more recognizable your brand becomes.

Brands sell better than non-brands because customers prefer the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar. The audio signature is the essential part of the style guide for radio branding, and even though most radio people never think about it, the “voice” of the writer’s pen is far more important than the voice of the announcer who reads the script.

The words chosen by the scriptwriter will shine like a movie projector on the screen of imagination, creating lifelike images in the mind.

QUESTION ONE: Which actors will your words place on the screen?

Will your voice be first person “I,” second person “you,” or third person “they”?

QUESTION TWO: What will be your time perspective? Will your verbs be past tense “was,” present tense “is,” or future tense “will be”?

These are two early but important choices when choosing a literary “voice” for an ad campaign. These two simple choices can yield nine different voices:

1. **“I was....” (first person, past tense)**
I was walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....
2. **“I am....” (first person, present tense)**
I am walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....
3. **“I will be....” (first person, future tense)**
I will be walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....
4. **“You were....” (second person, past tense)**
You were walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....
5. **“You are....” (second person, present tense)**
You are walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....
6. **“You will be....” (second person, future tense)**
You will be walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....
7. **“He/she was....” (third person, past tense)**
Sally was walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....
8. **“He/she is....” (third person, present tense)**
Sally is walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....



9. **“He/she will be....” (third person, future tense)**

Sally will be walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....

QUESTION THREE: How will you structure your sentences?

At one end of the spectrum are long, rambling sentences that bridge from one thought to another in a conversational stream of consciousness reminiscent of how William Faulkner and Jack Kerouac filled page after page with colorful images without ever feeling the need to take a breath or insert a period that might allow the listener to think a thought or see an image other than the ones they so carefully projected onto the screen of imagination.

At the other end: Hemingway. Declarative. Short and tight. Calling upon the imagination to supply what the writer leaves out. Action happening between the lines: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

The announcer’s voice is not the voice of the brand. The jingle, the music bed, the special effects are not the voice of the brand. The voice of a brand flows singularly from the pen of the writer.

Think of the TV ads: “Hello, I’m a Mac.” “And I’m a PC.” I give you those eight words in that order, and you’re instantly in touch with the whole campaign, right? You’re reading this, but you heard their voices as clearly as if they had been standing next to you. More importantly, you instantly recalled the ideas and attitudes and belief systems represented by each of those imaginary characters.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that America has 5.91 million businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Their highest and best hope is you. Become known for your word skills and you’ll sit solidly in the driver’s seat when it comes to social media. If radio people don’t rise up and shepherd these businesses into the best word choices, story angles, and word flags, who will fill this need?

Let it be you. **INK**

Roy H. Williams is president of Wizard of Ads Inc.
E-mail:roy@wizardofads.com

QUICKREAD

- Brands sell better than non-brands because customers prefer the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar.
- A “voice” and a time perspective are key elements to your script.
- The voice of the brand comes from the scriptwriter, not the announcer.



Is Your Station Starved For Sales Talent?

QUICKREAD

- A talent bank prevents you from just hiring any salesperson who fogs a mirror.
- Get referrals from people you respect and trust.
- Have 10 questions ready before you interview a candidate face-to-face.

Hiring salespeople is like eating. When you're starving, you'll eat anything. You don't want to wait until you're ravenous and scramble around your kitchen searching for something to eat. You want to be prepared, have a plan, and eat your meal when it's the right time for you.

Hiring salespeople is no different. And all you need to do to be prepared is establish a good talent bank.

Would you benefit from establishing a talent bank for your sales organization?

If you've made a statement like any of these in the past year, check the box:

- "I want our sales department to be most talented in the industry."
- "We're no longer going to allow sales positions to remain open for more than three weeks."
- "We need to make sure people don't wash out after only 100 days."
- "I want our organization to be widely recognized as the place people want to work."
- "When we have an opening, we're going to select the perfect person, not the first person we can find."
- "We're not going to be satisfied with 'OK' performance. We want great performance!"

I'd be willing to wager that you checked at least one of these statements, and probably more. That's because all sales managers have said these things — sometimes over and over again. It's time to make it happen. Strong recruitment and selection takes a little time and some basic planning, but, like dinner, you can easily make it part of your routine.

You might be thinking you should have started this process long ago. That may be true, but, as the proverb goes, "The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time is now." Establish your talent bank today to take control of the selection process and put yourself in a position to make great hiring decisions.

HERE ARE SEVEN STEPS TO BUILDING A STRONG TALENT BANK FOR YOUR SALES ORGANIZATION:

1. Write a recruitment plan. This is the plan that will detail what you'll do each week and month to fill the talent bank and help you realize your performance goals. (Hoping it will happen is not a plan.)

2. Tell everyone you're creating a talent bank. Explain that your goal is to have a comprehensive database that includes all the greatest and most talented salespeople, and their nominations are welcome.



3. Commit time every week. To build a talent bank, you need to work at it. If you were to commit 30 minutes a day, that would be a great start. Regardless of what amount of time you choose, follow through.

4. Increase candidates. Send out nominator e-mails to people you trust and respect, and add all responses to your talent bank.

5. Establish an interview system. Every candidate should flow through the same interview process so you can maximize efficiency and compare apples to apples. To start this process, select seven to 10 questions to ask every interview candidate before you agree to meet with them face-to-face.

6. Place people in your talent bank. As you start getting names, interviewing candidates, and checking references, make sure you add the information to the appropriate section of the talent bank. When your talent bank is brimming with names, you'll be able to select potential candidates based on their experience and viability.

7. Share the talent bank with your manager once a month. Review it together to determine what parts of your plan are working well and what opportunities for adjustment may exist.

Follow these seven steps for six months, and you should have a healthy talent bank to show for it. These tips will help you build and beef up your talent bank, so you'll never need to scrounge for someone when you're desperate.

For a free blank talent bank you can use, go to info.csscenter.com/radioinktalentbank

Matt Sunshine is EVP of the Center for Sales Strategy.
E-mail: mattsunshine@csscenter.com



Improving The Interactive Audio Experience

Our “Digital Dashboard” Dialogue with David Frerichs (Aug. 8, 2011) prompted a number of comments, including some from Nick Piggott, chairperson of the RadioDNS Project. In short, RadioDNS is designed to bring broadcast radio and the Internet together, “enhancing the experience of radio listening.” I invited Piggott to provide his perspective on some of the topics Frerichs covered in that earlier Dialogue.

What are your thoughts on radio apps?

When we talk about “radio apps,” I think we’re using it as shorthand to describe a better experience of radio than just audio alone — an experience that is also visually rich and interactive. It’s an experience we’re familiar with from smartphones, which have a color screen, a browser, and a connection to the Internet. There are plenty of indications that the dashboard is getting that kind of functionality, and that automobile manufacturers are constantly improving the quality of their in-car entertainment.

However, I sense some frustration from automakers that despite the leaps forward in dashboard capability, the incumbent radio industry is still offering the same basic experience we did 20, 40, 60 years ago. Given that, it’s not so surprising that operators like Pandora are finding the doors open at the automobile industry for a new experience of audio in the car, an experience delivered entirely via the Internet.

What do you see as the barriers to adoption for Internet-delivered audio?

Luckily for the broadcast radio industry, the barriers to Internet-delivered audio in the car are high. The cost of providing mobile Internet is very high, and far, far higher than broadcast radio to achieve the same basic reliable function of audio. Broadcast radio ought to have a natural advantage in this space. That said, as satellite radio has demonstrated, no technical barrier is too high to overcome given sufficient consumer demand, and failing to find a way to update the experience of radio in the car — to bring it closer in quality to other in-car entertainment services — will certainly drive manufacturers to find ways over or around those barriers. Consider what we have now as a short period of breathing space during which we could innovate and reduce the demand for purely Internet-delivered radio on the road.

“The Internet” is only a delivery channel and, as such, doesn’t add any value at all. Arguably, given the relatively high cost-per-listener expense, simply using the Internet to carry the same experience as FM reduces value. What the



Internet allows is the delivery of a better experience, which can in turn be more valuable to listeners and advertisers. If the industry can create a consistent improved experience of radio, and work out how to deliver it to both smartphones and the dashboard, it should make more money.

There’s no doubt that a change from analog to digital broadcasting goes some of the way to solving the problem of how to get this great new experience to the car without the cost of the Internet. The value from digital broadcasting comes when you go beyond just audio and use some of the digital capacity like a broadcast Internet channel, delivering visuals and information alongside the audio.

There is a halfway solution. We could use analog radio to deliver the audio, and just use the Internet to deliver the enhancements, which is a far lighter load on the mobile network and far less critical in terms of performance and reliability. To quantify that, to stream everything over the mobile network (audio + data) would use about 30MB an hour, or 1.2GB of data a month for a typical daily commute of one hour each way. Leaving the audio on broadcast and just sending the enhancements over the IP could reduce that data volume by 90 percent.

Using analog plus Internet in this way might kick-start more enthusiasm for digital broadcast radio in the dashboard. If a hybrid (broadcast + IP) approach is a stepping stone and a catalyst to going fully digital, then it’ll have done a fine job. But if Internet radio becomes the norm in the car, it’s because we threw away our natural advantage, and our chance to remain the dominant provider of entertainment on the move. **INK**

Deborah Parenti is VP/GM of Radio Ink.
E-mail: deborah@radioink.com



FORECAST

2012

DECEMBER 6, 2011
HARVARD CLUB, NEW YORK, NY

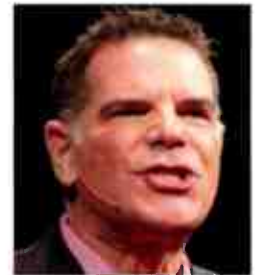
Do You Know Where Radio Is Headed In 2012?

Join radio's top minds as they look toward the coming year for the radio business.

Forecast has become radio's most well-attended financial conference. Fostered by a no-press policy that affords panelists the freedom to remark candidly about their thoughts on the radio business, session discussions are extremely frank and deeply informative. We expect this to be the strongest Forecast event to date. Seating is limited to 200, so we suggest that you book soon to guarantee a seat and capture the early registration price.



Peter Smyth,
Forecast '12 Co-Chair
Chairman/President/
CEO, Greater Media



Jack Myers,
Forecast '12 Co-Chair
Chairman, Media
Advisory Group

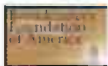
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Brutally Frank Sessions. Tough Questions.

AGENDA*

Tuesday, December 6, 2011
Harvard Club, New York

Continental Breakfast: 8:00-8:30 AM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

8:30-8:45 AM

B. Eric Rhoads, Chairman/Publisher, *Radio Ink*

Peter Smyth, Forecast '12 Co-Chair

Chairman/President/CEO, Greater Media

Jack Myers, Forecast '12 Co-Chair

Chairman, Media Advisory Group

Deborah Parenti, Vice President/

General Manager, *Radio Ink*

8:45-9:30 AM

Opening Keynote - TBA

Session 1: 9:30-10:15 AM

Economic Forecasting: Revenue Expectations for 2012

Experts focus on economic predictions, the impact of the 2012 elections, how radio revenues will be affected, and the platforms and initiatives where those revenues are most likely to come from and grow.



Moderator: Peter Smyth, Chairman/CEO, Greater Media, Inc.

Mark Fratnik, VP, BIA/Kelsey Group

Mark Gray, President/Katz Radio Group

Jack Myers, Media Economist, Chairman/Media Advisory Group

Break: 10:15-10:35 AM

Session 2: 10:35-11:15 AM

Prospects for Radio as an Investment in 2012: Wall Street or Main Street?

A panel of leading bankers and equity investors considers the near- and long-term future of the radio industry and what it will take to expand, as well as the future for IPOs, private equity and debt financing, and privatization options over the next 12 months. Who's investing today - and what are the hot buttons that will make or break a deal in today's environment?



Moderator: Drew Marcus, Founder & Managing Partner, Sugarloaf Rock Capital, LLC

Blair Faulstich, Managing Director/Providence Equity Capital

Chris Ripley, Managing Director, Head of West Coast Media/UBS

Session 3: 11:15 AM-12:00 PM

Local Revenue Initiatives - Does Local Make 'Em Loyal?

A close-up look at local revenue streams. Where is the greatest potential for growth, and what are the best ways to capitalize on it? What is the role of digital? How does radio in the local marketplace compete - and/or take advantage of broader national resources as well as social media marketing platforms? These and other compelling issues are explored.

12:00-1:15 PM

Luncheon

12:15-12:30 PM

Lifetime Leadership Award Presentation to Jerry Lee

12:30-1:15 PM

Keynote: To Be Announced

Session 4: 1:15-2:00 PM

Political Money: How to Maximize Radio's Potential for 2012 Dollars

The 2012 elections should be the most expensive in history. There will be more money on the table, and more competition for it by more media, than ever before. The impact of issues/potential money from Capitol Hill - and where the experts see it coming from - makes this a panel you can't afford to miss.



Moderator: Thomas P. O'Neill III, Founder/CEO, O'Neill & Associates

Session 5: 2:00-2:40 PM

Digital Media Economics 2010-2020: What Radio Can Learn From the Internet Business Model!

What can the traditional radio business model learn from the Internet business model? What does radio, as a media business, need to look like by the end of the decade to enhance growth over the years to come? And what is the best business structure in today's environment to ensure radio's future as an integral part of the expanded media world?



Moderator: Jack Myers, Media Economist & Chairman/Media Advisory Group

Mitch Davis, Co-Founder & CEO/Live Gamer

Tom Burgess, CEO/Clovr Media

Break: 2:40-3:00 PM

3:00-3:20 PM

To Be Announced

Session 6: 3:20-4:00 PM

What Do Advertisers Want?

Does radio need to reposition itself in the advertising marketplace? How can it fine-tune its sex appeal? A panel of leading clients and ad agencies offer their perceptions of radio: what works, what doesn't, and what it will take to earn their business and marketing partnership opportunities in 2012.

4:00-4:40 PM

Keynote - TBA



Session 7: 4:40-5:30 PM

Leadership Speak-Out

Lew Dickey, Chairman/President/CEO, Cumulus Media



David Field, President/CEO, Entercom Communications Corp.

Doug Franklin, President, Cox Media Group

Jeff Smulyan, Chairman, Emmis Communications Corp.

Peter Smyth, Chairman/CEO, Greater Media, Inc.

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5:30 PM

Closing Remarks

5:45 PM

Top 40 Cocktail Reception, honoring the 40 Most Powerful Individuals in the radio industry

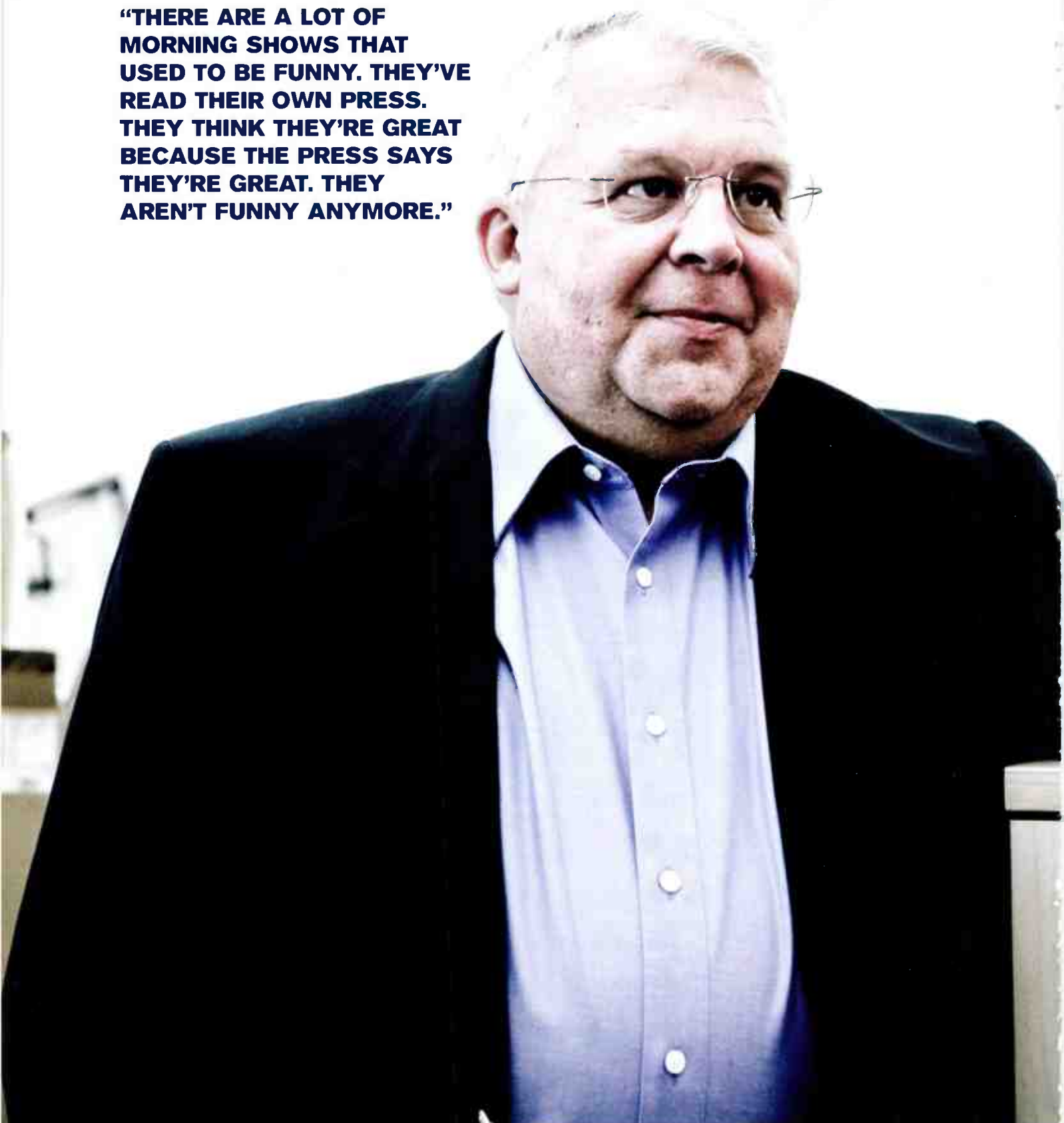
* Agenda subject to change

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Call 561-655-8778 or go to www.RadioInk.com/Forecast.

Seating is limited to 200 persons. Registration includes invitation to the 40 Most Powerful People In Radio VIP Cocktail Reception.

“THERE ARE A LOT OF MORNING SHOWS THAT USED TO BE FUNNY. THEY’VE READ THEIR OWN PRESS. THEY THINK THEY’RE GREAT BECAUSE THE PRESS SAYS THEY’RE GREAT. THEY AREN’T FUNNY ANYMORE.”



LOOK WHO'S BACK

{By Editor-In-Chief Ed Ryan}

RANDY MICHAELS SAYS HE NEVER LEFT.

But after he broke away from Clear Channel in 2002 until he fired up Merlin Media in 2011, Michaels was MIA from radio, despite WGN's being part of the Tribune Co. operation he ran for Sam Zell. So the moment rumors started swirling that Emmis' Jeff Smulyan was trying to make a deal with Michaels in Chicago and New York, the spotlight was on every breath Michaels took. And now that Merlin has been operating three stations for the past six months, one of radio's most fascinating and controversial figures is back for another go and already making waves.

When Michaels and Bobby Lawrence were building Jacor back in the late '80s, it was a different radio era. Stunts, tricks, rock 'n' roll, and Top 40 were the norm, and the digital world did not exist. Today, crazy stunts and hard-headed station-to-station competitiveness have given way to big radio clusters, a PPM-focused and sanitized radio dial, iPhone apps, and podcasting. But if you think Michaels is stuck in the '80s, think again. He's all about the digital world, and he's all about creating something new for an industry that he says has been less than creative and innovative over the past two decades.

RANDY'S RADIO RIDE

- Michaels begins his radio career as an engineer at his college station at SUNY Buffalo.
- During college, he joins Taft Broadcasting's radio and TV operations in Buffalo. He moves with Taft to Cincinnati, serving the company until 1983.
- In 1983, Michaels and Bobby Lawrence form Seven Hills Communications.
- In 1986, Seven Hills merges with Jacor. Michaels becomes Jacor's EVP/programming and co-COO.
- Sam Zell acquires Jacor in 1993. Michaels becomes president, moving up to president and CEO in 1996.
- In 1999, Clear Channel purchases Jacor, naming Michaels radio division president and, later, CEO.
- During Michaels' tenure, Clear Channel Radio grows from 425 stations to more than 1,200.
- Michaels leaves Clear Channel in 2002 and starts RadioActive and Product 1st.
- In 2007, Michaels joins Tribune Co. as EVP/CEO of the company's broadcasting and interactive businesses.
- Also in 2007, Michaels is named CEO of LocalTV, a company that acquired the television stations formerly owned by New York Times Co.
- In 2009, Michaels is named Tribune's CEO and elected to the company's board.
- In October 2010, Michaels leaves Tribune.
- In the summer of 2011, Merlin Media is founded, with Michaels as president and CEO.

Photography by Michelle Wlony

In his first interview since launching Merlin Media — with news WMMP and classic rock WLUP in Chicago and news WEMP in New York, and wheelbarrows full of money from private equity firm GTCR — he gives us the details.

When did you start thinking you wanted to get back in radio?

I think that's kind of a funny question. I don't know that I ever left radio. I put on 30-some stations and bought CPs in FCC auctions 37 and 62. And there's a small station that could only afford three call letters [WGN-AM/Chicago]. So I wasn't sure I ever left.

I mean in the sense that you are now, running stations.

Again, I don't mean to be cute, but I wouldn't say that I am back in radio, I would say I am in media. What we are trying to do is build a company that can create, ingest, and repurpose content, and distribute it through multiple channels. I think there is still tremendous value in radio transmitters, particularly FM. We also plan to be very active on the Web, with mobile and tablet products.

So it's a multi-media media company. We certainly plan to add more media assets. It may be more radio. It may be more TV. It may be outdoor. It may be more interactive.

When did you start having discussions with Emmis?

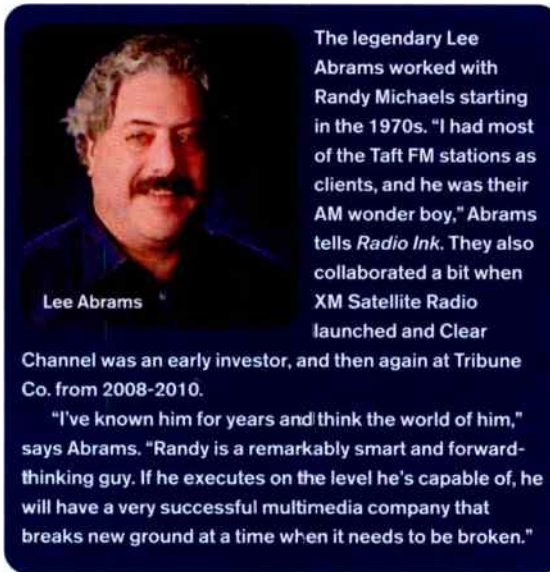
I can tell you that I had been talking to [Emmis CEO] Jeff [Smulyan] about his major-market FMs for several years. At one point, when Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity were up for renewal, I toyed with the idea of making a deal with Jeff to take some equity in his big-market stations that were underperforming and giving a lot of that to Rush and Sean to build spoken word formats. So two, three, four years ago. It got serious after I left Tribune. I have a very particular theory about the right way to play broadcasting at this time.

What is that?

I don't think you'd expect me to blurt out everything. In the mid-'70s, I was in Buffalo with Taft Broadcasting and was offered Kansas City. The FM in Cincinnati, WKRC, was opening — why couldn't I have that? John McClay, who ran Taft Broadcasting, asked me a question: "Don't you want to stay in radio?" Back in the '70s, Taft had television, radio, and FM. They didn't take FM seriously. It was obvious to me that FM was emerging. Radios were getting cheaper and were starting to show up in cars. Music was quickly moving to FM. I thought I would look smarter if I did that. And it worked out.

In the '80s, much of the music transition was complete. There was a period when AM was over. I remember a research study that said if you had an AM station, you could ride it down, but there was no new audience available. I believed if we did spoken word, news, talk, sports, things that weren't fidelity-dependent, especially on some of these big AM transmitters, there was plenty of life left.

As it turns out, a lot of stations got 30 years out of AM transmitters, some of them more successful than in music days, by putting on programming that is unique, desirable, difficult to duplicate, and



not dependent on fidelity. I think in 2011, it's obvious that music is moving to the iPod, the portable device, the smartphone, and the tablet. Some of these big FM transmitters should be used to put difficult-to-duplicate, spoken word programming on the bandwidth people listen to now. Eighty percent of Americans don't listen to AM.

We are living in a non-linear world. People time-shift their entertainment. When you and I were kids, we called our favorite station and requested our favorite song. It didn't help, but we

thought it did. We waited, and we heard it. Kids today would find it remarkable that we ever had to wait. They would say, "If you want to hear your favorite song, just go play it."

What kind of content don't you time-shift? You don't time-shift real-time content. You don't record the Super Bowl to watch it next month. You don't record the 7:15 traffic report to hear it this afternoon. Things that are going on right now get consumed right now. Frankly, I don't care if you listen on the radio, your smartphone, or the toaster, you are going to consume information that is current in real time or very near real time. I think there is opportunity there.

I also think that there is another piece of the thesis that says too many MBAs are running broadcasting, and too much research — that is good research but not well understood — has caused most of the big companies to miss the obvious. If you talk to programmers today, they all quote—"know"—unquote that in a metered world, you can't speak because spoken word is death. Personalities that got great ratings with the diary had their ratings fall when the technology changed to the meter.

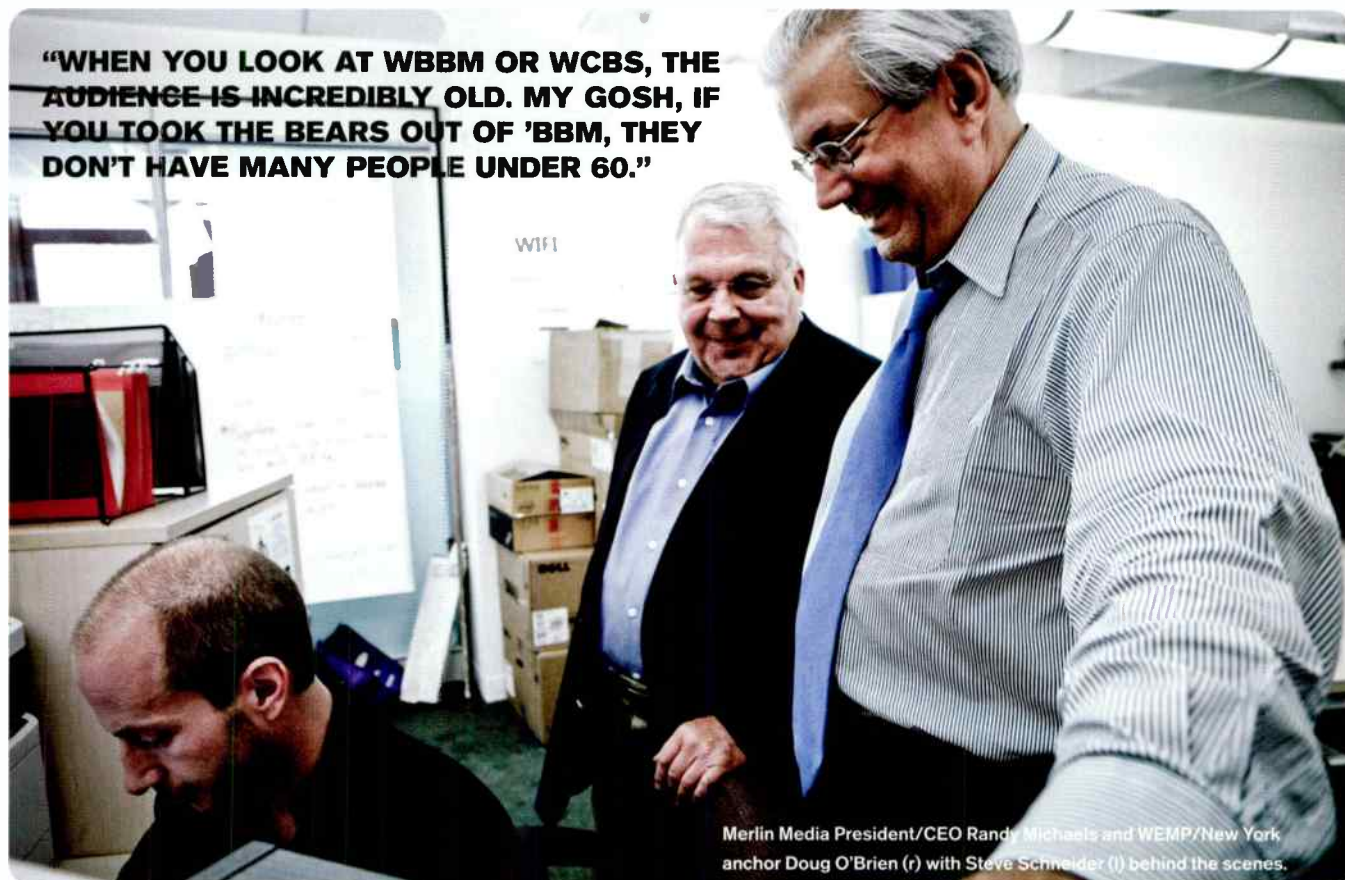
I think that is a remarkable analysis when in most markets the highest-billing station is all-talk. Morning shows are less valuable because most people have their meters charging in the morning, like they are supposed to. Secondly, it really exposes the shows that are running on their reputations. There are a lot of morning shows that used to be funny. They've read their own press. They think they're great because the press says they're great. They aren't funny anymore.

How did you come up with the format plans for Chicago and New York?

I think that a different question is, why does talk radio sound the way it sounds? It's a little bit serendipitous. When I was the national PD of Taft in the late '70s-early '80s, we ran hot AC stations in a number of markets. They were great stations, but you couldn't get a rating at night because adults watch TV. We came up with the idea of moving talk programming to 8 p.m., when TV viewing really kicked up.

Because WKRC competed with WLW, which had the Reds, and Bob Trumpy doing sports talk, I thought the available audience was female. In addition to that, when you looked at the most successful talk stations in the '70s, they skewed female — KABC in Los Angeles, KGO in San Francisco, WOR in New York. These are female-skewing stations. We did talk that came out of *Cosmo*, topic-driven. We did the same topics, in many cases, across multiple markets. We got gangbuster ratings.

"WHEN YOU LOOK AT WBBM OR WCBS, THE AUDIENCE IS INCREDIBLY OLD. MY GOSH, IF YOU TOOK THE BEARS OUT OF 'BBM, THEY DON'T HAVE MANY PEOPLE UNDER 60."



Merlin Media President/CEO Randy Michaels and WEMP/New York anchor Doug O'Brien (r) with Steve Schneider (l) behind the scenes.

We had a couple of rules: no politics, no sports. It worked tremendously. Back then, Taft made us do five-year plans. My five-year plan was to take the music off, one record at a time, flip some talent around, put a funny show on in the afternoon for the drive home, do issues midday and full service in the mornings. Then, in 1983, I went to WLW, and I flipped the plan around. We had the Reds and Bob Trumpy. I did exactly that. I put Gary Burbank on in the afternoon with funny stuff. We did issue talk midday, but instead of targeting women, we targeted men. It worked great. At the same time, Howard Stern came on and Rush Limbaugh started making politics interesting.

So your plan is spoken word aimed at females?

If you look at spoken word radio, it is hard to find spoken word that women listen to. That has nothing to do with the fact that they won't. It had to do with the fact that it's not there. I have always thought there was an opportunity to put something on that was inclusive of women and was always putting it off because you need to have the right anchors and you need to have the right signals.

When I was at Clear Channel, it was definitely on the drawing board. So I just kind of picked up where I left off. "Inclusive of women" is the right way to say it. I have read we are going to be female-based. I think you'll be surprised when the ratings come out; it will be darn close to 50-50. Because we are inclusive doesn't mean men won't listen.

The reason I was intrigued by Walter Sabo is that I wanted to do spoken word in a way that wasn't the way Clear Channel does it, that wasn't the way CBS Radio does it. The only example that really sticks out is Jersey 101.5 [WKXW/Trenton], which Walter set up. Walter would tell you it's a female-based talk and news station. When you look at demos, guess what? It's 50-50 men and women.

The point is, it is spoken word that doesn't exclude women because it doesn't alienate women. That is where we are going. I

think you will find that we get just as many men, but, unlike the spoken word stations, we are familiar with them. In today's world, advertisers are having a tougher time finding women. Women sell far more than men. If we can get a demographic balance, we're going to have much higher billing than if we achieve the same ratings but are lopsided in the male direction.

What rules will your stations follow to make sure you don't alienate women?

Rules create games. The more rules, the more loopholes I can find around them. We work on principles. That is an important distinction. When I said no sports, no politics, those were the principles. Clearly, if something major happened in sports, it doesn't mean you're not allowed to talk about it. Doesn't mean you're not allowed to say who won the Super Bowl or the Kentucky Derby. They are not hard and fast rules. They are guidelines.

Likewise, we have principles here. I'm not ready to talk about all of them. They are pretty obvious once you think about them. They are not generally observed by people doing spoken word today. Including women is much more about not alienating them. If you think about most shows that have a man and a woman, the man is the driving force and the woman is the oil.

There have been a few examples around the country where that's not the case. Beth and Bill on KESZ in Phoenix, for instance. Both very bright people, but [the late] Bill [Austin] came off as a big, goofy, Hawaiian-shirt-wearing comic. Beth [McDonald] was the soccer mom. Intelligent, successful, grown up.

It was the flip side of the morning show with the ditzy broad and the bossy guy. You can learn a lot from that. Women don't want to hear guys alienate them. In fairly non-subtle ways, most spoken word radio treats women in a way that a lot of women find to be offensive. I think it's more about not doing that than it is about hard and fast rules.

How do you think the stations sound so far?

Well, I think they sound new. I think they sound like we're still working out bugs in the systems and new equipment. We have architected these stations in a way that has never been done before. They are fresh. They are complex. They are in the cloud. The content is available to stations we have now and stations we will have in the future. It's being set up in a very different way, and there are a lot of kinks and bugs to work out.

We are using a different style guide than I'm aware of having been used before. We're not only teaching people a lot of new things, there are a lot of old things to unlearn. We're trying to focus on the impact of news. In Chicago one day, it drove me nuts. There was a lot of police activity on Lakeshore Drive. To me, if you are in a news station and the police are on Lakeshore Drive, they are there for a reason. What's the reason? Is there a traffic accident? Is there a holdup? Is there a gorilla loose from the zoo? Tell me what's going on.

So much of what gets covered on the news doesn't really tell people why it's important to them and what's really going on. We're trying to do something that's not conventional. We're a long way from achieving that.

Let's talk about GTCR. You've hired a lot of people, and a news operation is not cheap to run. Is there an expectation that you need to be profitable by a certain time?

I think the people at GTCR are fabulous. They don't try to identify a business where they believe there is an opportunity and then look for somebody to run it, which is the traditional way. They look for an operator, and let the operator build the company. Their view before I met them was that there ought to be something you could do with radio transmitters, which are such a cheap and convenient way to reach all of the cars on the road. When they heard through Jeff Smulyan that I was out trying to raise money to put spoken word on FM, it made all the sense in the world to them.

We made a deal. They understand that it is an expensive format. I think broadcasters are looking at the equation all wrong. What you bill is not what's important. The money you spend is not what's important. What's important is the sustainable difference between what you spend and what you bill. Just having the highest revenue and the lowest expenses doesn't mean anything to me. Having the highest cash flow is what we want.

When you look at where that occurs and how you make it sustainable — you don't create sustainable businesses with formats that are simple to duplicate. You create sustainable cash flow with formats that are a little complex, that are difficult to duplicate, that are highly desirable. How can it be lost on anybody that the highest-billing station in America is in Washington, DC, where in a \$250 million market, WTOP is taking \$60 million now?

I understand we are in a different situation. We don't have to bill 20 percent of this market to be a home run. I think if you look at the power ratios for the format, when you consider the fact that we are going to be able to sell not just men but women, I expect that we will be profitable certainly before the end of 2012. We have plenty of capital if it takes a little longer than that. At the end of the day, that thesis that this kind of programming belongs on FM makes tremendous logical sense. I think, given some time, we are going to get it right, and it's going to make tremendous amounts of money.



Merlin
Media COO
Walter Sabo

One of Randy Michaels' first hires at Merlin Media was Walter Sabo, as COO, though they had only known each other for a few years and had never worked together. Sabo says, "We had a conversation about the impact, the power and effectiveness of spoken word on FM. I had no interest in consulting. I had felt, in order to implement and execute it efficiently, it would be a good idea to work there. I

have to tell you, Randy and I totally agree on every aspect of programming that we have discussed to date. We are totally in sync about what needs to be on the air, in any format."

RI: Why is this format different?

All day, you take the news of your life and you share it with your spouse, parents, friend, co-workers, etc. The way you share it is different. Let's say you got a promotion. You would tell it differently to each of them. You might feign modesty when talking to your neighbor. You might simplify it when talking to a 5-year-old niece. You might brag a little when telling your dad.

It's the same fact, but you present the information to the audience you are talking to a little differently. You communicate in words, terms, symbols that are meaningful to your audience. The traditional all-news stations are great stations. They are brilliant at reaching the retirement set. You look at the demography of those stations, and they aggressively appeal to people over 65.

The interesting thing about Arbitron is that all my life, I have heard endless arguments over the share of audience of any given station. But I have never heard an argument about the demographic appeal that Arbitron shows. There is a big show of teens for Z100 [WHTZ/New York]. Nobody argues about it. They may argue about how big that share should be, but no one argues about its appealing to teens. That is because Z100 does things to appeal to teens. If you are reaching mostly people over 55 and 65, you are putting on programming that aggressively appeals to them. Because of the programmers and the owners and the MBAs and all of the people who have gotten involved in radio over the past 25 years, the opportunities for innovations have diminished dramatically. That gives us a great opportunity.

RI: What differentiates Merlin's stations from other news stations?

It's not really a new way. It's the way people have spoken all of their lives. When you are late to meet your friends because of traffic, you're not going to say, "There was a four-mile backup due to a disabled vehicle with police activity on the side of the road." We are going to say, "Some idiot ran out of gas," or, "The police are doing radar, stay away from there." Because that's how you would tell your friends.

What is your long-term plan?

It is not GTCR's intention to stop at two stations. I think you will see us acquire more stations that we own and operate. I also think you will see us develop derivative products that we syndicate, and some stations that we don't own.

You mentioned modifications to the Loop.

That will be an evolution. The Loop is in a classic rock format and will remain in a classic rock format. I believe people are looking at the research too literally. There is a way to take some intelligent risks and create elements beyond the music that add dimension desirability. My good friend Lee Abrams really invented modern classic rock. Burkhart-Abrams syndicated a classic rock version, and they came up with a lot of great features — "The Pre-Electric Lunch," "The Midnight Album Hour," "The Block Party," and the "Memorial Day



Merlin Media President/CEO Randy Michaels and COO Walter Sabo with VP/Production Jerry Rohira and Creative Commercial Services Director Doug Doescher.

500.” It’s 30 years later, and what do you hear? All the same stuff.

Wow! For 30 years, nobody has had a new idea. It’s time for some. We have them. Some of them will work, and some of them won’t. The way we are going to find out is to try them. If someone who knows a lot about the music, who is a great writer, a great producer, and a great idea person, reads this — assuming you actually print it — we should get in touch. There is going to be a place for some great writers at the Loop in Chicago.

Are you going to start a network?

I wouldn’t use that terminology. I think we are going to build a media company that can supply content that other people will find desirable, and that will get ratings for other companies. I don’t think I would look at it as a network in the traditional sense. I don’t think we are going to be networking shows designed to be broadcast simultaneously on stations across the country. We will be syndicating work parts that allow local stations to customize the content they use, and do what is right for their situation.

What is your philosophy on content distribution?

There is no question that there are lots of ways to distribute content. Not only are there alternative distribution methods, in today’s world anyone can create content. The barriers to entry for just delivering the music format are much lower. That is why I’m so focused on developing differentiating content. Some people would say, “Gosh, if you are playing music, then you don’t have any advantages, because anybody can download all of the music they want and put it on their iPod. They are going to know more about what they like than you do.”

To which I would say, “The access to music doesn’t mean I have the ability to program. The access to canvas and paint doesn’t mean I am Picasso.” I could buy the same materials that the masters used. I just can’t paint the picture. I believe there is still an art and a science to programming that most people don’t understand intuitively. The right programmer can put together something where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Unfortunately, a lot of that is being lost today, with centralized playlists, corporate programming, and everything coming from Austin or Atlanta or San Antonio. That’s goofy. And it creates big opportunity. Yes, there will be competition, but sometimes you want to ride, sometimes you want to drive.

I would also say that wireless broadband is coming, but when you look at the auto companies, they work five or six years ahead. All of that stuff has to go through R&D, they can’t have something they put in the car fail from heat or cold or vibration. It is not going to be free. The all-you-can-eat wireless broadband plans are gone. Listening to all the audio you want or watching all of the video you want on your cellphone is going to become increasingly expensive. If I can provide something for free that is a reasonable substitute or superior to what you can get some other way, fine.

By the way, whatever we do will also be available on the wireless device. In a world where there are few barriers to competition, you just need to make your product better.

How far away are you from apps for the two new stations?

We will have apps shortly. There are some other things coming that, I think, may surprise people.

What is your view on the radio industry nowadays?

I don’t know that I want to answer that question. I think there are far too many transmitters owned by investors, as opposed to broadcasters. One of the great things about the GTCR folks is they understand that they are investors. No doubt, they supply capital with the expectation of a rate of return. But they’re not operators. They are not trying to send in their MBAs to evaluate our content, our operations. They don’t assume that because they can run a spreadsheet or do a regression analysis that they automatically understand how to create programming.

There has never been a simpler business invented than radio. You sell air. When you don’t sell your inventory, you don’t haul it to the dump. It goes away. We basically put content on a transmitter, which is cheap, and we attract an audience. Then we go out and sell advertising and marketing. If we can charge more for the advertising and marketing than it costs to put on the product, then we have a great business. It is really simple.

Believe me, after running a big publishing company, the logistics of cutting down trees, assembling news up to the minute, getting it printed, and distributing it to every home in a major metropolitan area between 3 and 6 in the morning, that is a daunting challenge. It is a whole lot easier to set someone up with a transmitter, and people buy their own receivers and everything. It is a simple business.

Here is what is hard: capturing the public's imagination. Every transmitter on the Hancock or the Empire State Building puts out a signal that is roughly equal to every other transmitter. Some have high ratings, some have low. The difference is what is on them. Then you get beyond the math and get into the art. You are into a multi-varied equation that is not too easy for an MBA to nail down.

So many of the people that own radio stations today, if they went to a stadium show with the Who and the Rolling Stones and people were screaming for five hours, 100,000 people out of their seats, they would need an exit poll to find out if the concert was good. It's just embarrassing.

Have you been surprised by the fascination people have with everything you do?

First of all, I don't think most people are all that interested. I think a few noisy people are interested. This kind of dovetails with the last question. Debt levels are high, the economy tanked, so everyone is afraid to take a risk. Everybody is trying to be safe.

What I say is, good heavens. We are in the middle of a real serious inflection point in the way people get news and information. The least safe thing we can do is be safe. The least safe thing we can do is what we did last year and the year before. The dumbest thing we can do is roll out another "Memorial Day 500" because it worked last Memorial Day.

This is the time for intelligent risk, for experimentation, for reinvention. And everyone is afraid to do it. We get corporate guys together who don't understand the first thing about programming, and we blow up some of the best tools programmers have had. I spent 30 years running the worst commercial last in the set, trying to start breaks with a McDonald's or Pepsi or a great-sounding jingle. Now we have run around and said the first position is really better. Now everyone wants it, they just don't want to pay a premium.

When you put together a presentation for advertisers and it shows them how you can get the same effectiveness in 30 seconds that you get in 60, and they don't have to pay as much, then people spend less. It has just been goofy, the kind of thing that has been done to this industry.

The intelligent risk, the tolerance for mistakes and failure, is too low. We need to try a lot of things. We need to fail at a lot of stuff. That is the only way we will find out what does work. You need to constantly try things.

I am confident that spoken word on FM is directionally correct. I am also confident that whatever is on the air now is going to have to be adjusted and tweaked and modified. So what? That's how we will get there.



That is not an attitude that you find today on the broadcast networks. Everyone is afraid to make a mistake. They are afraid to try something new. That is the dumbest thing we can do.

The people listening to music that they have picked on their iPod or on Pandora or on RadioIO or Slacker or Last.fm is a real issue. Here is what you don't do about it: put on a bunch of songs that aren't my favorite with zero talent, zero appeal between the records, and interrupt them with commercials. I think that is a dumb strategy to compete with the iPod.

If you don't provide differentiated content that causes people to want to listen to you instead of what they can do themselves, where are you going to be? Now I am done lecturing the other guys. Much more important to go out and actually do it and see if the ideas that I am espousing have any validity.

Have you had any conversations with CBS Radio President/CEO Dan Mason since you came back to those two markets?

I haven't. I like Dan. He's a friend. I do look forward to speaking with him. I think CBS has overreacted. I don't think we are targeting them. When you look at WBBM or WCBS, the audience is incredibly old. My gosh, if you took the Bears out of 'BBM, they don't have many people under 60. I have no interest in the audience that listens to 'BBM. I think they will continue to listen to 'BBM.

I don't think it's bad when my new spoken word station gets ratings and your lousy music station goes down. Every new format takes from the formats that exist. I think to assume that our audience is going to come from WINS, WCBS, or WBBM is crazy. I don't think a lot of it is going to come from those stations. They are too old. We are going to get younger people who aren't listening to spoken word at all right now. **INK**



Returning The Favor

Unlike Facebook profiles, relationships with Twitter followers and Google+ circles don't have to be reciprocal. People can follow (or circle) others they find interesting, and those people can choose to return the favor ... or not.

So should you reciprocate? If you're a media personality or a social media manager for radio, the answer is yes.

Radio personalities and station accounts should use social media to engage listeners in conversation. When you follow a listener back, you're telling them that you care about what they have to say. And if you don't care? You're missing out.

Advantages of a "FollowBack" strategy:

It's not just about you. Social media is about being social, which involves two-way communication. If your idea of social media is to throw out some links to your website, you're missing the point of what social media offers radio: an opportunity to get to know your audience. Giving listeners more information about you is only one half of the equation.

You can use social media for show prep. When you follow your listeners, you can see what they're talking about. You may see a trend in listeners' tweets, or you may see one interesting tweet that sparks an idea for on-air content.

If you use Twitter (or other social media) for on-air content, mention the names of the listeners who participated in the online conversation. People love to hear their



names on the air. This exposure will increase your online engagement and likely get you more followers as well.

Because sharing links and information is such a big part of Twitter, it isn't a bad idea to "listen up." Stay ahead by identifying viral topics before they reach their peak.

You'll learn a lot about your listeners by following them on Twitter. Want to know what topics your listeners care about, or what music they're into? Follow them and read their tweets for a peek into the lives of your demo.

You can create deeper relationships with listeners by joining their conversations. You don't always have to be the conversation starter. Treat your online experience like a cocktail party, and mingle. Chime in when you have something to say.

You'll get more followers when listeners see you follow back. P1s get so excited to see their favorite station following them that they often tweet about it, creating added exposure for your Twitter account.

You'll also be able to send direct messages. Twitter's private messaging system allows you to message only people you follow. If a listener has an issue that requires a private conversation, you may prefer to take the conversation from public to private using DMs.

That said, there are a few cases in which you shouldn't follow back. If the follower has no profile pic or bio, tweets that appear to be spam, or tweets that are sexual or illegal in nature, skip them. You don't want your staff to be exposed to content that isn't consistent with your company standards. **INK**

While we're talking about it, follow @StephanieWinans and @Radio_Ink. We'll follow back. Stephanie Winans is Webmaster and Social Media Manager for WABB and the Randy Lane Company. E-mail: stephaniewinans@gmail.com

QUICKREAD

- Twitter and Google+ relationships don't have to be reciprocal, but you'll get more followers if you follow back.

- Take advantage of the opportunities social media offers to get to know your listeners.

- Treat social media like a cocktail party: Mingle.



WBZ Makes History In Boston

You know you've reached a milestone when the mayor sets aside a special day just for your radio station — and when your station was originally housed in a building called a “plant,” and it's still on the air. In September, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino showed up at the studios of WBZ-AM/Boston and declared the station's 90th birthday “WBZ Radio Day” in the city. Menino commended WBZ — Boston's oldest station and America's first commercially licensed radio outlet — for its “outstanding commitment to the City of Boston's radio listeners.”

WBZ GM Mark Hannon says it was quite an honor to have the mayor come by with that proclamation. “Mayor Menino has been a great supporter of the radio station, and he loves it too,” Hannon says. “He's made himself very accessible. He gets phone calls at 5 and 6 a.m., oftentimes, from our newsroom, and he's always receptive to that.”

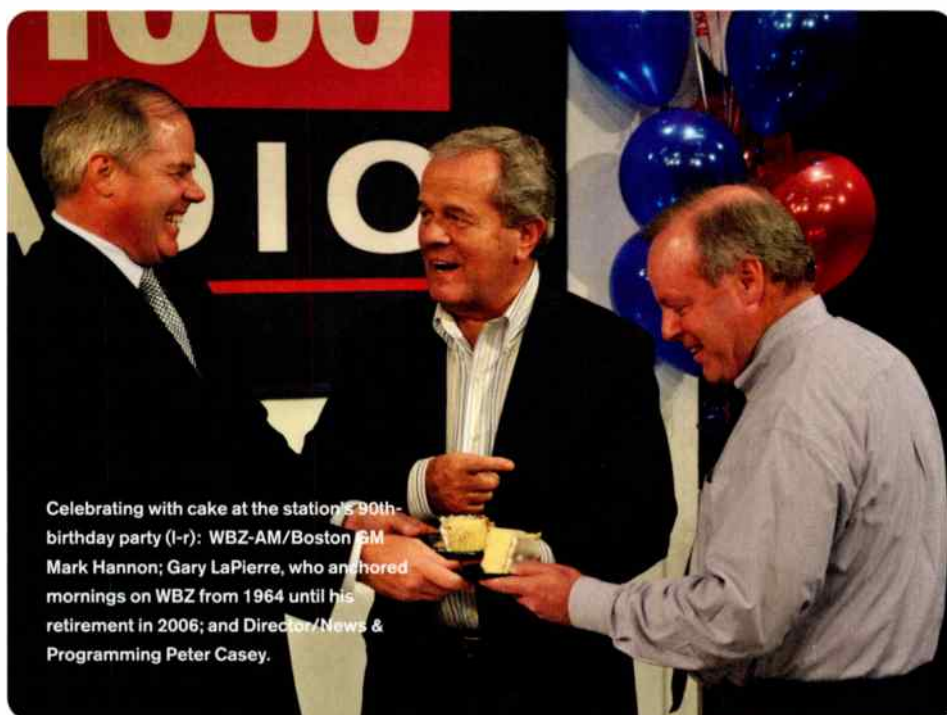
WBZ-AM Director of News & Programming Peter Casey has been with the station for nearly two decades, having joined WBZ when it was switching from music to an all-news format. He says, “One of the things that I've explained to a number of people is that I have always called 'BZ a 'destination station.' It's not a place people come to to get somewhere else. People go to other stations to get to 'BZ.”

Destination Station

Hannon agrees. “WBZ is the culmination of hard work,” he says. “Once people get here, they want to stay. More than likely, to get here, you're getting your chops elsewhere, in smaller and medium markets, or maybe even other stations in the Boston market. I think most people set it as a destination for where their career will end up. Once they get here, they do everything they can to maintain that perfection so they stay.”

Casey believes WBZ's success has been due in no small part to its consistency. “I think WBZ has a sense of place in people's minds and people's hearts,” he says. “Not everybody likes change. I think it means something that this is the station with the call letters that they grew up with. We have always had a good news and information backbone to it. Even when we were a rock 'n' roll station, even when we were doing all the various different types of things that we did in the '20s, the '30s, the '40s, the '50s, before we became a rock 'n' roll station, we were always the station that provided information to everybody. Back in the days of the mid-'60s and '70s and '80s, when

Station:	WBZ-AM/Boston
Format:	News
Management:	GM Mark Hannon, Dir./News & Programming Peter Casey
Ownership:	CBS Radio



Celebrating with cake at the station's 90th birthday party (l-r): WBZ-AM/Boston GM Mark Hannon; Gary LaPierre, who anchored mornings on WBZ from 1964 until his retirement in 2006; and Director/News & Programming Peter Casey.

there was another all-news station in the city, we still, in research, showed up as having the stronger news image in town.

“Then when the Gulf War happened in the early '90s and we switched to all-news, it seemed to be, as our morning anchor said at that time, ‘the format that our station was meant to be all along.’”

Hannon says that consistency translates well with advertisers. “Having the connection to WBZ, just because it has such community outreach and has such a one-to-one connection with everyone that listens to it, advertisers kind of *de facto* get that same connection to the audience, to the listener,” he says. “The station not only delivers that connection, but, more importantly from an advertiser's perspective, it delivers great results. This is a great direct-response radio station. Advertisers who come on the station just have tremendous success with using it. Obviously, that's most critical for them.”

Boston Vets

Hannon grew up in Boston listening to WBZ, and now he runs the station, and Casey has spent his entire radio career in the Boston market. (These days you can probably count on one hand the number of radio people who have spent their entire careers in one market.)

“As a listener growing up here, this is kind of the center of the universe in many respects,” says Hannon. “You just knew it was special.”



The old Westinghouse plant in Springfield, MA, original home to WBZ-AM/Boston.

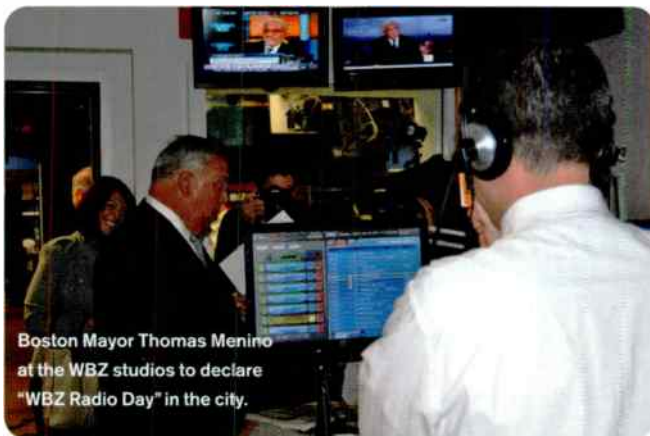
do you need me to be? Should I come in right away?' That's the nice thing about this staff. They love to and want to be here when news is going on.

"We have what we call the WBZ Hall of Fame, which we created back in 2006. Every now and then — it's not something we do every year, but when I think it's appropriate — we put somebody in the WBZ Hall of Fame. It would be somebody who has not only made a career at WBZ, but made an impact at the station and the community. This year we put in, posthumously, Carl de Suze, who was the morning guy here for more than 40 years."

Hannon adds that WBZ is made up of the best group of professionals one could ever imagine. "I think people don't realize what it takes to deliver the news on a daily basis and how many people, how big of a team you need, to deliver that from back to front," he says. "It's an amazing operation. It's a great group of professionals. In many cases, they have been there for many, many years."

"According to radio historian Scott Fybush, WBZ started in Springfield, MA, in 1921, because that's where the station's owner, Westinghouse, had its factory. Westinghouse put up a second transmitter on top of a hotel in downtown Boston and linked the two up by phone line. Imagine, in 1924, they had a phone line going from Springfield to Boston, and it was one of the wonders of the radio era."

Casey says that old Westinghouse building is about to be knocked down. "Three of us drove out to Springfield to see the original Westinghouse plant where WBZ was originally located, back in 1921," he says. "It is in the process of being demolished. The original transmitter towers are still up on top of that building. I was able to go out there and take a picture of the transmitter towers, which was kind of a nice little thing to do." **INK**



Boston Mayor Thomas Menino at the WBZ studios to declare "WBZ Radio Day" in the city.

When you get behind the scenes and you are actually involved in the radio station, I think my comment to the staff [at the 90th-birthday celebration] was, 'It's not just special, it's inspirational,' to see what happens on a day-to-day basis.

"You certainly understand why it is the center of the universe in terms of radio in New England. I think because it was New England's first radio station, and it's been here for 90 years, it's been here for every conceivable event that's happened over those nine decades. It's kind of the point to go to to find out everything that's going on, up to and including things as large as 9/11, which is probably the most moving story and heart-wrenching situation that any of us has lived through."

And, as Casey explains, you cannot succeed for 90 years without having a great team. "I'll give you a good example," he says. "We had some interesting weather that came through here this summer. We had an earthquake. We had some tornados in Western Massachusetts. We had what was a hurricane, and then a tropical storm by the time it reached us. Before I could pick up the phone and call everybody that needed to come in, the staff was calling me, asking, 'What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to be? Where

Is your station setting the bar high?

Contact Ed Ryan: edryan@radioink.com

PETER'S PD PRINCIPLES

- Do the right thing as often as you can. If not all the time, as often as you can. You know what the right thing is. Sometimes you just have to remember that it's important to do it.
- Be aggressive. For a news station, be aggressive in your story selection.
- Be aggressive in the types of content that you want to put on the air.
- Think more about what your listeners' lives are like, and focus on that. Sometimes we are too close to the news issue of the day, but it might not be the best story for the listener, even though it may have importance in society.



WBZ AM/Boston Director/News & Programming Peter Casey



The Always-Evolving Talk Radio Format

As Merlin Media attempts to reinvent talk radio with a new format on the FM dial, zeroing in on female and younger listeners, more radio executives are taking note and considering how the format will evolve over the next five to 10 years. Suzanne Simms, VP of affiliate relations for *The Dave Ramsey Show*, says, "I have spoken to more than one very influential radio executive in the past six months who has told me that they believe that in 10 years, political talk as we know it now will no longer exist. And I agree with them."

Simms isn't alone in thinking the talk format is in for seismic changes. Other executives are saying listeners have grown weary of so much right-wing political talk and that live and local will be making a comeback — a comeback that may also be due in part to stations wanting to figure out a way to grab bigger chunks of money the way WTOP/Washington does. Managers are also realizing they cannot win the jukebox battle against digital devices and beginning to simulcast their news or sports franchises on the FM dial.

But everyone agrees the talk formats are strong and successful, and 2012 is going to be a huge year, with the presidential election and so many issues on the table. And what everyone is hoping for is a 2012 that catapults radio revenue from under the recession cloud at last.

Talk Radio Network's talent roster includes Laura Ingraham, Michael Savage, Phil Hendrie, Erich "Mancow" Muller, and of course America's Radio News Network, long-form news programming heard on hundreds of stations across the country. TRN President/CEO Mark Masters believes 2012 is going to be dynamic for the talk format. "With the economy, unemployment, energy prices, and so many other factors, it's going to be vibrant," he says. "There are two factors. News makes and drives the news cycle, and talk radio reacts to what news creates. Talk radio takes data and turns it into meaning.

"There is so much going on right now. To make it quite simple, everyone is going where the revenue is, and that's the spoken word formats. It's in news radio, which is the number one-billing format. It's in news/talk. Where else is talk going to be? It will be in entertainment-type venues like Ryan Seacrest and Mancow and Elvis Duran. I call it 'infotainment,' where you have celebrity interviews, hybrid situations where there's a combination of talk and music."

Masters predicts that the next few years are going to be "very talk radio-centric, for some very central reasons." He says, "One out of six Americans is looking for a job. Unemployment is at 9.1 percent. With so many houses underwater in the equities markets, interest rates so low, T-bill yields low, that money is still not coming back into the market to invest. Young people between 16 and 30, who are starting to be called the 'Lost Generation,' are competing against highly pedigreed 30-somethings and 40-somethings for jobs. All those people stay very close to the news and very close to talk radio, to find out how they can position themselves, differentiate themselves, and use change to their advantage."



MARK MASTERS
President/CEO
Talk Radio Network



RANDY LANE
Founder
Randy Lane Co.

Randy Lane, founder of the Randy Lane Company, is a former PD and GM who's worked with Ryan Seacrest, Jimmy Kimmel, Kidd Kraddick, Mancow, and many other recognizable industry names, and he believes the talk format is at a crossroads. "It's been dominated by political talk for the past 10 years, primarily conservative political talk," Lane says. "I believe that you are going to see that expanding into different demographics, as well as splitting off into some different talk formats, such as female-oriented talk.

"I do believe that you'll see more live and local, particularly in the bigger markets. KFI in Los Angeles has only one syndicated show, two hours of Rush Limbaugh. What's interesting is that KFI's morning show, with Bill Handel, and the half-middays, with Bill Carroll, out-perform Rush. Whether that's going to trickle down into the medium markets and outside of the top 10 markets, that's another question. I do believe it will happen, at least to a degree.

"You are likely to at least see a live morning show and possibly a live and local afternoon show in the future, as some of these major companies and publicly owned companies at some point are going to be selling off some of their stations. We should see the rise of more independent and regional broadcasters, with that result."

Citadel Media Networks became Cumulus Media Networks when the sale of Citadel Broadcasting to Cumulus Media closed, and CMN SVP/Programming & Distribution Carl Anderson believes the talk format is strong. "I think it's very healthy," Anderson says. "The trends we are seeing, with many of these strong brands now coming to the FM side of the dial, just shows that not only is there an appetite, but also advertiser demand. This will expose more ears to spoken word content, which is already an active format."

Anderson, whose lineup includes Mark Levin, Michael Baisden, and Mike Huckabee, doesn't agree with those who say political talk has peaked. "Every year we see more and more affiliations," he says. "The key is the top personalities, discussing the issues that really matter. We are going into a political season like 2012, and we have very serious issues on the table. Regardless of what side of the aisle you're on, whether it's unemployment, whether it's folks being in debt, I think that when you have personalities like we have in our portfolio, it's important to address these issues. As we look ahead into 2012, I think you are going to see not only strong ratings, you are going to see just overall greater business for news/talk."



CARL ANDERSON
SVP/Programming & Distribution
Cumulus Media Networks



BOB FINNERTY
SVP/Radio
Fox News Channel

The Fox News Radio roster includes Alan Colmes, John Gibson, and Tom Sullivan, and SVP/Radio for Fox News Channel Bob Finnerty believes conservative political talk is alive and well. "My sense is, everybody is talking about talk radio becoming more mainstream, and I don't see that yet," Finnerty says. "I think it will eventually get there. We had the experience when Air America launched. They were focused on a political agenda, rather than on informative and educating radio. I think it gets hard for many program directors — if they have principally conservative talk, they are not quite as open to someone like an Alan Colmes. Maybe later at night, they would be. I don't see that yet. I think a lot of people are wishing it would go that way, but I don't see that happening yet."

Finnerty isn't surprised by the move of talk to FM. In fact, he says, "I am somewhat surprised it hasn't happened more. In most cases where spoken word is going to FM, the audiences have gone up. I think a lot of the large operators know the formats should be over on FM, but they're saying, 'What do we do with the AM sticks?' So a lot of people are very cautious. WTOP is sort of like the poster child for that. I think it will continue to happen."



JULIE TALBOTT
President/Content & Affiliate Relations
Premiere Radio Networks

Julie Talbott heads content and affiliate relations for Premiere Radio Networks, where the powerhouse roster includes Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Jim Rome. “The talk format is incredibly strong, and more relevant than ever as news cycles get shorter,” says Talbott. “Listeners want their information in an entertaining format that places the news in context, and radio is one of the few places that can provide that information. Premiere has built a reputation for providing ratings-winning programming delivered by new and established, compelling personalities. Our history of success and ability to deliver the best content, guests, promotions and ratings are the reasons why we see consistent growth year after year — we expect that to continue for the foreseeable future. There are times during the year that are more compelling for talk radio than others, but these cycles do not represent a tired format, they reflect overall listening patterns.”

Talbott notes, “We’re also seeing growth in FM talk. AM radio is still incredibly successful and provides us with a tremendous affiliate base, but FM is providing another outlet for news/talk in markets where there are limitations. In addition, talk stations are adding an FM simulcast because it allows them to grow their audiences.”

Suzanne Simms, VP of affiliate relations for the syndicated *Dave Ramsey Show*, sees a strong future for talk radio on a number of platforms. In years to come, she says, “I believe there will be many more spoken word stations in each market than we have now, and those stations will carry a large variety of shows and show topics for listeners to choose from that address every area of their lives.”

Simms continues, “Talk radio today continues to be a relevant form of entertainment and communication to a large and growing audience. However, I see it becoming more diverse. When you look at the economy in this country and the culture we live in, you have to know that radio listeners more than ever are wanting and will continue to want more variety in the spoken word format — i.e., shows that address all facets of their lives, from health to lifestyle to their wallets.”



SUZANNE SIMMS
VP/Affiliate Relations
The Dave Ramsey Show



RANDALL BLOOMQUIST
President
Talk Frontier Media

Randall Bloomquist has programmed WMAL/Washington and WBT-AM in Charlotte and served as director of AM operations for Clear Channel/Richmond, and is now the president of his own company, Talk Frontier Media, which specializes in talk talent development and content creation. Bloomquist says the talk format is the only kind of radio he’d want to be involved in at the station level these days. “If you are creating great local programming, you’ve got a unique media product,” he says. “Music, you can get 100 different places. Nationally syndicated talk, you can get many places. But great, compelling, local talk — live, local, interactive, community-focused talk — you can only get on local talk radio stations. I think the immediacy, interactivity, and localism of well done talk is a unique media product. I think that is a tremendous advantage over its competitors in other radio formats.”

Bloomquist continues, “The unfortunate thing we have seen in talk is — and this dates back decades, to about the time of Rush Limbaugh’s ascendancy — we unfortunately started teaching listeners that talk radio equals political talk. It is not the listeners’ fault that’s what they think. It is what we taught them. Then we taught them that talk radio meant conservative talk. Although I think the pendulum is starting to swing, the result of that is the format has unnecessarily painted itself into a corner.”

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MIKE STERN
Founder
Talk Mechanic

Mike Stern spent three years as news/talk editor at *Radio & Records* and now runs *Talent Mechanic*. "I think the most interesting thing that talk has going for it, is the amount of unique content it has for listeners, and the advantage that gives the radio station," Stern says. "There are so many places to hear a Nirvana record or a Lady Gaga record these days. It seems like there is more coming all the time.

"When it comes to a talk station, you own all the content. You have a lot of original content every day that music stations just can't match. I think that is why you are seeing some of the migration to FM, because it is getting harder and harder to compete with music. I am not saying music radio is dead or hurting, but it is getting tougher."

He goes on, "It's interesting that outside the U.S., one of the things that is very popular on radio is emotional, relationship type of talk. You don't hear much of that on American radio, but you see it on television. It seems to me that the logical place, especially as talk migrates to FM, and especially as people try to find talk programming that is going to appeal more to women."

Gabe Hobbs is a 35-year radio vet who has specialized in spoken word formats for the past 20 years. From 1998 through 2008, he oversaw programming for Clear Channel's 275 news, talk and sports stations. He also served as the in-house consultant for Premiere Radio Networks, working with Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck.

"I think there will be, obviously, more talk on FM," says Hobbs. "I think we will have far more genres than we have now, beyond political talk radio. There will be a lot of it online. A lot of those guys are going to be hobbyists, like they are now. There are so many Web aggregators who have lots of talk shows on. There will be some people who emerge from there.

"Assuming that we continue to invest in our product, we will see new shows emerge in the next five years. They are there, we just have to be patient and make the investment. I'm seeing some of the smaller companies do that. That's the way it has to happen. I understand why. I think Cumulus, as big as they just became, it appears to me that one of their first missions is to identify that: 'Who are these guys, and are they already working for us?' I If so, let's figure out who they are, dig them out, and put them on some more radio stations." **INK**



GABE HOBBS
Founder
Gabe Hobbs Media

The collage features several radio show promotional images:

- GUTSY**: A man's back with the word "GUTSY" written on it.
- Clark Howard CHEAP**: Clark Howard in a suit with "CHEAP" written over him.
- INSENSITIVE**: A man's face with "INSENSITIVE" written above him.
- BOM BASTIC**: Ed Schultz in a suit with "BOM BASTIC" written above him.
- Caffeinated**: Two men in suits with "Caffeinated" written in red script above them.
- THE BILL PRESS SHOW**: Bill Press in a suit with "THE BILL PRESS SHOW" written above him.
- CREDENTIALS**: A man's face with "CREDENTIALS" written below him.
- BRAINY**: A man's face with "BRAINY" written above him.
- TH THOM HARTMAN**: Thom Hartmann in a suit with "TH THOM HARTMAN" written below him.
- CH EEKY**: Stephanie Miller in a suit with "CH EEKY" written above her.

Centered in the collage is the **DIAL GLOBAL** logo and contact information: dial-global.com, 202.546.7940.

BLAST From The PAST >>



TOTALLY SERIOUS!

Apparently, in 1931 laughter was not permitted in photographs of entertainers. Pauline (2nd from right) was dismissed from her job shortly after this picture was taken for cracking a smile.

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