MANAGING RADIO

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This publication comes out of a collaborative project between the authors who have worked together on radio management courses for Sunderland's successful MA in Radio (Production and Management). The publication aims to be both a useful text for students studying the theory and practice of managing radio stations and an authorative hands-on guide to setting up a station from scratch. Finally there are short case studies based on empirical research that exemplify different station structures and management approaches. It mainly concentrates on station management in the BBC local, commercial and community sectors.

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We introduce the changing and complicated environment of radio in terms of technological, social, economic and political forces that affect it. We provide detail on both the size and nature of the environment, the radio audience and the changing nature of regulation, competition and the demands of the industry and the audience whilst focusing particularly on technological advances in the industry. We argue that these complicated and rapid changes that beset radio place new demands on radio management and managers and that they need to respond appropriately in order to meet these and maintain the trust of their audiences. From this we move on to outline why there is a need for this book and the audience that it is aimed at and provide detail on the structure and content of the remainder of this publication.

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This section maps the UK radio industry and the regulatory framework for radio. It will present an overview of the different sectors for radio: BBC, commercial and community radio (including hospital and student stations) and the small but growing sector of independent production companies and web and podcasting operators. At the beginning of the second millennium the very use of the term 'radio' has become debatable because it is now available on so many platforms other than that provided by the traditional transmitter-receiver model. This section will survey these platforms including Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) Digital Multimedia Broadcasting through mobile devices (DMB) web radio and podcasting.

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We look at job areas specific to the new community radio sector - volunteer management and community development and training.

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structures that are less based on a classical hierarchy and more on an integrative and consensual one based on shared values. We will discuss how commercial radio stations may have both a local hierarchy but may also be part of a wider national, or international, structure that includes other group companies and service providers outside the parent company.

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There is no doubt that strong financial management of a radio station is paramount to its survival. BBC services have to show that they use their licence fee income effectively, community stations need to generate and manage income from different sources to meet their aims and maintain independence and in commercial radio a primary objective of the station manager is to operate in a manner that generates the most profit. In this chapter we will first look at the importance of fixed and variable costs in radio management and how these can impact on the delivery model of the station. We will then consider the importance of costs and cash flow, particularly with regard to establishing a new radio station before moving on to consider how income and costs may be estimated and the potential sources of revenue for a radio station. We then move on to consider how advertising, sponsorship and subscription are forms of income alongside license fees and how community stations face a particularly demanding job raising money for training and community participation on top of the usual station running costs.

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A radio station is generally constituted as a private company or a department of a larger company and is subject to all the laws and regulations governing any such body. In handling the specific challenges of public broadcasting it is all too easy for the manager to lose sight of general legal requirements in fields such as employment, health and safety and taxation. While in no way wishing to minimise the importance of such issues for the radio manager, up-to-date information on these areas of legislation is widely available and we will here concentrate on matters more specific to broadcasting.

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We consider how people may be managed in a radio station. In particular we will focus on the selection and retention of personnel (both paid staff and volunteers) and outline practical means to recruit them and how a station manager is affected by legislation. Finally we look at several examples of radio training initiatives relating to radio management and developing skills within in the community radio sector.

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Historically, many senior radio managers have feigned ignorance of, and abdicated responsibility for, the technical aspects of getting programmes to listeners. Although it is not necessary for the manager to have a component-level knowledge of the technology behind today's digital media, a basic understanding of the capabilities and potential of the new technologies provides a real advantage for maximising the performance of any mass medium. Here we will cover the broad issues that most often cause concern or confusion for the non-technical manager.

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Brian Lister looks at how a local radio service has developed and changed and relates these to various concepts within this book. This detailed case study of the development of local radio in Sunderland demonstrates how these concepts influenced and affected the development of a radio station across nearly twenty years and provides thought provoking insights in to the issues surrounding managing radio. Sunderland's local radio service has undergone a great number of significant transformations since its launch in 1990, changing its name twice under six owners of radically different backgrounds and motivation from a community organisation to major commercial radio groups. The management styles and structures of the station have been as varied, responding to a range of commercial, managerial and regulatory challenges which might be seen as a reflection of the issues facing British local radio as a whole.

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Caroline Mitchell offers Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) as an example of good practice in UK community radio. Bradford is a large, culturally diverse city of around 280,000 residents that made its former wealth through the textiles industry. BCB broadcasts to a five kilometre radius from Bradford city centre and although it was finally awarded a community licence to broadcast from January 2006 it has broadcast full- time since 2002 under the Access Radio pilot scheme and between 1992 and 2002 using around 30 different RSL licences on both AM and FM. The station received the Radio Academy Nations and Regions Award for the North East and Yorkshire

region in December 2003. Since 1992 the station has grown from a RSL run on volunteer effort to a thriving station with nine paid staff and at least 200 volunteers. It has state of the art studios and offices in the centre of Bradford.

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Jo Tyler, a Producer who worked on the development and launch of BBC 6 Music, focuses on the launch of BBC 6 Music, one of a 'suite' of radio stations created by the BBC to substantiate the corporation's move into digital radio. These stations evolved alongside significant developments in multi-platform and interactive media, including websites and facilities for interaction with an audience who was becoming more familiar with use of media technologies. The launch of 6 Music was significant in many ways: it was the BBC's first new music station since the re-organisation of BBC Radio 3 in 1970 and; it was the first to utilise the extensive BBC music session archive, derived primarily from BBC Radio 1 recorded sessions. As a station that also had to cater for a broader and more diverse audience, 6 Music provided challenges for managers in terms of management of the cross platform content. Focusing on the lead up period to the launch of 6 Music in 2002, this case study provides a brief historical background to the planning of 6 Music, outlining issues raised from the convergence of the BBC media environment. It explores the production techniques and formats adopted when launching a new station whose audience interact on many platforms.

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Section 1.1

Introduction

Summary

In this chapter we introduce the changing and complicated environment of radio in terms of technological, social, economic and political forces that affect it. We provide detail on both the size and nature of the environment, the radio audience and the changing nature of regulation, competition and the demands of the industry and the audience whilst focusing particularly on technological advances in the industry. We argue that these complicated and rapid changes that beset radio place new demands on radio management and managers and that they need to respond appropriately in order to meet these and maintain the trust of their audiences. From this we move on to outline why there is a need for this book and the audience that it is aimed at and provide detail on the structure and content of the remainder of this volume.

Introduction

Radio stations and the people who work in them are faced with, to use the Chinese adage, 'interesting times'. There is increased competition from radio and other traditional media at local, regional, national and now global levels and increasingly from new technological means of broadcasting, such as podcasts and Internet audio streaming - we can listen to many UK based digital radio broadcasts via satellite or the Internet virtually anywhere in the world. This dual aspect of globalisation brings with it interesting political, economic and social issues - who, for instance, owns, controls and decides on the 'content' of a radio broadcast, how independent is a radio station, and so on? Many commercial stations are now part of much larger global media companies, some of which may seem to transcend national politics, policies and laws. These technological, economic, political and social issues are both complicated and nested - often one affects another and sometimes in ways that may not be immediately obvious.

Technological advances have resulted not just in the introduction of alternative types of broadcasting but also in new alternatives to radio listening, such as playing computer games. As a result radio broadcasters find that both

the number and the types of competitors have increased at a time when they can reach an ever-increasing audience. This though is not just due to technological advances; people in the developed world are now supposed to have both a higher disposable income and more leisure time than previously and increasingly more media channels to choose between.

Nonetheless listeners can no longer be considered to be passive audiences. They are, to use a term present in management and media studies, 'active' as audiences (see McQuail 1983) and as consumers who chose from an increasing variety of outlets competing for their attention, time and money. If they don't like a broadcast they can, and will, turn it off and find an alternative. The structure of the competitive environment for radio stations has, and continues to, change.

Economically, radio stations now compete for audiences and market share in an increasingly competitive marketplace that may be dominated by a few, large global media companies. According to Michael Porter (1980) there are five forces that act on an organisation in a competitive marketplace: the relative power of the buyers; the relative power of suppliers; potential new entrants; substitute products and finally; the prevailing degree of competitive rivalry. In Porter's terms the radio industry is an increasingly turbulent and competitive environment. Suppliers here include, for example, news production companies as well as staff. So while a station, for example, may find an increasing number of sources for news feeds it may also find that it faces more competition to hire and retain a well know DJ. With regard to the former a station may negotiate a news contract with both local and global news suppliers. According to Porter, the extent to which a station can 'negotiate' successfully with its suppliers would vary according to the particular dynamics of each supplier-station relationship. Similarly a station's relationship with its various 'customers', that is, for example, it's advertisers, the local community, the audience, and again the buyer-station dynamics would affect any relationship here.

Porter argued that strategically an organisation should first decide whether or not its market position allowed it to be the cost leader (ie that it can be the lowest cost producer for the industry) - if it could not then it should instead ensure that its product is differentiated from its competitors and so aim at charging a premium for these different products. Following this decision the organisation should then decide on the scope or focus - whether the organisation aims to meet the needs of the entire market or a particular segment. So in Radio management terms, a station that is unlikely to be a cost leader may instead concentrate on differentiating its service and focusing on a particular niche - a national or regional specialist music station (Kerrang - a

heavy rock station), a station that focuses on a particular geographic area part of a population.
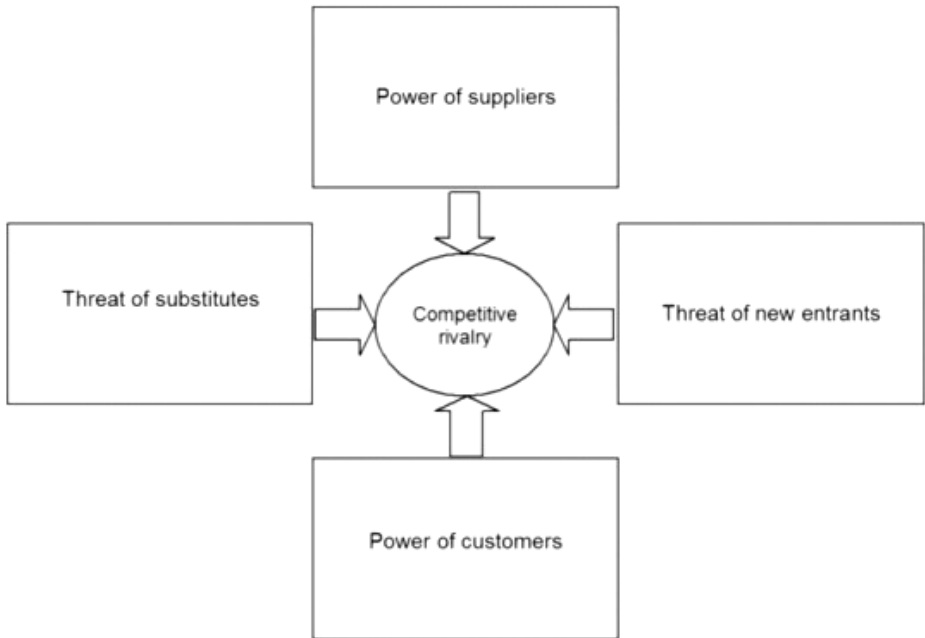
Michael Porter's (1980) Five Force Model

For Porter at least, the move towards global media companies is a sign of a competitive strategy where a global organisation attempts to dominate its suppliers, buyers and customers. Where there is little competition and very little chance of a substitute product or new entrant to the market one would expect the dominant station to be in a good position to make a profit. Where there are many small stations competing for the same audience and faced with global news suppliers, etc., one would expect the stations to face greater financial difficulties. Interesting times indeed, and we believe one where it is increasingly important for radio stations to be effectively managed!

The rise and rise of UK radio

By July 2008, in addition to BBC radio, there were some 300 commercial radio stations in the UK, plus 112 community radio services. A further 67 community radio stations had been approved by Ofcom but have yet to come on-air. (Ofcom 2008a)

Since 2000 the new community radio sector has developed rapidly and the Community Media Association now has over 700 members. Hundreds of short-term 'restricted service' stations (RSLs) are licensed every year; they provide a training ground for would be commercial and community licensees. There are 68 student radio stations and over 250 hospital radio stations currently operating. All these people can benefit from this book. There is evidence that there is a growing market of people who up to now have had little connection to community radio but who might now be involved at a strategic or a funding level. This includes local authorities and services and also a wide variety of funding bodies - all of whom need to understand the issues involved in community radio if they are to have any kind of involvement in the new sector.

There are growing numbers of independent radio companies that make programmes for the BBC - there are 94 on the current register of BBC Radio 4 independent radio producers. Increasingly, would be broadcasters run their own production companies, web radio stations and podcasts. Add to these totals innumerable internet and other unregulated services and it must be the case that more people are taking managerial responsibility for a radio station than at any time in British radio history. Against this however must be set the continued consolidation of the media business with a concentration of commercial radio ownership into the hands of fewer companies with a consequent reduction in the status of the individual station manager.

Radio responds to new technologies

All the current developments in the structure and regulation of the radio industry must be seen against the background of changing technology and a greatly increasing range of audio delivery platforms. While there are those who predicted that the iPod would mean the end of radio as we know it (see Berry 2006 for discussion of this) the same was said at the birth of television, commercial television, daytime television, the walkman and the Internet. Radio broadcasting has a strong survival instinct.

Most of the new media opportunities for radio broadcasting involve targeting small segments of the listening population, albeit sometimes on a

worldwide scale. The old models of management developed at a time when an individual network could see a weekly audience in excess of twelve million people are not applicable to the new digitally-delivered strands which may number their audience in tens of thousands. Over half of the UK commercial radio stations serve areas with an adult population of fewer than 300,000 and it is the management systems developed here and in the smaller BBC outlets that give us the best indication of practical corporate structures for the future of radio.

Speaking at the Radio Academy Festival in Cambridge in July 2007 (Radio Magazine 2007), BBC Radio 1 controller Andy Parfitt said there was a common belief that radio listenership among young people was suffering because of the Internet, TVs in bedrooms and multimedia mobile phones. "There's a myth that needs to be debunked," he told delegates. "That myth is of the teched-up 17 year old. Analogue media and radio have far more impact than we are led to believe."

He said an extensive research project undertaken by the BBC among young people across the UK showed radio still played a significant part in young people's lives. But Parfitt also pointed out that the notion of owning 'a radio' on its own was alien to most young people, "They expect it to come free with other stuff [such as mobile phones]." And he continued, "The idea of going out and buying a standalone piece of kit called a radio is unimaginable."

This may be one explanation, along with relative cost, of the unusual age profile of the first DAB radio purchasers. In 2004, five years after the award of the first National DAB Multiplex, Ofcom estimated the average age of the digital radio set buyer was 51, much older than the normal 'early adopter' profile for new technologies and products.

Speaking to a Social Market Foundation seminar on Digital Radio in September 2004 (Ofcom 2004), the then Ofcom Chief Executive, Stephen Carter said:

> *Ask many people how many radios they possess and often the first answer is 'two: one in the kitchen, the other in the bedroom.' If you ask them to think again the typical reply is 'Oh, well there are the car radios of course... and the one in the alarm clock... and the one in the Hi-fi... and in the bathroom and then there's the kids' ones;' and if they are at the more tecchie end they'll add: 'errm... does listening to it on the Internet count, or via the TV... or on the mobile?'*

Nobody knows exactly how many radios there are in this country. Best estimates put it at somewhere between 110 million and 150 million, that is, 5 or 6 for every household. For the industry and the public, that's a good thing; though it does have implications for the move towards a fully digital world in radio.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that technological advances will change the purposes for which we use radio. The function of music radio has arguably already changed forever. Indeed, speaking at the Captains of Industry Conference held in Singapore in November 2007, Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, the vice president of Google's Asia Pacific and Latin America Operations pointed out that, since 1982, the price of data storage had fallen by a factor of 3.6 million (Storey 2007). She argued that, if this trend continues, every piece of music ever recorded could be carried simultaneously on a portable iPod type device as early as 2015.

New demands on radio managers

Against this background of unprecedented technological change the expectations of the radio audience are changing in other ways. Perhaps in response to the laissez faire wild-west atmosphere of much of the internet, greater emphasis seems to be being placed on the reliability and trustworthiness of the traditional public-service broadcaster. In a world where facts, opinions and entertainment are freely available from thousands of sources it is arguably only the trust and understanding built up between a broadcaster and their regular listeners that justifies the existence of traditional services at all. This places new demands on the radio manager.

In spite of this increased need for trust the public perception of the broadcast media in the UK has fallen. In the wake of a 2007 scandal involving fake phone-in competitions on high-profile programmes and wrongly edited footage of the Queen, a Guardian/ICM poll showed trust in the BBC had fallen sharply and a wider crisis of public confidence in the broadcasting industry as a whole (Glover 2007). Fifty-nine per cent of those questioned said they trusted the BBC less than before the revelations and the poll suggested that the programmes of the BBC, which has long prided itself on its reputation for accuracy and honesty, were regarded as no more honest than those of commercial rivals.

Although focussing on television, where the highest-profile lapses occurred, the poll suggested many lessons for radio broadcasters. Asked

whether they thought that the BBC's job should be to entertain, even if it meant dishonesty at times, 67 per cent did not agree. This suggests that there is a strong public backing for the corporation's subsequent attempts to impose clear values on its output. BBC Director General, Mark Thompson, said the organisation had experienced "a rude awakening" and promised to send staff on retraining courses to restore a culture of honesty.

BBC radio programming has not escaped unscathed with lapses admitted to on Radio One in the Jo Whiley Show in May 2006, on BBC 6 music during 2006 in the Tom Robinson Show, the Clare McDonnell Show, the Liz Kershaw Show and the Russell Brand Show. Film Cafe on BBC Asian Network in February 2007 and White Label, a BBC World Service programme broadcast up to April 2006, also faked winners.

In the case of the Jo Whiley Show, transmitted on BBC Radio 1 on 12 May 2006, the BBC revealed that it had been pre-recorded to permit essential engineering work in the studio. Listeners were still invited to enter a competition that had already been recorded with an on-air participant who had expressed an interest in entering the competition the previous day. Although this person was a genuine member of the audience, the name of a second participant, mentioned on air, was invented, and listeners had been invited to telephone and text when in reality there was no opportunity to participate.

When in October 2008 press publicity stimulated some 40,000 people to complain about the broadcasting on Russell Brand's BBC Radio 2 programme of phone calls made by Brand and Jonathan Ross to actor Andrew Sachs, suggesting that Brand had carnal knowledge of Sachs' granddaughter, most of the comment by press and senior politicians centred on the management systems and corporate responsibilities of the BBC. In the resulting furore the highly respected Controller of Radio 2, Lesley Douglas, and the Radio 2 Head of Compliance, David Barber, were left with little alternative but to resign.

Whilst these breaches of trust represent a very small proportion of the programmes broadcast in the last few years, they indicate an underlying problem in non-news areas that management appears to the public to have failed to apply adequate editorial controls.

The manager in radio

So who manages radio? In radio job titles are seldom a good indication of rank, authority or experience. Whilst a producer in network radio will have similar responsibilities to a producer in television, film or the stage, and is additionally expected to act as a director in the studio, it has become commonplace for a

lowly-paid or voluntary assistant who answers the telephones in a local radio station to also be referred to by the presenter as 'my producer'.

It is perhaps not accidental that the term Managing Editor refers to someone who has overall responsibility for a BBC local radio station whilst the equivalent post in a commercial station is often a Managing Director. This distinction between editing the output and directing it is reflected in the typical programming philosophy of the two sectors. Some years ago it was similarly usual for the head of programmes in a BBC local station to be a Programme Organiser while their equivalent in commercial radio was a Programme Controller, perhaps again indicating a difference in emphasis between facilitation and control.

Many community radio stations side step these value-laden terms and are under the day-to-day control of a Station Manager; a title increasingly used in smaller commercial radio stations where directors sit at a higher level in a group structure and where little control over editorial or commercial policy is devolved to the individual station.

It is not simply that 'who manages' has changed in radio, how they manage is also changing. Radio managers now manage multi-skilled employees, have an ever increasingly participative audience and increasingly answer the demands of global organisations. Perhaps encouraged by these demands they have become increasingly influenced by modern management theories (for instance see Georgina Born's research (2004) about BBC management culture). Nonetheless we would argue that management theory here cannot be assimilated wholesale; radio is a specific environment and management needs to adapt to and reflect this appropriately.

Who is this book aimed at?

The creative and media industries, including radio, are faced with increasing competition locally, internationally and from other markets. In such a competitive market it becomes more important for radio to be managed effectively and managers can no longer rely on merely repeating old practices.

This book comes out of a collaborative project between the authors - radio managers and academics who have worked together on radio management courses for the University of Sunderland's MA in Radio (Production and Management). At present there are only a limited number of academic texts that focus specifically on managing radio. This is despite radio being both one of the most widely accessible global media forms and a subject studied at under and post-graduate levels at Universities in the UK, Europe and elsewhere.

Radio studies, as an area of study at undergraduate and post graduate level, has developed a great deal over the past decade, helping to boost the profile of the medium as an academic and practical area of study. The boom in small -scale radio stations and independent radio production, along with the development of Internet radio and other technologies have changed the way new entrants see jobs in radio: radio management is no longer the preserve of the few senior managers in the BBC and the larger commercial radio groups. It is furthermore no longer the case that someone is solely a radio presenter, reporter or producer: those who work, or wish to work, in radio now need to be a multi-skilled employee and aspirant radio manager. Nowadays media students have a chance to participate in running small-scale stations whilst they study. Courses in radio and business studies are beginning to reflect a wider range of job roles in radio including the multi-skilled role of the radio manager. Furthermore Ofcom (2008b), the UK radio regulator, now requires radio stations to state their commitment to training, this indicates the wider responsibility this part of the radio industry now has towards identifying skills gaps and promoting best practice.

Media graduates increasingly use radio as entry point to the media industries. They no longer see radio as a job only in terms of presentation or journalism but have become aware of wider opportunities in production and management. 22,000 people work in the UK broadcast radio - more than in terrestrial TV (Skillset 2008). Since 1990 the opportunities in UK radio have increased with the proliferation of commercial radio stations: there are now over 400 local, regional and digital commercial services (RadioCentre 2008: 11) and 54 network, national, and local BBC radio stations (BBC 2008)

This volume aims to be a useful text for students studying the theory and practice of managing radio stations as well as those outside academia who are looking for a good hands-on guide to setting up a station from scratch. It is also envisaged that it would be a useful source for those undertaking media studies who are interested in media management more widely and management students interested in the media industries.

Structure of the book

Managing Radio is divided into three sections. In *Section One, Managing Radio-Introduction and Overview*, the authors synthesise their academic and practical experience in both media studies and management and organisational theory to integrate contextual and critical material and viewpoints from academics and radio managers. *Section Two, Practical skills and techniques for managing radio*, is a detailed and comprehensive practical

guide to the different elements of managing commercial and community radio as well as operating as an independent producer or on line radio service. It provides useful tools and examples of management practice, backed up where appropriate with references to wider academic reading. For instance in *Section 2.2 Station organisational structures* discussion about how volunteers might be involved in a community station. In *Section 3, Managing Radio Case Studies* examples will be used to illustrate different station structures and management approaches. These are based on empirical research by Mitchell and Lister, using their extensive contacts and working knowledge of these stations.

The art of radio management

A senior manager visited several small radio stations on a trip to the eastern United States. The most impressive thing, he said, was that all the staff at each station seemed to know all the essential facts about their company, "I asked the receptionist about their transmitter power, and she was able to tell me straightaway. I asked the engineer about the music policy and he could describe it in great detail, and a presenter told me how their rate-card was structured." In the twenty first century, top radio managers have a broad understanding of how the medium works, part statistician, part entertainer, part engineer, accountant, and salesperson, and a large part teacher. That is the art of radio management.

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Section 1.2

Radio industry overview

Summary

This section maps the UK radio industry and the regulatory framework for radio. It will present an overview of the different sectors for radio: BBC, commercial and community radio (including hospital and student stations) and the small but growing sector of independent production companies and web and podcasting operators. At the beginning of the second millennium the very use of the term 'radio' has become debatable because it is now available on so many platforms other than that provided by the traditional transmitter-receiver model. This section will survey these platforms including Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) Digital Multimedia Broadcasting through mobile devices (DMB) web radio and podcasting.

Introduction

Knowledge of the context of changing social, economic, political, technological and cultural factors (or STEP factors) is crucial for radio station managers when they plan the way a station runs. How people receive the station, how it spends its budget and what it can broadcast are all issues critical to its success. An understanding of the radio industry 'landscape' and the three main sectors of BBC, commercial and community radio is important for any radio station manager in the UK. Similarly managers need insight into changes in national and global patterns of media ownership and concentration and important concepts such as public service broadcasting if they are to have an informed framework to work within.

In this Section we will consider how these factors have helped influence the development of the radio broadcast industry - including how it is politically regulated; how the commercial sector has consolidated economically in to several major groups alongside the license funded BBC and community stations; how different broadcasters meet different social needs - including community broadcasting and hospital and university radio, and; how new technology has again opened up this market to new forms of broadcasting and competition. We will do this by considering how the industry has developed

and how it may continue to develop influenced by its current and possible future technological needs.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

BBC radio has been established as a public service, funded by a licence fee since 1922. The radio channels and services that have developed over the last century are some of the most sophisticated and varied in world radio. BBC Radio is divided in to five analogue national networks: Radio 1 provides new music and entertainment for 15-24 year olds; Radio 2, music & entertainment for over 25s; Radio 3, Classical, Jazz, World, Arts and Drama; Radio 4, 'intelligent speech radio' and Radio Five Live, live news and sport. There are five digital channels: 1xtra. Black Music; 6 Music, contemporary music; BBC 7, archive and contemporary comedy, drama and children's programmes; Five Live Sports, extra additional commentaries from major sporting events and The Asian Network, providing speech and news based programming of Asian interest. In addition there are five national channels: Radio Scotland, Radio nan Gaidheal, Radio Wales, Radio Cymru, Radio Ulster and Radio Foyle, and 39 local radio stations across England.

Integral to BBC Radio is BBC Online, a vast selection of web pages that provide programme related services, back up information and increasingly audio content to enable people to time shift their listening. The BBC World Service is funded separately by government, not through the licence fee. Under its public service remit each channel attracts a wide range of listeners in terms of age, demographic and lifestyle however each station does have a format and 'core' target audience. BBC managers strive to cater for existing audiences whilst always keeping an eye on 'bringing on' new listeners, for instance younger audiences to local radio or Radio 4.

BBC local radio has operated since 1967 and 40 stations across Britain provide local audiences with news, entertainment and specialist programming. Since 2005 these stations largely stopped having programmes for specific groups and instead they aim at a broad demographic of 50 plus with a centralised playlist across all stations. There has also been a rationalisation of programming across regions in the evening with regional programme sharing (see section 2.2 for discussion BBC management of how presenters 'imagine' their target listeners).

The BBC operates under a Royal Charter that was last renewed on 1st January 2007 after extensive internal review in the BBC, scrutiny within Parliament and consultation with members of public and many different organizations representing public interests. There was much debate about the

repositioning of Public Service Broadcasting, how the BBC should be funded and the roles and responsibilities of BBC journalism, particularly in the light of BBC reporting about David Kelly, the weapons expert who apparently committed suicide after being named as the source for a BBC story about the government's case for war with Iraq. (See also discussion about the formation of media policies in Freedman, 2008).

The Charter lays out its core aims and rules for governance in terms of the BBC Trust and Audience Councils (see below). The Department for Culture Media and Sport has also established detailed agreements governing the BBC's services and regulation. It's core purposes are:

- Sustaining citizenship and civil society;
- Promoting education and learning;
- Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence by using the licence fee as venture capital for creativity;
- Representing the UK, its nations and regions;
- Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK;
- Building digital Britain.
  (DCMS 2006: 9)

(See also http://www.culture.gov.uk).

The BBC Trust has Members who are appointed by the Queen on advice from ministers, following an open appointments' procedure. They have extensive experience in public and commercial life and are there to represent the licence payers, to 'ensure the BBC is independent, innovative and efficient: a creative and economic force for good in the UK, and for the UK internationally (http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/about/index.html). National and Regional Audience Councils are made up of members of the public who have who meet monthly to present issues of audience feedback and concern which are then fed back to Trust members - each council is chaired by a Trustee. Issues about management and performance of all radio stations are considered alongside online and television.

The BBC Executive Board, chaired by the Director General, is responsible for the overall operational management of the BBC with priorities laid down by the BBC Trust. The Board member directly concerned with radio is the Director of BBC Audio and Music who is responsible for all the network and digital channels as well as the Radio Drama, BBC Proms and audio across TV and radio. The deputy Director General is currently responsible for News and journalism across the whole of the BBC that includes all radio news. The

Director of Nations and Regions is responsible for local radio and does not sit on the Executive Board.

The next tier of management is the Channel controllers. In 2008 some Radio controllers are responsible for a digital only channel in addition to one of the main networks, thus Controller Radio 1 is also responsible for 1Xtra, the Asian Network and BBC Switch. The Controller of Radio 2 is also responsible for 6 music, theController of Radio 3 is also Director of BBC Proms; Controller, Radio 5 Live also controls 5 Live Sports Extra. There is also the post of Controller, Radio 4 and Head of Radio Entertainment. Each regional level has a Head of Regional & Local Programmes responsible for radio, TV and online, usually several stations and each station will have a Managing Editor responsible for the day to day operations of each local radio station. Under this layer will be production (including programme editors, producers, broadcast assistants and presenters, journalism, technical and support staff responsible for daily programme making for each station.

From this it may be seen that there is a complicated but clear management hierarchy within the BBC. What is also apparent is that this structure focuses on 'divisions' where each Controller has responsibility for several different areas and a geographic focus at a regional level (Mintzberg 1988). In addition to this structure the BBC has endeavored to empower its managers rather then retain control and authority at the top of the organization. Managers are however encouraged to 'refer' issues up the management hierarchy should they be unsure of what action to take. Interestingly in the wake of the October 2008 Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross controversy it was the Controller of BBC Radio 2 who took ultimate responsibility and resigned - not the programme producer. Perhaps the production team in this particular case was held not to be responsible for the hiring and retention of two 'controversial' media presenters. That may have been a decision referred up to the Controller, Radio 2.

Commercial Radio

Commercially funded radio is acknowledged to be 'the most dominant form of sound broadcasting in the world' (Barnard 2000: 49). In the UK it is a relatively young sector and it operates in competition for BBC local, regional and national audiences. Established under the then Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) it started off in 1973 with two stations in London which were rapidly joined by 17 others dotted across the UK over the next three years. By 1985 the IBA had licensed 49 stations but growth really took off after the 1990 Broadcasting Act replaced the IBA with the Radio Authority. By the start of the new millennium the UK had around 250 commercial radio services, a number which has continued to grow under Ofcom and with the introduction of digital channels.

Ofcom (Office of Communications) was established by the 2003 Communications Act as the regulator and licence awarding body for UK radio. It awards licences to commercial analogue and digital radio, community radio and restricted service licences (RSLs). It monitors programmes and format compliance and lays down codes of practice for broadcast content and deals breaches of these codes and complaints.

Growth in terrestrial licences and the development of digital, internet and satellite radio services has been followed by a consolidation of the UK commercial radio business into the hands of a smaller number of larger companies. Of the 300 or so commercial radio stations operating by the end of 2007 over half were controlled by just four companies, GCap, Bauer, TLRC and UTV. The majority of the remainder were held by groups of between 3 and 13 stations. A list of local analogue stations in group ownership shows that, of the 260 such services listed in 2007, more than 100 (some 40 per cent) have by mid-2009 changed branding or ownership, or closed down.

The number of licences held may not be the best indicator of power in the sector however, some of the latter groups were very well-funded operations holding a small number of licences for major cities or regions, commanding significant population coverage without the overheads of the dozens of smaller stations held by the more thinly spread groups.

The comparable position ten years earlier was set out in 'Report on UK Commercial Radio's Future' published by National Economic Research Associates (NERA 1998) In October 1997 there were only 180 analogue commercial radio licences of which the largest four groups (GWR Group, Capital Radio, Emap and Scottish Radio Holdings) held only 41 per cent. GWR and Capital subsequently merged to form GCap while Scottish Radio Holdings was taken over by Emap, later to become Bauer.

The majority of local and regional commercial radio stations are in group ownership, some groups focussing on one part of the country and others on particular formats while the two largest groups have a disparate range of services dotted across most of the UK.

By the end of 2007 two of the largest groups were GCap, with some 74 radio brands ranging from Capital FM and dozens of town and city-sized FM stations across England and Wales to 25 Capital Gold and Classic Gold stations on AM and the XFM regional stations in London, Manchester and Scotland, and Chrysalis with the Galaxy and Heart regional FM brands plus LBC on AM and FM in London. During 2008 Gcap (itself formed from an earlier merger of Capital Radio Group with GWR) and the former Chrysalis stations all became part of the Global Radio Group. Global also operates the national station Classic FM.

Similarly Bauer Media now controls own the stations formerly run by Emap, including the Big City Network of local FM stations, the Magic, Kiss and Kerrang brands and the Scottish stations, including Clyde and Forth, formerly operated by Scottish Radio Holdings.

The Guardian Media Group operates regional FM stations under the Real Radio, Smooth and Rock Radio brands, having incorporated the former Saga services into the Smooth stable and Century Radio into the Real brand.

The remaining, mainly smaller, local radio services are largely group into the hands of a few groups, including CN Radio, Kent Messenger Group, Lincs FM Group, The Local Radio Company, Tindle Radio, UKRD Group and UTV Radio (who also operate national commercial station TalkSport).

Economies of scale

There are undoubted economic advantages for a company holding a number of radio licences (Doyle 2002a). Quite apart from any networking or sharing of programming which may be possible, the ability to share technical overheads and administration costs can make a significant difference to the otherwise marginal profitability of the average local station.

Having large groups can also make stations less vulnerable to being taken over by predators and arguably make managers' jobs more secure:

> 'Senior managers usually want to avoid takeover and the risk of replacement by a new management team. By expanding - e.g. through acquisition of several smaller companies- a firm makes itself a more expensive and difficult target for takeover, the greater the job security

for its senior managers.'
(Doyle 2002a: 67)

It is striking to be reminded by the NERA report (1998) that the top four groups, while operating fewer than half the commercial radio stations, achieved sales in the 1995-96 financial year totalling £217 million, 72 per cent of the total revenue earned by the whole industry. While the then four big groups (GWR, Capital, Emap and SRH) returned a combined annual profit of over £61 million, NERA concluded that radio groups other than these top four were on average not making a profit.

While the underlying principle remains true today the fiscal picture has been clouded by difficulties and uncertainties surrounding the large radio empires built up over many years of acquisitions by GCap, Emap and others, and now by the entry of multi-national companies such as the German-based Bauer Publishing Group.and the Times of India who in 2008 purchased and relaunched national commercial station Virgin Radio as Absolute Radio.

Interestingly, 2008 saw a slight reversal of the trend towards the larger radio groups with a tendency towards the disaggregation of some of the smaller local stations. Previously unprofitable FM services in places like Bath, Southport, Swindon and Huddersfield having been taken over, reportedly for token amounts, by smaller companies who plainly believed they could run a more effective and efficient small-scale local service.

Concerns about the concentration of control centre on two main issues: the effect of any reduction in plurality of media ownership in each market and any damaging effect on the localness of each service, where this is a factor in their format. The commercial radio industry has argued, with considerable success, for a relaxation of the rules governing how many stations in the same market may be owned by a single company.

During the consultation prior to the 2003 Communications Act the largest of the Independent Local Radio groups, GWR Group plc, was one of the loudest voices arguing for deregulation of ownership rules. In particular they rebutted common suggestions that stations under the same ownership would sound the same and target the same audience, arguing that: 'Ownership convergence leads to more format choice for listeners and, in the developed market that now exists, poses no threat to plurality of voice.' (Radio Magazine 2000).

GWR used examples from the recently deregulated US market to demonstrate that programming diversity increases as ownership converges and concluded: 'Relating these conclusions to a more liberally regulated future, one can see that ownership convergence would result in a greater variety of formats, with niche formats being supported by an owner's mainstream

stations as a way of providing a comprehensive range of choices to listeners.' (Radio Magazine 2000)

Demonstrating that the fundamental issues underpinning radio management have not changed significantly over the years, these commercial radio arguments echo those deployed by the BBC more than 40 years earlier to justify their control over a range of broadcast outlets, most notably in 1958 when they were competing with the new Independent Television Authority for the channels needed for a second television service. The former BBC Director General, Sir Ian Jacob, observed that the BBC and ITA tended to 'go their separate ways and the public is denied true alternatives. Competition in broadcasting inevitably produces this result.' (Paulu 1961: 25) He argued that a third TV network operated by a new commercial undertaking would simply compete head-on with the existing services. But by programming its two services together the BBC would provide two truly complementary services, which would supplement rather than compete with each other.

The national communications regulator is charged with balancing commercial pressures towards undue concentration of ownerhip and the homogenisation of electronic media. Ofcom's principal statutory duty is 'to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters; and to further interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition' and in terms of radio to make sure that radio services 'are both of a high quality and calculated to appeal to a variety of tastes and interests (Ofcom 2004: 5) It is a 'light touch' authority which also carries out research into markets and aims to 'remain at the forefront of technological understanding' (2004:6).

In order to achieve its mission of 'furthering the interests of citizen consumers as the communications industries enter the digital age' (2004:6) Ofcom will:

- balance the promotion of choice and competition with the duty to foster plurality, informed citizenship, protect viewers, listeners and customers and promote cultural diversity;
- serve the interests of the citizen-consumer as the communications industry enters the digital age;
- support the need for innovators, creators and investors to flourish within markets driven by full and fair competition between all providers; and
- encourage the evolution of electronic media and communications networks to the greater benefit of all who live in the United Kingdom (Ofcom 2004: 6)

In addition the Communications Act of 2003 states that Ofcom needs to make sure where appropriate local material ('locally-made programmes') is included in services and programming (2005:5/6)

Economies of scale however have not helped the big commercial radio groups to establish a successful business model for Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), nor to provide a wealth of complimentary programming. Encouraged to take up space on the first wave of local digital multiplexes by the offer of an automatic extension of their existing analogue licences, most of the larger AM and FM stations rushed to simulcast their programmes on DAB. Only the smaller stations - typically covering an area smaller than a DAB multiplex - declined to pay for a second (and usually far more expensive) transmission chain. Little effort was made however to generate original content and stations unique to the DAB platform. Outside the BBC at the time of writing Planet Rock is the only digital-only station with carriage on the national multiplexes, Core and One World closed in early 2008 and the Jazz and Capital Life followed in March 2008. Announcing the last two closures, GCap Media Chief Executive Fru Hazlitt Hazlitt explained:

> *The majority of people who are listening through DAB receivers are listening to stations that are simulcasting on FM. The majority of DAB receivers out there are FM-enabled too. If you put that against a background of the cost structure of DAB, it cannot be an economically viable platform.*
> (Plunkett 2008)

Other remaining digital-only services include those from the Bauer publishing stable, including The Hits, Kerrang and Heat which appear on a number of local multiplexes across the UK. Critics point to the lack of exciting exclusive DAB content as a reason for an apparent lack of consumer enthusiasm for the new platform, while others dispute the original claims of superior technical quality compared to FM.

Community Radio

This is the newest sector of UK and arguably one of the most interesting developments in UK radio for new entrants to radio management. Anthony Everitt described it as 'one of the most important cultural developments in this country for many years' (Carter 2003: 66). In 2004, after over 25 years of campaigning by grass roots and specialist interest groups the Community

Radio Order established Community Radio as a distinct sector alongside BBC and Commercial Radio. Community Radio is licensed and overseen by Ofcom and at the time of writing is completing a rolling programme of advertising licences on a region-by-region basis with some 170 licences awarded and over one hundred stations on air. Ofcom states that the characteristics of community radio services are:

- That they are local services provided primarily for the good of members of the public, or of particular communities, and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals involved in providing the service;
- That the service is intended primarily to serve one or more communities (whether or not it also serves other members of the public);
- That the person providing the service does not do so in order to make a financial profit by so doing, and uses any profit that is produced in the provision of the service wholly and exclusively for securing or improving the future provision of the service, or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the community that the service is intended to serve;
- That members of the community it is intended to serve are given opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service;
- That, in respect of the provision of that service, the person providing the service makes himself accountable to the community that the service is intended to serve.

(http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun_radio/tlproc/awards/sep08/)

This sector has been in development for many years so there are already several examples of well established stations that have been operating in some form or another for over a decade (see case study of Bradford Community Broadcasting in section 3). The sector is extremely varied and includes stations for inner city areas (e.g. stations managed through Radio Regen in the north-west of England), remote rural and island regions (e.g. Radio Forest of Dean and Radio Scilly) military training establishments (e.g. Garrison FM in Catterick) and stations by and for children and young people (e.g. Takeover Radio in Leicester). One of the most interesting sectors within community radio is that people from Black, Asian and other minorities and people from religious and cultural groups have been able to set up stations. Gloucester FM

for example is for people black and ethnic minority and disadvantaged communities in the city of Gloucester and Awaz FM serves the Glasgow 's Asian population (originating from Indian Sub Continent) broadcasting in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and English. Hope FM is a station run by Christians in Bournemouth. Profiles of more community radio stations can be found on the Community Media Association website.

There is no doubt that this sector has opened up opportunities to many different people at a grass roots level to get experience of a range of jobs in a radio station. However the sector as a whole is one run by volunteer labour not one where there are many paid work opportunities. Community radio has always acted as a stepping stone to work in the mainstream media and the expansion of this sector is an opportunity for people who may not have felt able to contact a commercial or BBC station to gain confidence and experience in radio.

One of the interesting aspects of this new sector is that it has created the possibility for new types of station operations, for instance management of a variety of funding sources from training and programme development projects and social marketing campaigns so that community stations are sustainable. The management of volunteers and participation in all aspects of the station programme making and governance is also an interesting area. The sector in the UK is still very young but it is clear that it can learn from the experience of managers in the voluntary sector as well as from the mainstream radio industry.

Hospital, Student Radio and Restricted Service Licences

Alongside the Community Radio sector there are three other types of radio where people can gain experience of managing a radio station - radio stations based in Hospital and Colleges or Universities and Restricted Service Licences (RSL) which are short term stations where formats can be tested out or special events like a sports event or festival can be catered for. All are licensed by Ofcom. Most people who work in the broadcast side of radio have volunteered for Hospital or Student stations at the beginning of their careers or have gained experience working on RSLs.

There are about 60 Student radio stations in the UK. Many broadcast on licences that allow them a low power medium wave frequency (LPAM) so that they can broadcast within the confines of a distinct campus (e.g. at Sussex University), some as RSLs and some as internet only. Most are funded by student unions or associations and some take advertising. These stations

usually operate on a membership basis (anything between 18 and 500 members according to the Student Radio Association website). Since 2000 some stations based at Universities have applied for community licence so that they can provide specific services to students and other people in their transmission area, for example Siren Radio at the University of Lincoln and Utopia FM in Sunderland. Scifo outlines the various functions of student radio which range from representing student interests, experimenting with alternative formats and music to offering 'an important space for minority voices and promote wider campus and community participation and political activism'. (Scifo 2007:233)

The Hospital Broadcasting Association represents 228 stations and broadcasts total of 18,648 hours every week. Some stations have been established for many years (Radio Sunderland for Hospitals started in 1953) and programming generally aims to provide information and entertainment for hospital patients with a core of music requests that are gathered by volunteers from patients. There are usually opportunities for volunteers to work their way up into management positions in stations and many professional station managers have started off in hospital radio stations.

Restricted Service licences (RSL) have been available since 1998 (and before that as 'Special Event Licences') for people wanting to run short term radio stations. They have been very important as short term trials for, and providing training opportunities for, the new community radio sector. There are now three categories:

Short-term RSLs (SRSLs) offer a maximum of two licences per year which can last up to 28 consecutive days on low power on AM or FM and are widely taken up for community and religious broadcasts (about half of these are for the Muslim religious festival of Ramadam [Ofcom 2008]) SRSL licences are also available for sports event broadcasts, festival broadcasts, and student and educational broadcasts (for instance for welcoming freshers students).

Long-term RSLs - a licence category provided within a clearly-defined single site occupied by an establishment such as a university, hospital, military barracks, marina or shopping centre up to five years at low power. They usually broadcast on AM only.

The third type of licence is for Audio Distribution Systems which are low-power, site-based, broadcast services using spectrum outside the traditional broadcast bands.

Independent Production companies

There are growing numbers of independent radio producers and companies making programmes for the BBC, commercial radio and corporate clients. Many of these producers are former BBC employees made redundant in the 1990s under John Birt's director generalship or who decided that they would have more creative independence working outside the BBC. An increasing number are a new generation of media producers who work across different media platforms including internet and radio. The BBC is now required to have at least 10 per cent of programmes on its analogue and digital channels made by independents and there are 119 companies on the 2008 register of BBC Radio 4 independent radio producers. Independents range from companies who operate with just one or two people to larger groups who have developed multi million pound businesses making media content across TV, radio and multimedia. Loftus Productions for instance is a small award winning company that makes creative and experimental features, documentaries and dramas mainly for BBC radios 3 and 4. Somethin' Else is the largest independent producer in the UK and makes programmes for Radio 1, 2 , 4 and 5Live, designs websites and produces podcasts, produces to UK top 40 for commercial radio and manages media campaigns linking up broadcasters and stations from all over the UK.

The Radio Independents Group represents most of these companies and has been lobbying consistently for a larger proportion of programmes to be made by independents. It also negotiates with unions such as Equity and broadcasters about agreements on behalf of its members. The award of licences for new national digital radio channels to Channel 4 Radio in 2007 was welcomed as opening a new field for independent producers expansion into the commercial speech sector, however plans for the service were abandoned during the 'credit-crunch' financial crisis of 2008.

Web and podcasts

A range of amateur and professional broadcasters run their own web radio stations and podcasts and, in addition to computers, there are now a number of devices designed to receive internet radio stations from around the world.

Rajar research has shown that about eight million people in Britain listen to internet radio stations at least once a week (Wray, 2008).

Internet-only radio stations can be established by an individual using just a computer and an internet link. Many 'webcasters' set up their stations for free and are not required to pay licence fees, or choose to exploit ambiguities in

copyright rules (see Priestman 2002 for a discussion of this). Most web stations are however dependent upon commercial copyright music. Most established analogue stations now 'stream' their programming at the same time as their broadcast transmissions and this has had far reaching implications for their ability to reach wider (although not necessarily larger) audiences. Storing audio on the web has enabled listeners to 'timeshift' in their listening habits to suit their lifestyles (Priestman, 2002, Atton, 2004). For those groups without broadcast licences, the ability to run internet based web radio stations and to produce podcasts has enabled programme makers and audiences to relate in new ways to radio. The communities producing content through networking amongst their diasporic communities and linking their cultural and social interests in local and global spheres. 'Shalom Salaam' for instance is a web station based in Bristol, UK, which has constructed a space for broadcast dialogue between Jews and Muslims. Audiences now listen in increasing numbers to audio broadcasts through their televisions, MP3 players and DAB Radio. Increasingly knowledge of, and access to, new media such as the internet is crucial for social functioning, particularly amongst young people. Many established stations use the web to compliment their broadcasting activities: for example by simulcasting to attract audiences outside their direct transmission area and by providing flexible listening opportunities (for instance 'listen again' and podcasts) so audiences can listen to programmes when they want.

Conventional broadcasters can increase their audiences to include listeners from the wider audience listening via the web. An example is Resonance FM an experimental arts community radio station in London which attracts listeners from all over the world. Connemara Community Radio repeats certain programmes for people who originated from the district and who now can listen via the Internet from places like Britain, Australia and the USA. There is also the potential for enhancing participation through interactive websites and discussion lists that enable on-line participation and information for listeners and, in the case of community radio, volunteers. One of the more interesting uses of the web is for stations to network, share programmes and link up for campaigns. An example of this is the 'Radio Voices Without Frontiers' campaign organised through a world network of community stations through the World Association of Community Radio (AMARC). Annually scores of community stations world wide link up and web cast on the theme of anti racism and the elimination of racial inequalities.

Audio Platforms and Futures

The radio industry worldwide has learnt to respond to competition through taking on alternative forms of digital distribution and by continuing to keep abreast of the media uses of its audiences (Ferguson, 2006). All three sectors in the UK are now available on different platforms including Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) and internet radio.

The story of DAB in the UK is still unfolding (see above). Compared to other European countries the coverage of digital radio in the UK has been high, (Lax et al, 2008) however there is division in the UK radio community about its suitability and longevity, the willingness of broadcasters to set up stations using this technology and the likelihood of mass audiences adopting this new format, buying new DAB sets and forsaking the advantages of FM. According to the Digital Radio Development Bureau there is still growth in this sector - there are 7.7m sets in circulation and sales up by a fifth, year on year. (Gibson 2008).

According to Lax et al:

> *the availability of spare FM spectrum; the relationship*
> *between commercial and public service radio; the balance*
> *between local and national services. These differences*
> *have all shaped the development of the DAB policy (and*
> *thus the current level of its development) in each country.*
> (Lax et al 2008: 58)

As the Ofcom report about 'the iPod generation' has identified, radio managers need to be aware that young people want radio to do more and to have more control over what, how and when they listen. As a recently established radio blogger Mark Ramsey stated:

> *Listeners...ask the key question we (broadcasters) too*
> *often forget: "What's in it for me? Why should I spend my*
> *time HERE rather than on Facebook or MySpace?"*
> (http://www.hear2.com/)

Through Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (DMB) radio can be enhanced as listeners can receive music and entertainment in different ways, listen through mobile devices like MP3 player or mobile phone and download music and radio programmes in the form of podcasts (The Knowledge Agency, 2004). For radio managers knowledge of how to apply this concept of

'personalization' to radio, where people have control over their own personal media space will become increasingly important. (Doyle, 2002a)

The idea that audiences generate content as well as receive it is also an important factor for twenty-first century radio managers. User Generated Content (UGC) has been identified as one of the key trends for radio:

> *UGC will have an increasingly important role to play in what UK radio audiences will come to expect from services across all platforms and devices, wherever and whenever they want.*
> (DTI, 2005: 30)

The UK Radio industry has constantly responded to economic, societal, political and technological forces. In the last decade the BBC, commercial and the emerging community sector have all embraced digital technologies and most stations are using the internet to enable the audience to participate in various ways in their station and services. Although the take up of DAB amongst broadcasters in the UK is one of the highest in Europe and audiences seem to be receptive to new ways of listening, the jury is still out on whether DAB will be accepted as a viable investment long term by broadcasters or whether other emerging digital technologies will take its place. Whilst radio is surviving as a medium, increasingly terms like 'smart radio', 'enhanced radio', even 'visual radio' are becoming common parlance amongst radio managers and broadcasters.

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Working in radio management

Summary

In this section we look at the scope of employment in UK radio. What has to be managed and who does the managing? Taking typical jobs in BBC, commercial and community radio we outline work areas that need to be managed: Programming, news and sport, sales, marketing, commercial production, sales traffic, engineering, compliance, liaison with outside bodies, house maintenance, accounts and finance, administration and human resources. We look at job areas specific to the new Community Radio sector - volunteer management and community development and training.

Introduction

Over 22,000 people work in the UK broadcast radio, a workforce bigger than that of terrestrial TV (Skillset 2007). Radio management is no longer the preserve of a few senior managers in the BBC and the larger commercial radio groups. The boom in small-scale radio stations and community and independent radio production has changed the way new entrants see jobs in radio. It is no longer the case that someone is solely a radio presenter, reporter or producer: new entrants to radio are becoming aware of a wider range of skills that are needed to be a multi-skilled employee and aspirant radio manager. Nowadays people have a chance to participate in running small-scale stations at an early stage in their career or even, in the case of hospital and community radio, as an adjunct to other work. University, college and school students may get a taste of what it's like work on a student radio station and take some management responsibilities alongside their studies or on a paid sabbatical post. Most student and community broadcasters and many commercial and BBC managers have learnt how to manage radio stations 'on the job' and through their experience in production, sales and on the few in-house courses provided by stations. However courses in media, radio and business studies are beginning to reflect a wider range of job roles in radio including the multi-skilled role of the radio manager. Ofcom, the radio regulator, requires all radio stations to state their commitment to training: this

indicates the wider responsibility this part of the radio industry now has towards identifying skills gaps and promoting best practice. Media graduates are increasingly using radio as entry point to the media industries. They no longer see radio as a job focussing only in presentation or journalism but are becoming aware of wider opportunities in production and management.

Employment patterns and practices

Radio industry employment patterns and practices have changed rapidly over the past twenty years and the introduction of new technologies for production and control are now embedded in radio management. Managers now expect employees to be multi-skilled and flexible (Marjoribanks 2003: 69). Multi-tasking has been identified as a core skill by the industry training body, Skillset, and in practice most people prefer to be involved across a wider front, not just one specialist role (Skillset 2001).

(Author's note: Skillset use the term 'multi-tasking' here. It may however be more consistent and precise to say 'multi-skilling' as this involves job enrichment whilst traditionally 'multi-tasking' involves increased task loading and the fragmentation of work - i.e. a 'deskilling' (cf Braverman 1974. Arguably modern proponents for deskilling and multi-tasking owe much to the early work of F.W. Taylor (1911))

Simon Cottle argues in innovative production projects, during the 'processes of multi-skilling' the boundaries between different production roles become blurred and require the team to understand each other's roles and the nature of the production in more depth. (2003:135) In 2005 Skillset identified that there is a current or emerging shortage of management skills in the areas of communication and team working skills, project management, commercial awareness (independent radio), legal knowledge, knowledge of IT networking systems (among engineers) and financial skills (Skillset 2005b).

Of the 22,400 people working in the UK radio industry in 2007, the Skillset employment census (2007) estimated that 10,800, 48 per cent of the total, were employed by the BBC. 9,600 (43 per cent) were working in commercial radio and a further 2,000 in community and voluntary radio. The Skillset figure for the community sector does not include the far greater number of volunteers working on these projects, which they estimate could make it the biggest sector in radio.

About a quarter of the workforce is freelance or employed on contracts of less than a year but this varies considerably between the sectors. The BBC recorded a freelance workforce of some 19 per cent, while commercial radio's freelance workforce stood at about 38 per cent (Skillset 2007). The largest

proportions of freelance staff are among those involved in presentation and production and this may explain the higher proportion of commercial radio's workers being employed in this fashion.

Community Radio

As we saw in the previous chapter the UK Community Radio sector has also developed rapidly over the past decade. Anthony Everitt observed: 'The Access Radio Projects have matured with surprising speed. One dimension of this is the personal development of station workers, many of whom a year ago were inexperienced in both in radio and in management, and are now battle hardened.' (2003b: 41)

(Community stations were named Access stations by Ofcom before being officially recognised as a legal community radio sector)

There is no research yet to say who is being employed in this sector but from observation of some of the first wave of stations we see a mixture of individuals from outside the industry with long experience of particular projects, submitting licence applications and subsequently becoming paid managers as well as some transfer of experienced senior producers and managers from BBC and commercial local radio taking the helm at community stations. Hundreds of short-term 'restricted service' stations (RSLs) are licensed every year providing a valuable training ground for would be commercial and community radio managers. And of course community radio stations have always acted as a training ground and springboard for work in BBC and commercial radio (Lewis 1994).

In community radio volunteers may well come to the station with a diverse range of skills that can be utilised for the station's benefit and their own. We argue that community stations are unique in this ability to attract volunteers and create alliances with people who have a very wide range of skills and professional experience.

Independent Production

The Independent Production sector is growing although, with few opportunities for commissions outside the BBC networks, progress is slow. Independent producers range from multi-national commercial giants to one-person companies. Essentially independent producers manage the whole production process delivering agreed programming for an agreed price. The Radio Independents Group is a non-profit making trade body that represents

the interests and needs of the UK's independent radio production industry. The RIG (2007) claims to represent two-thirds of the sector, and in 2007 had 90 companies in membership. BBC Radio 4 operates a list of registered independent production suppliers (BBC 2008a) that, at the time of writing, lists 121 companies, 70 of which (58 per cent) give London addresses.

Increasingly, independent producers are able to run their own internet radio services and podcasts independent of the established broadcasting hierarchy and the commercial sector is starting to recognise the benefits of independent production. Until financial pressures forced the cancellation of their radio plans, Channel 4 proposed to invest substantially in digital radio programming and during 2007 Guardian Media Group Radio announced it was making the biggest single investment in independent commercial radio programming by creating a £1m programming fund for GMG's range of Smooth, Real, Century and Rock Radio networks.

Simon Cole, chief executive of independent producers UBC Media, and part of the Channel 4 radio consortium, welcomed GMG taking a lead in making a commitment to the independent production sector on behalf of commercial radio: 'Independent productions were responsible for almost a quarter of the 110 Sony nominations and 6 out of the BBC's 20 Gold Awards this year so GMG can be very confident that this move will lead to some quality programming.' (Media Guardian 2007).

While regarded by the independent sector as inadequate, the BBC's independent quota does at least guarantee a minimum number of opportunities for independent companies to get their work onto the national networks.

The minimum proportion of BBC network output being independent productions (currently 10 per cent) is determined by the BBC Trust in accordance with Clause 58 of the agreement between the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport and the BBC of July 2006. There is no requirement for BBC Local Radio or the World Service to broadcast Independent Productions although they may do so if they wish. In calculating the independent contribution to their schedules the BBC do not include programming such as news programmes, repeats and continuity announcements.

With the addition of the digital networks, the BBC expected the hours produced to meet the quota to increase from approximately 2,600 to 7,300 hours per year from April 2008 (BBC 2007).

The BBC has set up a system of commissioners who can select from in-house productions and independent productions with an element of competition between the two sectors, commissioning decisions supposedly being based solely on the creative merit of the proposal and the value for

money offered to the licence fee payer. Details of how to pitch ideas for independent productions, a guide to who's who in commissioning, full details of the BBC's terms of trade for independent commissions and details of BBC guidelines and policies are available at www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning.

Typical management roles

Job titles vary from station to station, even within the same group. Often the subtle changes in title reflect the structure of the organisation and the relative seniority of the post holder within a company framework.

A Managing Editor has overall responsibility for a BBC local radio station while the equivalent post in a commercial station is often a Managing Director. Many community radio stations are under the day-to-day control of a Station Manager, a title increasingly used in smaller commercial radio stations where directors sit at a higher level in a group structure.

In smaller operations an individual may cover a number of functions which would correspond to separate posts in a larger organisation. The Managing Director or Station Manager may well also present some programmes or sell advertising to their own list of key clients and may double as the head of programmes or sales. Nevertheless, certain identifiable job functions always exist in some form and, while many roles will cross these boundaries, they are best described under the headings of separate departments.

Programmes

Conventionally under the control of the Programme Controller, the department includes all programme production and presentation staff and freelance presenters. The head of department is also variously referred to as Programme Director (particularly if they are also a director of the company), Head of Programmes, or Station Manager. In BBC Local Radio this is part of the role of the Managing Editor, supported by one or two Assistant Editors.

Only on very large stations will a producer be responsible for the production of an individual show or strand of programmes. In some cases the breakfast programme may be produced by a team including perhaps a producer, a presenter or two and a production assistant but elsewhere on the schedule a self-operating presenter will be expected to prepare, produce and present the programme entirely on their own.

Replacing the traditional tier of programme producers a number of roles have developed which control elements of programming across the schedule.

For example a Head of Music may be responsible not only for the station's overall music policy and playlists but also, using specialist music scheduling software, for selecting the individual tracks to be played in each show. Others may prepare, for example, community or what's on information, promotions of competitions for use in all shows. In all but the largest stations these roles will be added to the duties of a regular programme presenter and increasingly programmes staff are responsible not only for the on-air broadcasts but adapting material for other streams, websites, podcasts, video and text services.

The department is usually regarded as including news and sport preparation and presentation, typically placed under the control of the News Editor or Head of News. Only rarely is the News Editor separately responsible to the senior level in the company, usually this would only be the case in an all-news operation. Otherwise it is regarded as important for the Programme Controller to exercise control over all the elements which contribute to the listener's experience, including news and information coverage, music scheduling and so on. The programmes department will also retain control of station imaging production, which is frequently contracted out to a specialist production studio or a group production unit, and those elements of station marketing which are not sales promotions (see below).

Sales

In commercial radio the Sales Manager (or Sales Director) is responsible for revenue from commercials, sponsorship and co-promotions. The sales area usually includes separate departments for commercial production, sales promotions and sales traffic. In most commercial radio stations the majority of employees work in a sales-related role.

Advertising sales are undertaken by a team of sales executives (a term preferred as sounding more impressive than 'sales representative'). Larger commercial stations may have over a dozen sales executives, each with a list of potential clients and a monthly sales target to achieve. Specific individuals may be tasked with selling sponsorship and promotion opportunities, commonly known as 'S&P executives'. The sales team is often supported by a dedicated administrator or secretary.

The proportion of revenue expected from national advertisers varies with the size of station and any parent group. In the case of a small, very local, station only a few per cent of the total revenue may come from national brands while on a big city or national service they may account for the majority of income. National advertising is usually contracted to one of a handful of national sales houses, for example First Radio Sales or a group's own national

sales team, who will be answerable to the Sales Manager on a small station or at a more senior level in a larger group operation.

In a community radio station commercial revenue provides a smaller proportion of the total income, the community radio legislation limits it to a maximum of 50%. Some stations may elect to carry no commercial material at all, others may choose to do so only in a limited form. As a result commercial sales may be the responsibility of a single individual who may have a general fundraising brief, also attracting financial support through other sources.

Smaller stations usually find it is not cost-effective to maintain their own in-house commercial production department, there are simply not enough new productions required to cover the costs of a dedicated studio, copywriter, producer and engineer. In such stations, commercials are scripted and produced to the client's brief by specialist external companies or by a central facility within a larger group of stations. Similarly scheduling the transmission of advertisements is a crucially important task and on a large commercial station can be deceptively complex. One or two staff members, generally known as the traffic department, will be responsible to the Sales Manager for this work, although again it may be undertaken by a central facility in a larger group.

Some formats lend themselves to a high level of off-air promotional activity funded by sales clients, in such cases stations may employ a promotions team, possibly under a Promotions Manager, to deliver the events effectively.

Engineering

Once, when studio equipment had many more moving parts and transmitters had glowing valves, there was a constant need for engineering supervision and maintenance. Radio station engineers today spend more time dealing with IT and software issues and less with a soldering iron in their hands and, as a result, there is no longer a need for each station to have its own resident engineer. Within larger radio groups one engineer may be responsible for maintenance across a number of stations, installing new facilities and being on-call for emergencies. Many smaller stations contract the work to an outside company or a local freelance. The engineering department is usually responsible for the provision of Internet services and web sites, although this would be delegated to a separate team of IT specialists within a group.

Transmitter engineering is a specialised area often contracted to one of a handful of broadcast transmission suppliers such as Arqiva, although a simple low-power transmitter for a single station may be maintained by the local engineer.

As in most cases the station will operate without continuous technical support on-site, the station manager needs to possess at least sufficient technical understanding to oversee these outside suppliers effectively.

Administration, Finance, Human Resources

It is easy to forget that most radio operations, even those within a larger group, must conduct themselves like any other individual commercial company. In a small station a Head of Administration may be responsible for all routine personnel matters, accounts, book-keeping, invoicing, general secretarial support, office cleaning and building maintenance and security. A larger station might well have additional staff specialising, for example, in accountancy or human resources.

Community radio services have a particular additional need for individuals to recruit, co-ordinate and support volunteers, to provide training and to liaise with other organisations in the community.

Unlike many of the more specialised broadcasting skills unique to a radio station, in these administrative fields many well-trained and experienced people are often readily available locally for part-time and casual work.

The Station Manager

The various department heads will report to a Station Manager, Managing Editor or Managing Director who will in turn be answerable to the Board of Directors, group management or a management committee for the day-to-day running of the organisation. Often the Station Manager will double as one of the department heads, typically being Sales Manager or Programme Controller as well as Managing Director. Not only does such an arrangement save one high-level salary, a substantial step towards profitability for some small commercial stations, but it makes the most use of the skills and talents available in an industry where relevant management skills are regarded as being in short supply.

The overall station management often takes responsibility for other matters which straddle both programming and sales, such as station marketing and public relations, and will usually be responsible for maintaining good relations with outside bodies, for example local authorities, major sponsors, industry bodies and regulators. Most importantly the Station Manager is responsible for the efficiency and morale of the whole team, for the development of an overall vision, brand values and corporate culture. Within a larger groups of commercial or BBC stations the manager is usually expected to allocate tasks and spending according to the parent company's priorities and

an agreed local budget. No two radio stations need be structured in exactly the same way, even carrying the same brands within the same group. The effective manager will modify the structure to make the most of the skills and talents available locally.

In Community Radio where many tasks are taken on by volunteers the Station Manager is often the only paid role in the station. Here one community station talks about how vital the funding (in this case from Ofcom's Access fund) is:

> *The appointment of a person to undertake the role of Station Manager has been the catalyst for the development of Radio Teesdale into an important community social enterprise. This would not have been possible without a full time paid manager. Should we not be able to continue the funding of this position the sustainability and continued growth of the station will be in serious jeopardy.*
> (Ofcom 2008)

Consultants

The arrival of consultants, particularly programming consultants, is usually greeted with dismay by staff who may see them as having been brought in as "hatchet-men" by a management too scared to do the dirty work themselves. Few seasoned radio broadcasters who have worked for any of the major groups since the late 1970s do not have a collection of stories about Australian, Canadian or American consultants brought in to change their stations. It is hardly surprising that much of this expertise came from developed radio markets like the US where there are now some 12,000 radio stations and where commercial radio was established some 50 years earlier than legal UK commercial stations in the early 1920's.

A continuing loss of audience or funding demands rapid and often dramatic changes in station operation, while a change of ownership usually brings with it a new set of objectives and priorities. A good consultant, well briefed, can achieve a great deal by bringing additional expertise, new ideas and a cool objectivity to a station's situation. Often only an outside person has the objectivity and lack of personal involvement in the history of the station needed to analyse the current position and impartially recommend new policies.

The UK radio sector has now grown to the point where it can support a fair number of home-grown consultants. Some are small companies, often effectively one individual, specialising in a particular field, from programming and music selection, through transmission planning, studio design, research analysis, presentation skills and voice coaching to sales and management training. Other consultancy firms offer a range of services under one roof including everything needed for a successful licence application or station launch.

An article in the Harvard Business Review (Turner 1982) set out eight fundamental objectives of effective management consulting:

1. Responding to a client's request for information.
2. Providing solutions to specific problems.
3. Making a diagnosis, which may involve a redefinition of the problem.
4. Making recommendations based on the diagnosis.
5. Assisting with implementation of recommended changes.
6. Building a consensus and commitment.
7. Facilitating client learning.
8. Enhancing organisational effectiveness.

Shane Media Services has been in the US radio consulting business for more than thirty years, founder Ed Shane (1991: 148) feels that while the consultant should not be feared by station staff neither should they be worshipped by station management:

> *The greater the understanding of the abilities of the station, the greater the results from the consulting relationship. The station must define the problem before outside expertise can be called in. The consultant will likely offer a new perspective on the problem. He may even re-define it. However it cannot be re-defined by an outsider until those inside are convinced that the problem exists and needs solution. The ideal station-consultant relationship stems from a clear concept of what needs to be done and why the client cannot do it without help.*

Ed Shane advises that, before spending money on a consultant, it is crucial that all members of the management team accept there is a problem, that the station cannot solve it internally and that an outside objective ear is

needed. He stresses that the consultant should not be used as a referee to resolve internal conflict but rather that any philosophical differences should be settled before the outside expert is brought in. Everyone should be a partner in the decision making process, clear goals must be established and the management team should all feel ownership of the process. The consultant should seem like as additional member of staff brought in to handle a project or to provide a "second set of ears".

Future employment in radio

Radio is often seen as a stepping stone to work in the apparently more glamorous, prestigious and better paid area of television. However it seems clear that people who choose to work in radio, in whatever capacity or at whichever level, can find a very wide range of jobs and roles in the industry. Our experience with students on media production courses is, even if they come to us to learn about video production, once they experience the flexibility of radio - and the ease at which it's possible to make programmes and get them on air quickly - they are 'turned on' to how things are done in radio. Although there a many specialist roles that require specific training and expertise radio is still a work area where people who are multi skilled will survive longest in the market place. The new community sector is evidence that radio is also an area into which people can transfer skills and experience learnt in other jobs. A community worker for instance can apply their experience of involving 'hard to reach' groups of people to using community radio as a tool to help prevent social exclusion. In Section 2.8 we will look in more detail at the whole business of employing, developing and managing employees and volunteers. We will explore how to gain employment in different sectors of radio and discuss some of the problems people have had in the past with being stereotyped in particular roles.

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Section 1.4

Core concepts of radio station management

Summary

In this chapter we explore core concepts of radio station management from the perspective of the radio manager, informed by relevant research and practice gleaned from business and management studies.

We show how awareness of 'brand values' and 'mission statements' are important to any station. We look at different management styles, the importance of the winning team, leadership and vision. We discuss the need for creative people in station management and the challenges of managing creative people and processes and the challenge of multi-tasking within small-scale station management.

We ask whether different sectors and platforms in radio require different management practices and using the example of managing radio presenters whether different parts of the workforce require different management styles.

Core values

Just as in any friendship, the relationship between the listener and the radio station depends on a mutual understanding, an agreement on shared interests and social attitudes. Everyone involved in producing material for, or marketing, the service should understand these underlying values. How a station is branded, marketed and how its core values are established are discussed further in Section 2.8.

Written up into a couple of easy to remember paragraphs, these values should inform a wide range of management decisions, from the design of the logo, to the design of the studios, to the choice of music and the selection of presenters. The core values can even influence technical parameters, such as the settings of the transmitter processing and the choice of company vehicles. For example would it be appropriate to your core values for your sales team to drive smaller environmentally friendly but trendy cars?

Managing creative talent

Some of the most unpleasant and ineffective meetings we have ever attended have been radio station "presenters meetings". In the nature of their work presenters tend not to be in the office at the same time and some might never meet at all. Particularly in the early days of UK commercial and community radio the obvious answer appeared to be the calling of a regular, perhaps weekly, meeting of all presenters. Often this had to coincide with some pre-recorded programming so they all might attend.

  The experience varied but in many cases such meetings were, to say the least, dispiriting and demoralising affairs. Often just as de-motivating for the management as for the staff and freelancers attending. By contrast the sales department would have a weekly meeting where, by design, the staff left the gathering highly charged and with a new found sense of purpose. Why the difference? In order to understand this requires an understanding of individual motivation.

The individual and motivation

A programme manager must remember what qualities they look for in a good broadcaster. Radio presenters, particularly on smaller stations, are expected to produce their best work while sitting alone in a soundproof box. For hours on end they must talk 'to just one person' while knowing that their efforts are being subjected to widespread public and professional scrutiny. In short, they must be very personally motivated to work well in those circumstances. (see also Section 2.5).

  Many top radio performers are not naturally gregarious. Following his death in 1995 the brilliantly inventive former pirate radio, BBC Radio 1 and Capital Radio DJ Kenny Everett was described by The Independent in his obituary as 'shy and delicate of nature' (Hayward 1995). In completing the late John Peel's autobiography, his wife Sheila comments that, at Radio 1 or Radio 4 he was in his element: "But put John somewhere new and you could watch him retreat into his shell." (Peel and Ravenscroft 2005:181). She describes arriving at parties where John would search immediately for some task that would excuse him from the awkward formalities of socialising.

  The personal motivation of each radio presenter varies from individual to individual, their aspirations vary enormously and the terms and conditions under which they are employed may vary considerably across the schedule. We

should not be surprised that, once herded into a single room, their only matters of common interest were the lowest common denominators, such meetings tending to focus on such matters as the state of the studio headphones, the squeaky studio chair and the strange smell from the air-conditioning. Seldom would there be any desire to debate creative and subjective matters of much greater importance to their listeners.

So how might we influence, manage and control an individual's motivation given that some, for instance sales staff, seem to be encouraged by financial rewards yet others - a presenter like John Peel - appear to have other motivators?

According to Abraham Maslow (1943) we all need good, safe working conditions and a meaningful job to feel happy and fulfilled. In order to understand this further Maslow developed his 'hierarchy of needs' - a sort of sequential ladder, or pyramid, of human needs ranging from lower to higher order - shown below.

Higher order needs

Self-actualisation (the need to fulfil one's full potential)
Self-esteem needs (need for recognition and a belief in one's self)
Social acceptance needs (need to be able to form satisfactory affective and support relations)

Lower order needs

Safety and security needs (need to feel safe and free of fear)
Basic physiological needs (need for food, shelter, clothing, warmth)

(Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of needs)

For Maslow the lower order needs are primary and must be given first priority, starting with the physiological needs, but once these are at least partially satisfied higher order needs may then become important. In order to manage staff effectively a radio station manager needs to consider what needs are important to the individual and how the manager may affect them. Whilst some individuals may be motivated by financial incentives and rewards this may not be true of all. It should however be noted that whilst money may not

motivate in this example, a reduction in salary can be demotivational and counter productive (Herzberg 1966).

From the hierarchy of needs it seems that some people may well be more motivated by higher order needs such as 'self-esteem' and 'self-actualisation'. Frederick Herzberg (1966) argued that individuals most concerned with lower order needs may focus most on what he termed 'hygiene factors at work, salary, working conditions, quality of supervision and so on. Other people however may focus on what he termed 'motivation factors', a challenging job, recognition and a scope for achievement, growth and development. For the latter a form of 'job enrichment', where the individual is encouraged to develop skills and given increasing autonomy and responsibility is appropriate.

It should be stressed that merely increasing the number of tasks that an individual is given may not be motivational. Indeed if someone is given too many dull, repetitive and stressful tasks then the person may feel overloaded and become demotivated. Sadly one hears all too often of a job being 'multi-skilled' when all that has occurred is that people are expected to perform a large number of repetitive and very similar tasks. Job enrichment requires that tasks are achievable, reasonable and encourage the development of skills and abilities. Job enrichment should focus on 'multi-skilling' rather than 'multi-tasking'.

Recognising the importance of individual needs, today most experienced programme managers avoid holding group meetings of presenters except where there is a matter to announce of company-wide importance (when there is probably a general staff meeting anyway). They prefer to schedule regular one-to-one meetings with individual presenters, or perhaps with the team responsible for a co-presented show. A programme manager may wish to formally sit down with the presenter of a daily programme every week and perhaps once each month with the presenter of a weekly programme. Such 'coaching sessions' are frequently based around the playback of a recent programme. The programmer can play a sequence, or perhaps a single link, and then spark a discussion on how well it was presented and maybe how it could be improved in future.

To save time it is common to use a recording with any music tracks edited out. To this end some studios have a dedicated recording system set up to run only when the 'microphone-on' light is illuminated. This conveniently provided a ready-made recording without any music, advertisements or other external or pre-recorded items.

However they are undertaken these coaching sessions should be helpful and supportive, rather than negative and controlling. There is no point in encouraging the presenter to repeatedly brood over an error or misjudgement, far better to highlight and fix in their mind those elements which worked well,

or at least those which make their boss happy. The meeting thus should focus on the higher order needs for acceptance and esteem and so on. For this reason it is often helpful to chose a programme segment at random rather than using this meeting as a post-mortem on the worst of the week's output. Indeed it can be constructive to invite the presenter themselves to choose the segment for review. They may pick a section of which they are particularly proud or they may use the opportunity to benefit from your input on a particularly challenging part of a previous programme.

US programming consultant David Martin says the secret of radio coaching is to bring out the best in others: "The most effective approach is to catch them doing something right - we catch performers doing something right and we recognise and reward that behaviour, that performance" (Martin 2007).

Similarly the highly respected US programme consultant Dan O'Day advises programme managers to listen to each programme for at least long enough to hear the talent doing something exceptionally well. Then when they happen to meet that presenter in the corridor, or in the elevator, they can casually comment on how much they liked that moment in the last show. He points out that such casual 'positive reinforcement' can be more effective than any number of formal meetings.

In larger stations a programme producer may be responsible for developing and coaching the presenters. The relationship between a presenter and their producer is complex and can be critical to the success of the programme. John Peel worked for many years at BBC Radio One with producer John Walters and together they were a formidable team. 'They had a closeness that was quite touching to observe,' recounts John Peel's wife Sheila (Peel and Ravenscroft 2005: 251). 'John frequently characterised their relationship as being like a man and his dog, but with each plainly believing the other to be the dog.'

Creative control

Radio attracts creative and sometimes innovative individuals and there are numerous examples of presenters and producers who have caused headaches for their managers because they pushed at the boundaries of what is acceptable to some parts of the audience. These same presenters have produced hugely successful radio when they managed in the right context. When the writer and presenter Chris Morris started out in BBC local radio he initiated various on air pranks - including letting off helium into the news booth so that presenters sounded like Donald Duck and broadcasting a commentary over the local news

saying whether he thought items were news worthy or interesting. He was sacked from his local radio work but went on to work in BBC comedy producing some very highly regarded satirical radio comedy such as 'On the Hour' on BBC Radio 4 (which satirised local radio news) and Blue Jam on Radio 1 Extra.

The tension for people working in the creative side of radio is between having the time and conditions to be innovative and meeting the needs of their employers who expect them to deliver their radio work. Block et al suggest that the audiovisual industry may be best understood though using of 'chaos theory' and the concept of 'bounded instability (Block et al 2001:228):

> *A highly stable, routinised environment does not lead to creativity, and a highly unstable yet energised creative environment will probably not lead to the completed product. The principle (of bounded instability) is that of hidden order in a seemingly random and uncontrolled environment. These hidden patterns provide the controlling mechanisms to differentiate a system from a purely random association.*
> (Block et al 2001:228)

Factors influencing the motivation of programme staff

Motivating	Demotivating
Positive feedback from management	Lack of feedback.
Positive feedback from co-workers	Feeling that nobody in the stationis listening to the programme
Constructive negative feedback from management	Negative feedback from management
Constructive negative feedback from co- workers	Negative feedback from co-workers
Positive feedback from listeners	Little or no listener response
Good audience figures	Poor audience figures
Improving facilities and environment	Poor or faulty facilities
Perceived "promotion" on the programme schedule	Perceived lack of promotion or publicity for the programme
Rewards linked to success	Perceived "demotion" on the schedule
	Success being penalised

The presenter's perceived ladder of success

One of the nice things I have discovered about radio is how quickly you can change things. Though of course you bruise a few egos in the process.
Nicholas Kenyon (Controller BBC Radio 3 1992-1998)
talking about instituting changes in Radio 3 presentation
(Carpenter 1996: 342)

On most radio services there has conventionally been an imagined hierarchy within the programme schedule. This does not necessarily reflect the value put on any individual programme or day-part by the listeners or the station management, being more akin to the order of artistes on a variety bill. Typically on the top rung sits the main host of the weekday breakfast show, below him or her the mid-morning show presenter, then perhaps the "drive-time" sequence host and so on down to the freelance who records voice tracks to play out at 3 am in the morning.

Successfully managing the presentation team requires that you understand the generally perceived pecking-order on your station. In reality it is quite possible that the current breakfast show presenter could achieve more for the station, and themselves, following a move to mid-afternoon. They might be worth just as much to you at that time as a result of other ways they will contribute to the service and you might even be happy to maintain their current income, but they may well see the suggestion as damaging to their professional standing.

While in general the main breakfast show host is the most highly paid individual on the station, frequently earning more than the most highly paid member of management, there is no real reason why this should always remain the case. A new competitive situation and different format could present a scenario where the most valuable creative contribution could be made at another time of day. For example, while the presenters are generally unpaid, some UK community radio services have opted not to offer a live breakfast show at all. Long-established community broadcaster BCB in Bradford argues that the talents and skills of its accomplished team are better deployed at other times of day.

Fear of stepping forward

In the above table of factors influencing the motivation of programme staff, at the foot of the "demoralising" column, we list "success being penalised". This is a bizarre but surprisingly common failing of busy overstretched management. How often have you yourself found yourself in a situation where you hesitate to volunteer for an additional and inconvenient task, perhaps to help out in an emergency, because you fear that, should you be deemed to have done it well, you will be asked to permanently add it to your normal routine in future? Equally, an individual's enthusiasm may lead them to attempt something brave and original only for any failure to be highlighted by their manager with the result that, in future they may decide to keep a low profile, offering nothing new to the station. In all departments of a creative operation such as a radio station the manager must be careful to encourage calculated risk-taking and support staff who try new ideas, even when they fail.

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Section 2.1

Knowing and researching your audience

Summary

In this chapter we outline the principles and techniques of audience research including qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques and how to understand and interpret Rajar (Radio Joint Audience Research Limited) surveys. We look at some critical perspectives on audience research methodologies and some of the problems of audience measurement for small-scale and community stations. Finally we discuss what radio managers might learn from media academics.

Introduction

On a visit to RTV Chipiona, a publicly funded radio and television station in a small coastal town in southern Spain we were interested to see the station layout - a radio studio and news office upstairs and a small TV studio and control room downstairs. We talked to the manager about his target audience. He told us that people in the town only listened to local radio in the mornings so radio was broadcast until lunchtime and then the local television took over in the afternoon and evening. This manager knew his audience and their media habits. For a small station with just a handful of employees it was provident for him to manage his station in this way.

Another example of the value of audience research comes from Andy Parfitt, controller of BBC Radio 1 since 1998, who has detailed knowledge about the importance of music in the lives of the network's audience: 'I know what a 20 year old is doing on a Saturday night; what music they get ready to go out to, what they play in the car, what they fall out of a club at 3 in the morning to...' (Born 2004: 264).

Audience research is 'designed to measure, define, construct and ultimately build, audiences' (Tacchi 2001:156). Throughout this book we refer to the needs, wants, tastes, expectations and habits of the target listener as the benchmarks for decisions on everything from the editorial policy to the

technical means of delivery. As a result audience research, of whatever form, is a crucial tool of the radio manager. The target audience is initially defined from a study of the existing market, into the un-served needs of potential listeners, then, once the service is up and running, it must periodically be checked to see if it is, in fact meeting those needs.

Is there a typical listener?

Most programming consultants recommend to their client stations that they develop a detailed profile of a mythical 'typical listener', complete with name, age, hair colour, job and family background, and train the presenters to visualise that person as they speak. US-based radio consultant Ed Shane (1991: p80) says:

> *Choosing an individual creates a focus of attention that helps a skilled on-air performer utilize radio's power as a one-to-one medium. The idea of using this type of attention focus is to create a metaphor for the entire audience. Since there are no pictures, no illustrations, no printed words, radio relies upon the private link between what is broadcast and the listener's imagination and interpretation. We ask announcers to visualise their typical listener as if that person were sitting right there in the control room. When the image is clear, we tell them, talk to that person in a natural, conversational way.*

An example of this from the 1980s saw commercial radio presenters encouraged by managers to target 'housewives' thereby contributing to the stereotyping of all female listeners as a housewives and potentially ignoring other sectors of the audience:

> *We call our average listener Doreen. She lives in Basildon. Doreen isn't stupid but she's only listening with half an ear and doesn't necessarily understand long words.*
> (Baehr and Ryan 1984: 37)

Since 2005 BBC managers have encouraged presenters to personify the typical BBC local radio listener as 'Dave and Sue':

> *Dave and Sue are both 55. He is a self-employed plumber; she is a school secretary. Both have grown-up children*

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from previous marriages. They shop at Asda, wear fleeces and T-shirts, and their cultural horizon stretches to an Abba tribute show. They are "deeply suspicious" of politicians, think the world is "a dangerous and depressing place", and are consequently always on the lookout for "something that will cheer them up and make them laugh".
(quoted in Self 2005: 33)

The technique of profiling your supposed audience can be useful commercially and in terms of communicating but the risk is that you can alienate others. Barnard quotes one presenter's discussions with his programme controller about the target audience for his mid-morning programme:

From our discussions I gathered he wanted to go for the housewives. And so we did. But people kept saying 'there's 20 per cent unemployment in Coventry - shouldn't you be catering for the male listener at that time of the day?' ...But I remained totally sexist in a pro-female way, and it worked. The increase in the JICRAR* was quite appreciable.
(Barnard 2000: 130)

*JICRAR (Joint Industry Committee for Radio Audience Research) produced commercial radio audience ratings until 1992 when Rajar was established jointly with the BBC.

At the BBC 'Sue's' profile was changed a few years later, now she is targeted as being on her own (Kelner 2008) and the expansion of community, digital and other commercial radio channels has meant that audiences in Coventry now have a choice of ten channels, including two community stations and two stations aimed at Asian and Punjabi communities.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Managers use a wide variety of research techniques to find out about their listeners but these can usually be divided into two distinct categories, qualitative research to test attitudes or quantitative research to measure habits. Qualitative research tells the manager about listeners' attitudes, their tastes and their perceptions. It can indicate which songs they want to hear, which presenters they prefer, their interests in local news etc. The numbers are not important, the manager is looking for clues which will help her or him to plan their programmes. A discussion group of ten target listeners might generate enough material to keep the programme team busy for months. Qualitative studies are research in depth rather than breadth and it is more important for them to be carried out well than with a large number of respondents. Often they are best conducted with non-listeners than with listeners!

Quantitative research, as the title implies, involves counting things: How many people listen to this radio station? Are there many in this or that part of the region? How many go to the cinema or enjoy cookery? For these answers a simple, carefully worded, questionnaire placed in front of as many of the right people as possible gets the most reliable results.

Quantitative radio research used to be very simple. If the BBC wanted to know how many people were listening to its radio programmes it stopped a few in the street and asked them what they remembered listening to the previous day. It was relatively cheap, it was straightforward to undertake the research and process the results in-house and it gave the BBC both the quantitative and qualitative results which it needed to justify its public service role.

Rajar and Listening Diaries

From the start of commercial radio in 1973 it was clear that the stations needed more precise information about times and durations of listening to convince advertisers to spend money. The Joint Industry Committee for Radio Audience Research (JICRAR) chose the "listening diary" methodology, using a booklet in which each radio station in a given area was given a column and people marked which stations they had been listening to each quarter of an hour through the day.

Inevitably, given the methodological differences between the two methods of audience measurement, the BBC and the commercial radio sector often produced conflicting results. It was clear that, in order to gain the trust of

licence payers, the government and advertisers alike, a single agreed system would be needed.

Since 1992 listening diaries have been issued and the results analysed under contracts awarded by a company jointly owned by the BBC and commercial stations, Radio Joint Audience Research Limited, commonly known as Rajar. The company is now jointly owned by the RadioCentre (the trade body representing the Commercial Radio stations in the UK) and the BBC. With each body owning 50 per cent impartiality between BBC and commercial interests is protected, policy decisions requiring the agreement of both parties and representatives of the advertising industry who also sit on the board.

A total of 130,000 respondents are used each year making Rajar the biggest audience research survey in the world outside the USA. It is also one of the most complex consumer surveys. Results are produced for about 340 separate radio services, including 60 BBC stations, but few of them cover exactly the same area as another station (Total Survey Area or TSA) so, allowing for overlaps, data have to be analysed for more than 600 different listening areas across the Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Respondents are each asked to complete a one week diary showing all the stations they listened to, for at least 5 minutes, recorded in quarter hour time blocks. The results are published every quarter for all the stations, although for the smallest stations the figures are based on a rolling sample taken across the previous 12 month period.

While Rajar controls and commissions the survey the actual work is undertaken by market research specialists. Under a two-year contract starting in 2007 Ipsos MORI undertakes the fieldwork while sample design and weighting is handled by RSMB Television Research Limited.

Every three months the latest top line results, weekly reach and hours listened per station, are made available to the public free of charge, most conveniently via the Rajar website www.rajar.co.uk, only participating stations and other subscribers have access to more detailed information on each service. Many smaller commercial stations and community radio services cannot afford to participate (costs typically start at around £7,000 per annum) and are not included in the survey.

While the present system has served radio well, it has inherent shortcomings: It does not produce listening figures for a particular programme on a particular day, only an average of the audience for that time slot over three, six or twelve months; there is no reliable way of telling how someone listened to a particular programme - on AM, FM, DAB, over the Internet or via a podcast; and the time taken for data collection and processing, audience response taking months to reach a programme manager, is in sharp contrast to

the immediacy of feedback available to internet-based media. In his detailed analysis of possible new radio audience research methodologies, Starkey (2003: 118) pointed out that many programmers: 'making even small changes to their schedule or their music policy, might prefer to see more immediate data in order to know how audiences are responding to the changes. Depending on how much they want to micro-manage their output, they may even want to consider reversing unpopular decisions before they cause too much damage to the station's market share.'

Under pressure from the then Chairman of The Wireless Group the former Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie and others to find an improved system, in 2001 Rajar instituted a number of tests of automatic electronic listening 'meters'. At the time of writing a two year project is underway to test portable people meters in collaboration with BARB, the TV research body.

As most people listen to many different radios in different places every day, the people meter must be attached to the individual respondent. Competing systems include a wristwatch-style device that records samples of what its wearer hears, and sends this data back to a central computer overnight. The central computer is supplied with recordings of all the available broadcasts to compare with the information sent back by the meter and thus analyse to which stations it was exposed.

A rival system depends upon participating stations including sub-audible coded signals in their programmes. The pager-like people meter records these codes and returns them to the central computer for processing. An advantage of this method is that, by inserting different codes, the meter can distinguish between the same programming delivered via different platforms (FM or DAB for example) and might be able to pick up delayed listening to podcasts and downloads. However it will not record any listening to non-participating services.

Many questions remain to be answered before the industry will dare to switch from its present 'gold standard' Rajar to a new system. There are questions of cost, practicality, user compliance and how to measure personal headphone listening for example. And any new methodology will inevitably result in a step-change in reported listening for at least some broadcasters.

How to read audience figures

Only if everyone were listening using a digital device with a return path, and only if they all agreed to supply the information, would we ever know exactly how many receivers were accessing our service at any one time. Even then we would only know that the device had selected our programme, we would have no idea how many people, if any, were actually listening to it.

As with Rajar, the only practical solution is to select a group of potential listeners and take their answers as representative of the whole relevant population. If we have enough of them, and are careful with the age, gender and demographic makeup of this smaller group we can call them a representative sample. The smaller the group, no matter how well balanced, the greater the margin for error and the greater the need for caution in interpreting the results.

Statisticians talk of a "confidence interval", a range of possible answers that runs from a figure lower than the result given to a figure higher by the same amount. For example according to Rajar (Rajar/Ipsos MORI 2005: 781) a result of 50 per cent from a sample of 500 respondents has a margin of error of plus or minus 7 per cent. That means a reported 50 per cent figure could in reality be as low as 43 per cent or as high as 57 per cent. This is described as a "95 per cent confidence level", meaning that the figures will fall within this range 95 times out of 100.

If that does not seem accurate enough it is instructive to look at the sample size needed for greater confidence in the data. In order to reduce the margin of error to within two percentage points the sample size would have to be increased tenfold to around 5,000 respondents. With most data now being electronically collated and tabulated the largest part of the cost of any survey goes on the fieldwork and these costs are almost directly related to the desired sample size. Nobody is going to spend some ten times more just to improve their confidence in the data by a few percentage points. These sample size considerations are just as relevant to electronic metering as they are to the traditional "diary" or questionnaire methodologies.

Even if the total sample for a survey is 800, a perfectly respectable sample size in most applications, an individual age band or other demographic cell in the published results will have been derived from a much smaller number of respondents. Where we wish to study the results for this smaller group the confidence interval is defined by this smaller number.

For example, a typical Rajar sample of 507 adults in a small local radio area (Rajar/Ipsos MORI 2006) was actually made up as follows (prior to weighting the data to match the local population profile):

Age:	Number of men	Number of women
15-24	36	40
25-34	35	29
35-44	30	53
45-54	37	37
55-64	45	61
65+	42	62

In other words, before getting too excited about the reported listening habits of, say, women aged 25-34 we should bear in mind that only 29 of them were sampled during the period in question. Let's say our station has a, perfectly acceptable, 25 per cent weekly reach with this age group, we can see that we would only expect seven or eight of these respondents to have heard our programmes at all during a typical week. Reported listening to any one show by this sample is plainly going to be greatly influenced by whether these particular eight individuals happen to be at work, asleep or otherwise not available to listen at the relevant time on the particular day or days. Add to this the fact that the majority of any station's total audience are not expected to be listening at any one moment and you can see that making decisions based on the figures for one demographic group, listening to one station, at one time of day in one survey period is a very risky business.

These issues are even more pressing where the entire service is aimed at a group who represent some minority within society. When Kelvin MacKenzie set up the 'Little Guys Radio Association' to challenge the commercial radio trade body over Rajar methodology, arguing that it represented the interests of only the major groups, it was significant that the other stations which felt motivated to join all targeted identifiable minority communities or interests. Founding members included Premier Christian Radio, Club Asia, Spectrum Radio and Sunrise Radio all of whom saw audience figures fluctuate according to the number of diaries given to their target audience group, a variable not corrected for in the Rajar sampling and weighting mechanisms.

Sunrise Radio Chairman Avtar Lit was quoted as saying: 'The Asian community is grossly under-represented in the Rajar survey and the audience figures for stations such as Sunrise Radio have been under-reported under the diary system for many years. We have been campaigning for years that the

Asian community should have more diaries in the Rajar survey' (Radio Magazine 2002).

While the Rajar methodology can be described as the "least worst system" available at the present time and gives a robust sample size for reliable assessment of overall station popularity, it is crucial that we become more sceptical of the data as we slice them more thinly.

Despite any concerns over the reliability of data, programme managers are regularly called upon to review the performance of individual programmes using audience figures. This can be undertaken with greater confidence by using comparisons with other data. Given a set of numbers in isolation, even with the most robust sample, it is not possible to say whether they represent "good" or "bad" performance.

Any research result should be interpreted in relation to at least one other piece of data, preferably several if the sample sizes are small. In analysing the results for a single programme suitable benchmarks might be:

- Previous performance of this service at the same time and day.
- Performance of competitors' services at the same time and day.
- Performance of comparable programmes, perhaps on similar group-owned stations, at the same time and day elsewhere.
- Overall size of the total radio audience at this time on this day.
- The average audience delivery of this service at all other times.

To be realistic the manager can only say that a programme is doing well or badly if it is moving in the same direction in relation to at least two or three of these benchmarks. Even then, of course, the change may be due to unavoidable external factors over which the manager and the programme staff have no control.

Many managers believe that trends over three or more surveys are more important than any quarter's individual results. They argue that it takes time for listeners to adapt to any change and that the most recent results probably reflect the audience getting used to changes made a year previously. Experienced programmers know that it can take as short a time as fifteen to twenty seconds for an existing listener to switch off if you offer them something they do not like, conversely it could take fifteen to twenty months before a non-listener becomes a regular listener because of that same programme change!

As in all aspects of a manager's dealings with employees it is important, in discussing research findings, not to dwell on the negatives. In a creative field like programming it is better to seek out the most successful aspects of the schedule, analyse these, praise the people who did well and apply the lessons

learned to the weaker points in the day. The manager must avoid spending all their time worrying about the things which apparently did not have the desired result but rather should investigate the items that worked well in as much detail as those that did not. Better to focus the minds of the team on what success sounds like than to endlessly recount their failures.

Audience research terms

When reporting the overall performance of a station the main factors used are weekly reach, average hours, total hours and share, and are defined by Rajar (2008) as follows:

Weekly Reach

Defined by Rajar (2008) as: 'The number of people aged 15+ who tune to a radio station within at least one quarter-hour period over the course of a week. Respondents are instructed to fill in a quarter-hour only if they have listened to the station for at least 5 minutes within that quarter-hour. Between 24.00-06.00, listening is recorded in half-hour periods.' The weekly reach, and population size, is usually expressed by in Rajar table as a number of thousands.

Weekly Reach per cent

'The Weekly Reach expressed as a percentage of the Population within the TSA' (Rajar 2008). Note that the total of the reach figures for all the stations in an area will greatly exceed 100 per cent as most people report listening to two or three stations each week. This measure indicates which station in a market has the most listeners - but gives no idea how long they stay with the station.

Total Weekly Hours

'The total number of hours that a station is listened to over the course of a week. This is the sum of all quarter-hours for all listeners' (Rajar 2008).

Average Hours

'The average length of time that listeners to a station spend with the station. This is calculated by dividing the Weekly Hours by the Weekly Reach' (Rajar 2008). Of great interest to programmers this is the key measure of loyalty to your station - how long does your average listener listen for in the average week. Typical results for local stations are in the range of seven to ten hours, suggesting that the average listener listens to that station for between one and one and a half hours on an average day.

Market Share

'The percentage of all radio listening hours that a station accounts for within its transmission area. This can be calculated for any target market across any area' (Rajar 2008). This is the measure, combining both the number of people listening and how long they listen for, that is most properly used by stations to show their position in the market. To be 'the most listened to' or 'number one' station in a market a station's market share should be greater than any other station's measured across the same market.

A station specifically targeting a particular demographic might extract the relevant data just for their target group in order to claim to be, for example, 'number one with women over 35'

Defining the station's coverage area

The Total Survey Area (TSA) is the area within which a station's audience is measured. Unlike the Measured Coverage Area (MCA) used by Ofcom, which is derived from calculations or measurements of actual signal strength, stations may choose their own TSA. Rajar rules require that it must be a contiguous set of postcode districts (the postcode district is the first part of the postcode, in AA1 2BB it would be the AA1 section) but set no other limit. Postcode maps can be obtained using various software applications and may be purchased from stationers.

For regional and national services defining a map this way is quite straightforward, but the coarse grid of postcode districts can pose dilemmas for a very local service. A station claming too many postcode districts will appear to cover a larger population but if the signal strength and editorial

proposition of the station does not adequately fill the area many of the more remote diary respondents will not even consider the station and the resulting percentage weekly reach and share figures will look very poor. Conversely a station claiming too small a TSA will not only appear to serve much fewer people, but any listening outside the TSA will not be included in the station's Rajar report.

This is most acutely felt where a major centre of population falls just outside the main postcode districts of a TSA but where the addition of the whole extra district would distort the local proposition of the station (see below). It is necessary to consider both the projected transmitter coverage (a signal strength map will have been produced to support the licence application) and the social tendencies of people in the postcode district in question, asking if they will be able to hear the station and, if so, will it interest them?

Typical local radio map - showing coverage with a good stereo signal against postcode boundaries.

In this example the signal coverage prediction (shaded) suggests we should include postcodes XY1 (in the centre of the city) to XY8 inclusive, and also XY10 and XY11. The question is whether to include the towns labelled A and B in our TSA. If we encompass these towns in our marketing area we will also be surveyed throughout districts XY9 and ZX12, both of which stretch right up to the nearby city where listening is dominated by a different local station. This larger population coverage might make us appear less successful (in terms of share and reach percentages) in our core area.

Note that postcode districts tend to be geographically smaller in areas of dense population but can cover vast areas of unpopulated countryside. Until the Rajar map was simplified in 2007 TSAs were defined using the smaller units known as postcode sectors, which enabled more precise targeting of the research but made the fieldwork far more complicated.

Other research

Where a Rajar survey is not practical or affordable, or when a station needs more specific information on the tastes and habits of potential listeners, the manager may be expected to commission their own research project.

A great deal of useful information can be obtained from simple research initiatives which the station can mount in-house, often using telephone research or a response mechanism via the station's web site. However, where the results are to be used to impress outside bodies such as advertisers, sponsors, supporters, Ofcom or the press it is usually necessary to commission a reputable research company to undertake the fieldwork and data analysis. The researchers will recommend as appropriate methodology and design the questionnaire, but the manager has to decide what questions are to be answered by the study.

Firstly the manager must be clear who he or she is interested in hearing from. There is no point in interviewing a balanced sample of people of all ages if we are planning a service that aims to succeed with teenagers. Just talk to the potential core audience: Who are they? Where do they live or gather? Secondly, given that respondents will only answer a few questions, the manager must focus on what exactly they must be asked about. Are we interested in their present habits, what they actually do with their lives, their radio listening, shopping, Internet useage? Or are we interested in their attitudes and beliefs, tastes in music, feelings about current radio programmes?

The techniques of market research are outside the scope of this book (see Hague, Hague, and Morgan 2004), but from time to time the radio manager

will have an opportunity to put a question before a sample of the audience, or potential audience. It is worth taking the time to word such questions very carefully, and to allow an adequate range of responses. In particular the results may be invalidated if the study uses leading questions.

For example it is tempting to ask: "Do you agree that XXX FM is the best radio station?" Far more useful data would be achieved by saying: "Look at this list of radio stations that can be heard in this area. Could you tell me which one you personally listen to most often?" It is quite possible that the service perceived as 'best' may not be the station they most often listen to in practice. And when asking about listening habits it is important to include a time scale: "Which of these stations do you listen to?" should become: "In the last seven days, which of these stations have you heard?"

If anyone is going to take the results seriously the methodology should avoid revealing who has commissioned the survey until that information cannot influence the results significantly. So a manager wanting to know more about a specific station, their own or a competitor, should leave those specific questions to the end, after any questions on general media habits and overall radio listening.

Focus groups

The real value of research lies in what it tells about what we should be doing in the future, rather than in its ability to give numerical values to what we have done in the past. In order to make good decisions for the future the manager needs to know about the perceptions, attitudes and feelings of their target audience. A handy and effective way of identifying such qualities is the focus group. Essentially a discussion between a small group of carefully chosen members of the public and a researcher usually referred to as a 'facilitator', lasting perhaps two hours, the focus group is encouraged to talk freely and openly about the matters under consideration. The members, typically between 6 and 12 in number, might be played recordings of particular stations, presenters or music and invited to express their feelings about them. Much of the success and value of focus group research comes from the skill of the facilitator in gently leading the discussion, they should not have an axe to grind and are usually an independent professional researcher. While the session will be recorded - with the participants knowledge and consent - and might even be viewed by station management on a video monitor or through a one-way mirror, it is important that the station is not felt to be present in the room in order to avoid any psychological pressure on the group.

Particularly valuable in establishing perceptions about the actual or proposed programming or marketing of a radio station, the focus group can provide the manager with valuable insights into the ways people relate to the station and its competitors and thus with that most valuable commodity - ideas.

It is tempting to see the focus group as a cheap alternative to a questionnaire based survey, but in reality the careful selection of participants - to ensure they are representative of a certain group of listeners, ages or lifestyles - can require substantial effort. A good researcher is also required to provide a useful and fair interpretation of what the group said.

Music testing

The pseudo-scientific, some would say cynical, approach to music selection by many of today's top radio companies causes no end of heated debate both within and outside the industry. However the restricted playlists of many stations are based on a simple premise with which it is hard to argue: when one of your target audience switches to your station you want to be playing a song they want to hear.

Worldwide commercial radio experience shows that stations that focus on the strongest, most appealing songs do better than those who don't. The aim of music testing is to establish which songs a station's target audience do and don't want to hear on the radio. Note that this is different to researching which songs they appreciate, sales and download charts measure something quite different, many highly popular songs suffer from "burn" - listeners are simply tired of hearing them. It should be no surprise that stations that avoid playing songs their target listeners dislike hearing on the radio can gain far higher hours of listening and therefore a larger market share.

Music testing is usually undertaken using a large number of extracts, "hooks" typically around 8 seconds in length, of familiar songs which the station already plays or might select in future. Such short samples have been established as adequate for the majority of listeners to identify the song and express an opinion on it and are far more effective than simply giving the participant a list of titles and artists, most of which will not seem instantly familiar. For each audio clip the listeners are usually asked to give a score, perhaps on a scale of one to five, of how much they like the song and, separately, how much they would like to hear it on the radio.

While such research can be undertaken over the telephone, by posting out recordings or using web-based tools, the most commonly method has traditionally been to conduct an Auditorium Music Test where a precisely

recruited group of a hundred or more listeners or potential listeners is assembled in a meeting room. Over a period of an two or three hours, with breaks, they are played numbered clips and asked to score them on a paper form or, increasingly, using a hand-held electronic device. It is possible to test over 400 songs in a single session.

The results are tabulated and the station receives a report showing the relative popularity of the music, often using a proprietary computer program to combine the popularity and "burn-out" scores into a single league table. While experience suggests that listeners' musical preferences do not change rapidly with time, repeated testing of songs the station is playing is advisable at regular intervals - perhaps annually - to check for burn-out, changing fashions or the fall from grace of a previously well loved artist.

Such testing is a major exercise and most stations cannot afford to undertake it frequently, if at all. Fortunately, identical tests around the UK have established that musical preferences do not vary greatly from region to region and larger radio groups commonly undertake a single central test to inform the playlists of all their same-format radio stations. Auditorium testing is also too blunt an instrument to help the programmer with the selection of new or recent releases. Not only is it held too infrequently but it assumes the majority of respondents are already familiar with the tune. Here there is still scope for the inspired skill of an experienced programmer, although often supported by the auditorium results of similar material in the past and an opportunity to gain listener feedback via the station's website or weekly "call-out" telephone research.

Research for community stations

Community radio is a different animal when it comes to research because on the whole stations are not as interested in gaining mass audiences but rather serving particular audiences within their schedule and being a tool for social action and community development. Few stations are able to afford, or want to be to be part of, Rajar but that doesn't mean that they are not interested in knowing more about their audiences and some have found new ways to do this. In community radio developing new audiences is about the importance of strategic and social partnerships. It is also very important for community stations to be able to provide evidence of 'social gain' to funders.

Phil Korbel, director of Radio Regen, summed up a discussion about community radio audience research:

It's clear that we should be doing research as a vital component of our sustainability, and that it should be built into the fabric of the everyday activity at a station rather than being an add on. It works to build our case as a sector and for stations to get money. Listener figures are important but we should look at impacts and qualitative approaches too - to back the idea that our different relationship with our audience pays dividends to funders."
(Manchester, Scifo and Korbel 2007: 2)

Dominowski and Bartholet (1997) have designed a useful on line resource called 'The listener survey tool kit' for community stations that has a wealth of information related to building a survey, choosing appropriate methodologies and questions, processing, analysing and reporting data. It also has a very wide range of examples of 'off the peg' questions that could be adapted by community radio audience researchers.

Crucial to community radio station managers is assessing the impact of radio as a tool for social purposes. We will look at tools for this in Section 2.12.

New approaches to radio audience research

In recent years academics within university radio and media departments have carried out research into specific audience behaviours and trends, both independently and in some cases collaboratively with radio stations. Academic research has employed a range of ethnographic techniques 'to chart the sense that media consumers make of the texts and technologies they encounter in everyday life.' (Moores 1993: 1). An example of this a research project funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRC) called the BBC / AHRC Knowledge Exchange Programme: which is looking at listener on-line engagement with BBC radio programming, including the long running Radio 4 soap opera 'The Archers'.

In Jo Tacchi's ethnography of listening habits (2000) she spent three years observing role of radio in domestic life and relationships. She carried out in depth interviews, participant observation, observation at local listener panels and focus groups. She uses this material to gain a deeper understanding of how radio sound fits in with people's lives, including possible gendered differences.

Sara O'Sullivan carried out research on one of Irish radio's most popular daytime talk programmes on RTE 1, she looked into the way that phone-in

callers participate and 'perform' in air and their relationship with the show's host and the listening audience (O'Sullivan 2005).

Lyn Thomas researched the appeal and audience of the long running BBC radio soap 'The Archers' through questionnaires, in depth interviews and focus groups. She carried out some of this research at 'Archer's Addicts' fan conventions and through ' the 'official Archers' fan club' and through these methods gained valuable insights into the way people associated the programme with 'pleasurable rituals of everyday life' (Thomas 2002: 136).

Finally, Stefanie Milan's research into what makes community radio practitioners happy provides an insight into the lives and motivations of community producers who area also audience members (Milan 2008).

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Section 2.2

Station and organisational structures

Summary

In this chapter we will look at the structures of different radio stations. We will consider how and why a radio station may be considered legally as a single, cohesive organisation before moving to outline different types of structure within the radio industry. We will outline the roles of management and staff in radio stations before providing two different examples of organisational structure from community and commercial radio. What we will argue is that in many radio stations people, and particularly managers, often assume multiple roles. Furthermore we will also argue that community radio stations often have structures that are less based on a classical hierarchy and more on an integrative and consensual one based on shared values. We will discuss how commercial radio stations may have both a local hierarchy but may also be part of a wider national, or international, structure that includes other group companies and service providers outside the parent company.

The requirement for structure

An organisational structure helps define the roles of, and the relationships between, the different people, departments and functions within an organisation. It helps specify the division of work and the hierarchy, authority and formal lines of communication.

Ofcom require the applicant for a community or commercial licence to be a single legal entity. Past experience of splits in applicant groups between the award of the licence and coming on-air, often a very challenging period for a new project, has taught the regulator to award licences only to corporate bodies. As there are well established laws and rules governing the ownership and conduct of companies this usually removes any need for the broadcast regulator to become involved in internal disputes over the right to control the licensed service, which might occur in a more loosely-defined association of individuals. The incorporation of the group operating a radio service also gives comfort to those funding the initiative, allowing transparent financial accounting, statutory reporting and a clear system of governance.

It is customary, but not obligatory, for a separate company to be formed when applying for each individual licence even when the service will be operated as a closely controlled subsidiary of a larger group. The company will own the licence, may also own all the facilities and assets used and can enter into contracts with individuals and companies supplying services to support the station. There can be tax and other financial benefits in this model and, in the event that the station is subsequently sold, it makes the transfer to another owner relatively straightforward. Such companies often start life as a dormant entity bought 'off the shelf' for a small fee, the name and constitution being simply changed at a first general meeting of shareholders - which in the case of a wholly owned subsidiary would amount to one vote.

While commercial licence-holders will be constituted as standard private or public limited companies, a standard model for the structure of a community radio station has yet to emerge in the UK. The short history of the sector has seen considerable discussion as to whether such a group is best constituted as a conventional non- profit distributing company, a co-operative, a charity or a community interest company. There is general agreement that the management of a community radio station should comprise a democratic structure. Yet this poses further questions as to the constituency that the democracy is intended to serve: is it the enthusiasts who set up the station; the newcomer volunteers who gradually take over; or representatives of the community which the station intends to serve? Who decides who should represent the community interests? And what happens when the community representatives take a different view to the station founders?

Model constitutions and memorandums and articles of association are available from organisations promoting community enterprises and often can be simply adapted to form the basis of a new company structure. Existing companies in similar field may often be willing to share a copy of their constitution and in the commercial field the company accountant and solicitor will be able to help. Many matters are governed by company law and it is usually only necessary to modify those items specific to the organisation and its proposed service or services.

Examples of incorporated company structures

A company limited by shares

In a company limited by shares, the members own shares in the company, either by purchasing them or by being awarded them, perhaps in return for services. Voting rights are usually in proportion to the number of shares each member holds, the shareholders, at an Annual General Meeting, appointing directors to run the company in accordance with the 'Memorandum and Articles of Association'. Any surplus income can be returned to the shareholders and therefore this is not seen as an acceptable model for a community radio station. However, as a private company might have only one shareholder and, as that single member may be another organisation, this is the form usually used for subsidiaries of larger radio groups.

In the Memorandum of Association it is usual to specify the objects of the company quite broadly, in order not to limit future developments, but it is crucial to be very specific in the Articles of Association, which specify such matters as voting procedures and the election and functions of directors. The future stability and orderly development of the station will depend on the decisions made here on how the membership can influence the organisation.

Most companies are required to have a Company Secretary, who may also be a member or director but this is not essential.

The organisation may be either private limited company (indicated as Ltd.) or a public company (PLC). In a private company admission to membership is usually at the discretion of the directors, a PLC is more difficult and expensive to establish but is permitted to offer shares to the public. In the past, many of the larger commercial radio groups were PLCs, giving them easier access to additional funds from the stock exchange but leaving them at the whim of institutional investors.

Companies limited by shares cannot have charitable status.

A company limited by guarantee

This is structured in the same way as the company limited by shares, but has no shareholders and is generally a not-for-profit company. It is a very common, extremely flexible corporate structure for voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations of all types, and is a suitable vehicle for a community radio group wishing to become a corporate body.

Members are not required by law to subscribe any money in order to become a member. However, they must agree to pay a sum towards the

company's debts if it were to go out of business. This is usually set at a nominal one pound. The directors are normally elected by and from the membership.

Although the memorandum and articles of association of a community radio licence holder will prevent the distribution of any profit to members, Ofcom are alert to the possibility that directors or employees of the company could personally benefit by paying themselves exceptionally large salaries.

A co-operative society

These are legally known as Industrial and Provident Societies (IPS) and must be registered with the Registry of Friendly Societies. Run by a committee of management accountable to the membership who will typically hold voting rights at general meetings and will elect all or some of the committee.

In the case of a community radio station the IPS could be structured as a bona fide co-operative, with the membership drawn from those working or volunteering within the station, or as a "the society for the benefit of the community" where the membership criteria are detailed in the society's rules, to include perhaps those living or working in the area of benefit, or supporting the objectives of the service. IPS legislation does not permit members under sixteen years of age.

Members may comprise individuals and/or other corporate bodies (unincorporated organisations cannot themselves become members but the rules may allow such bodies to nominate individuals to membership). As an IPS must have a minimum of three members (or two other IPSs) and must operate on the basis of a participating membership, it is not suitable as a structure for subsidiary companies.

While this might appear to be the perfect model for a community radio station, Radio Regen and the Community Media Association (Radio Regen 2006: 92) point out that in practice there are often problems with co-operatives. They are "very democratic, but highly unwieldy in their decision making and prone to schisms and executive deadlock; will not attract tax or rates relief; may find it difficult to attract funding."

Profit distribution is permitted in a co-operative if the rules permit it, but not a society for the benefit of the community.

A community interest company

A relatively new option for a radio organisation looking for a corporate structure, the community interest company is primarily intended for use by social enterprises who need the freedom to trade as a company but also need some objective evidence of their community benefit credentials in order to

secure grant aid and other support. As such it would appear to be ideal for the voluntary and community radio sectors.

At the time of writing there is relatively little experience of how these structures will work in practice, but, with not-for-profit principles built in, the community interest company should give funders confidence that their money will be spent appropriately.

With government talking of additional tax benefits for community interest companies, any new community radio group looking for an appropriate legal structure would be well advised to look into the advantages of this model.

One station has looked at using this structure in a more sophisticated way to enable more autonomy for different geographical areas:

> *We believed it was the best structure for us, as a*
> *community radio station. Our next stage, as we serve a*
> *rural area, is to set up CICs for each of our small towns, so*
> *they retain independence, and then to create a secondary*
> *cooperative as an umbrella organisation.*
> (Lockwood 2008)

Charitable status

Not-for-profit radio companies with social objectives might also register as charities, opening up new fund-raising opportunities and giving access to tax, VAT and rates relief.

A charity is defined as an organisation that exists to benefit the public, or a section of the public that is demonstrably in need, through the pursuit of certain objectives that the law recognises as charitable. A community radio service would therefore need to demonstrate to the Charity Commissioners that its purposes fall within these legally defined objectives: the advancement of education; the relief of poverty and need; the advancement of religion; and other purposes beneficial to the community, including public safety, the promotion of racial harmony, the preservation of the environment, providing recreation and leisure facilities, and urban and rural regeneration in areas of need.

Registration as a charity is a lengthy and relatively difficult process and brings restrictions on how the company may operate. Importantly for a community radio service there is a limit on the amount of income a charity can take from trading activities, generally a 25 percent limit compared to the 50 percent limit on commercial revenue permitted by Ofcom. A way round this is to set up a completely separate subsidiary trading company to sell airtime and

other services, with surpluses paid to the charity, but this adds a considerable administrative burden for a small organisation.

Management and staff roles

Ideally the job of the Station Manager should be to provide leadership and every essential task should have been placed under the control of one of the departments and delegated to someone competent to get on with it. The efficient Station Manager should be able to walk away from the station secure in the knowledge that nothing will stop happening. The Station Manager's role is however also to do with managing change, to look for new opportunities or ways of working for the company, and to or cope with unexpected difficulties with the existing operation. In other words they should strive to make themselves redundant, confident that in a changing and unpredictable world there will always be sufficient new opportunities and things going wrong with the existing operation to keep them busy.

In practice few station managers have the luxury of such a singular job description. Not only the tight budget required of a successful radio service but also a shortage of experienced and talented radio managers requires that their expertise be called into more hands-on daily use. Most station managers worked their way up the management ladder in a particular field, often in sales or programming although some have technical operations, news, marketing or financial backgrounds. In a smaller operation they will combine their overall management duties with those of a Head of Sales or a Programme Controller. An experienced presenter may continue to host a daily programme.

The Station Manager who also heads an important department should ensure that they appoint a deputy in the department to cover those days when their attention must be diverted elsewhere.

Reviewing the progress of fifteen experimental not-for-profit 'Access Radio' projects launched in 2001, Anthony Everitt (2003) found the human resources required to run a permanent service were under-estimated by many of the pilot projects:

> *Those, like Shine FM and Angel Radio, which have full-time, but unpaid, managers and trainers, now recognise the need for salaried employees in the long term. Even those with an apparently generous staff complement have found the combination of running a radio station, providing high quality training, negotiating partnerships*

with community groups and local agencies and (in relevant cases) selling advertising impossible to achieve. The consequence has been growing levels of exhaustion and under- accomplishment.
(166)

Everitt outlined their staffing needs:

The pilot scheme demonstrates that the basic tasks which an Access Radio station needs to undertake if it is to fulfil its potential and be financially viable are station management, training, financial and general administration (including the co-ordination of volunteers), fund-raising (public sector and/or advertising and sponsorship) and community liaison. It is possible to envisage a well-trained group of volunteers being able to shoulder much of the burden of station management. The same is probably true for aspects of training and mentoring. However, the remaining tasks are likely to call for more time than many volunteers can be expected to have at their disposal. In addition, professional expertise is necessary for efficient administrative management. Fundraising from the public sector is a sophisticated and laborious art and the experienceâ€¦illustrates the unwisdom of entrusting commercial sales and marketing to even the most willing volunteer. Negotiating partnerships with local agencies and institutions requires knowledge of community liaison and development.
(166)

Structure of a community radio station

Ironically, while the well-funded commercial radio operators can often adopt fairly standard models for their PLC and its many private company subsidiaries, the issues are far more complex and varied in a social or voluntary organisation.

Even the most democratic voluntary or community radio station is required to operate within the law, broadcasting regulations and the specific

terms of its licence and funding arrangements and must have some structure designed to maintain some level of authority, obedience to rules and attention to the social purpose of the service in the face of inevitable human differences. On the other hand there is a general desire in such organisations to avoid the top-down decision making of the big commercial groups and the BBC, which are often seen as stifling originality and creativity.

As befits a new sector looking for alternatives to the long-established duopoly of the BBC and commercial radio, there are as many structures as there are applicants for community radio licences. However some common themes emerge that include a desire for good communication and democracy. As such structures are often less hierarchical and less likely to be based on traditional business structures that often emphasise specific functions, job specialisations, clear departmental lines along with an assumption that authority, power and control are maintained at the top of the hierarchy. You can compare this with for instance Fayol (1948) who presents traditional models of bureaucracy.

Community radio structures are often 'flatter' (there are fewer layers in the hierarchy) and an individual may be a member of more then one 'team' or committee. As such there should be fewer departmental and functional conflicts and better communication throughout the station because of the more integrated structure (Linstead, Fulop and Lilley 2004). Whilst there is an acknowledgment of authority it is one where authority is more based on shared values and rules then on hierarchical position. Since people cohere to, and accept legitimate authority based on shared values they do not have to be forced or coerced by management to obey rules and commands. Weber for instance argues that power is force and coercion and largely ineffective (Weber 1964).

Headline Media Birmingham is a charitable organisation that uses radio and publishing to entertain, inform, engage and involve the local community in north-east Birmingham with Restricted Service Broadcasts. Its stated mission is to break down barriers to communication and to offer local people a chance to do something practical about unemployment, skills training, education and social isolation. With established studios and training facilities at the base of a residential tower block the project has the opportunity to develop its own ideas about the ideal corporate structure to meets its needs.

In applying for a full-time community radio licence, as Switch Radio, to serve some of the most deprived communities in north-east Birmingham and north Solihull, the organisation has set out a clear management structure designed to create and maintain a truly representative radio service but a structure that emphasises integration and control through shared values via a use of sub-committees.

Switch Radio. Proposed management and policy making structure:

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                        ┌──────────────────────┐
                        │   Board of Directors │
                        └──────────────────────┘
            ┌──────────────────┬───────────────────────┐
┌───────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│     Broadcast      │  │ Training and Education │  │   Finance and HR │
│   sub committee    │  │     sub committee      │  │   sub committee  │
└───────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
┌───────────────────┐
│     Volunteer      │
│       forum        │
└───────────────────┘
```
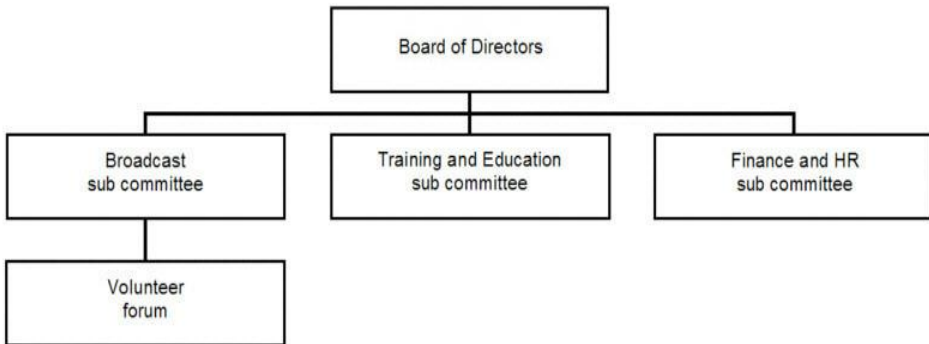
The board comprises voluntary part time members with representation from the service area, professionals with relevant skills and experience, volunteers and other users and co-opted members of the community. Members are nominated and elected by the Volunteer Forum.

The Broadcast sub-committee is responsible to the Board for, amongst other things, drafting programming policy, co-ordinating listener research, monitoring output and performance and ensuring legal compliance. In addition to three directors it includes the Station Manager, the Training and Programme Manager and volunteers with broadcast-related managerial roles. With a similar structure, the Training and education sub-committee is responsible for increasing participation, monitoring training, and the management and involvement of volunteers, while the Finance and HR sub-committee reports to the board on relevant matters.

A Volunteer Forum provides a voice for volunteers and other users, to influence the management of the station, raise any problems, develop programming ideas and devise broadcast events. The Station Manager and Training Manager attend meetings of the Forum. In addition to nominating members for Board election the Forum elects one of its own number to act as Head Volunteer and represent their interests at the sub-committees.

As can be seen an individual may be a member of more then one sub-committee and also a member of the Forum.

Switch Radio. Proposed staffing structure:
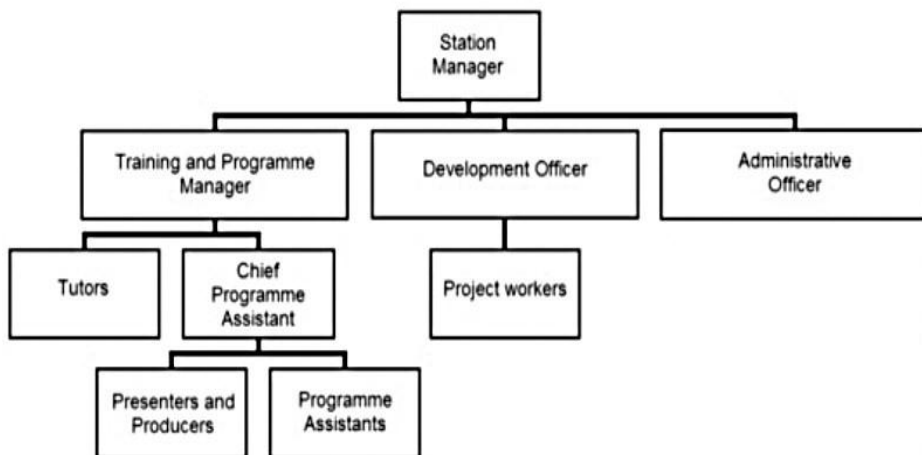
*A Volunteer Co-ordinator could also be a separate post.

Only the Station Manager, the Training and Programme Manager, Development Officer and Administrative Officer are full time paid positions, with the tutors and project workers being part-time paid positions delivering specific activities. All other positions are filled by volunteers.

The Switch Radio application defines the roles:

Station Manager:
is the chief officer responsible for the day to day running of the station, managing staff and overseeing various operational, legal and contractual functions. Has key responsibilities in fundraising and financial management, marketing and the sale of advertising and sponsorship.

Training and Programme Manager:
is responsible for co-ordinating radio skills training programmes, liaising with training partners and the day to day programming output and functions of the station, including management of volunteers and trainees (the management of volunteers could also be a separate post). Also responsible for music scheduling and the overall management of pre-recorded promotional material and

management of technical resources.

Development Officer:
is responsible for; identifying and developing projects with community partners across the service area; co-ordinating project staff; sourcing funding; organising promotional events; organising initiatives to encourage increased participation; identifying strategic development opportunities.

Administrative Officer:
generally supports the administrative requirements of the organisation.

Project Workers:
is a team of roughly three or four sessional workers who deliver educational projects across the service area.

Programme Assistants:
The Chief Programme Assistant works directly under the Programme Manager to assist in programme management, liaise with presenters, organise on-air competitions and input music on to the play- out system etc. This is the 'Head' Volunteer who works part-time up to 20 hours per week. A team of approximately six Programme Assistants, working five hours each per week, provide research, production and programme administrative support to presenters and producers.

Tutors:
A team of 4 part time tutors (3 paid and one Mentoring volunteer) working between 10 and 20 hours per week to deliver training activities. Individuals may combine this role with a Project Worker role.

Presenters and Producers:
In the region of 45 volunteers and trainees responsible for presenting and producing programmes each week, each working on average for 20 hours per week for daily programme staff and 6 hours per week for single programme presenters.

Switch Radio suggests that the above structure may evolve over time to respond to a hoped-for increase in volunteer involvement. For further discussion about empowerment of volunteers see Section 2.10 and some very useful support materials for this area can also be found in the Community Radio Toolkit website (Radio Regen 2006)

Structure of a commercial radio station

There are no specific staffing requirements for a commercial radio licence holder other than any commitments, for example a specific amount of journalistic cover, made in the licence application.

Many of the costs of operating a radio station remain fixed regardless of the size of the potential audience: a studio microphone or kilowatt-hour of electricity costs the same regardless of the audience size. A smaller service, with inevitably smaller income expectations, usually becomes sustainable only if it can reduce its variable overheads by, for instance, using fewer paid staff than its larger competitors. Whilst in a large organisation it may be possible to appoint a separate individual to look after each function, in the smallest station a handful of people will each multitask and have a number of roles. However big or small the radio station though there are always a number of key tasks that must be performed every week. The essential difference between a station with a large staff and a small operation is in the degree of specialisation each individual can enjoy.

The staffing structure of each radio station, even within the same group, varies, and with good reason. Where the breakfast presenter happens also to be a qualified engineer why not let them mend equipment every afternoon? If the accountant has a great knowledge of a particular type of music and an appropriate voice why not invite them to host a weekly show (if appropriate to the format)?

Before recruiting the manager should ask whether the station is really making the best use of the people it already has. Real people do not conform to exact skill specifications, it is immensely wasteful to pretend that they do. It is instructive to write down all the key tasks that must be performed every week in the company, listing them in a single column down the left-hand side of several sheets of paper. Then list the number of individual staff posts the station has budgeted for down the right-hand side of the same paper. The challenge is to match the tasks in the left column with the individuals on the right by drawing lines linking each post on the right with a number of tasks on the left. Plainly, in any economically viable scenario many posts must be given responsibility for several different areas.

Tasks might include:

Programme scheduling
Music scheduling.
Presenting individual programmes
Programme production
Feature production
Programme research
News gathering
News presentation
Sports coverage
Compiling what's-on type information
Collating traffic and travel news
Handling listener response
Programme promotion
Making on-air trails
Local advertising sales
Local sponsorship sales
Sales promotional activity
National advertising sales
National sponsorship sales
Other fund-raising
Commercial copywriting
Producing commercials
Scheduling commercials (Traffic)
Transmission engineering
Studio maintenance
Maintenance of computer networks
Technical installation
Handling station guests and callers
Commissioning research
Analysing research
Marketing
Managing station web site
Managing human resources
Sending out invoices
Credit control
Book-keeping
Management accounts
General administration
Liaison with outside bodies
Compliance with broadcast codes and laws
Health and safety
Building maintenance
Security
Cleaning

In allocating the tasks a live radio service always has to have a back-up plan if the usual means of delivery fails; no one person should ever be indispensable and therefore more than one name should be connected with any essential daily function.

In practice many of these jobs may be performed by freelance or voluntary workers, or contracted to outside bodies. It is essential however that the ultimate responsibility for any key area of the operation remains with someone who feels that they are part of the company and who is committed to the future of the station. The manager must not allow a situation to develop where, for example, invoices are not dispatched for weeks because a freelance found more interesting work elsewhere. We deal with the question of which tasks in a commercial radio station might be performed by volunteers, freelance individuals or outside contractors in Section 2.10.

A typical medium-sized commercial radio station:

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Group Management   │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Managing Director/  │
                    │   Sales Director    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────────────┬────────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Senior Sales    │   │ Programme Controller│
│   Executive     │   └─────────────────────┘
└─────────────────┘      ┌──────────────┬─────────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Senior Sales    │  │ Assistant        │  │    News Editor      │
│   Executive     │  │ PC/Presenter*    │  └─────────────────────┘
└─────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Sales Executive │  │   Presenter*     │  │ Sport & News        │
└─────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  │   Journalist        │
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Sales Executive │  │   Presenter*     │  │  News Journalist    │
└─────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐   * freelance presenters
│ Sales Executive │  │   Presenter*     │
└─────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Station         │  │ Programme        │
│ Administrator   │  │ Assistant        │
└─────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
```
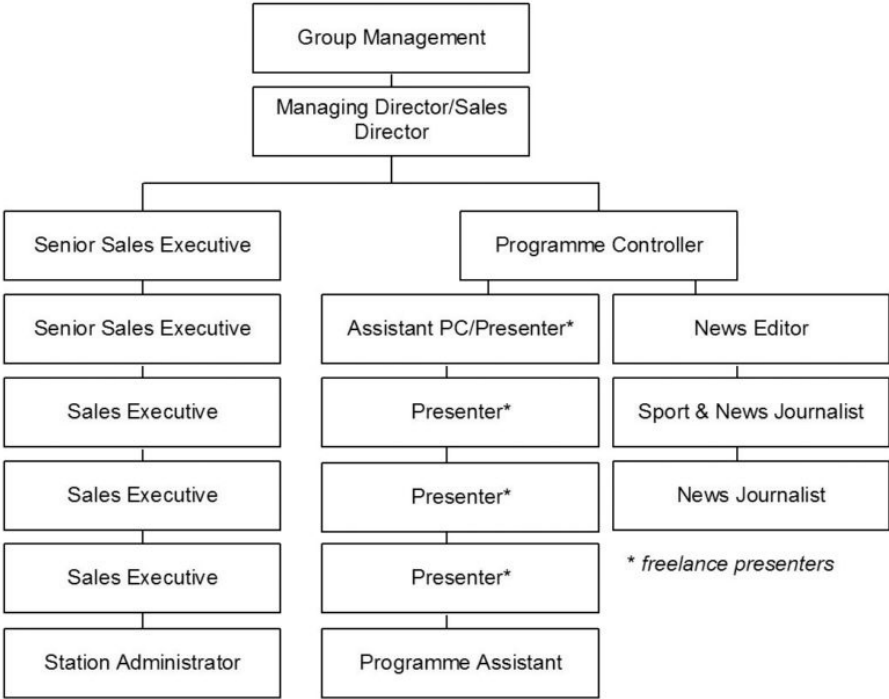
The organisational chart shown here corresponds to the internal structure of a typical commercial radio station serving a city of around a quarter of a million people in the early 2000s. The Station Manager role here was

performed by a Managing Director who doubled as the Sales Director, and the Programme Controller was also the breakfast show presenter. It will be seen that the structure is simpler and more straightforwardly hierarchical than the community radio model illustrated earlier.

The clear division in this chart between the programming and sales functions is a common feature of UK commercial radio, in part due to the requirement in all UK broadcasting legislation (Ofcom 2005) that there be a clear distinction between programming and items included in return for payment. The sales department was responsible for the sale, origination and scheduling of advertisements, sponsorship credits and sponsored promotions and targeted achieving the maximum possible revenue for the company. The programmes side of the operation was more focussed on gathering the largest possible audience. Commercial broadcasting has been described as a strange business where companies make one thing and sell something completely different: one team makes programmes to attract the best possible audience while another team sells access to that audience to advertising clients.

As already noted the great majority of commercial radio stations are now controlled by one of the larger radio groups. While the preceding chart suggests that the station exists as a semi-autonomous entity, with only the Managing Director/Sales Director having any contact with the group, the reality is very different in most cases. It can be seen that the station in this example appears to have no provision for commercial production, sales traffic (commercial scheduling), accounting functions or engineering. These functions are all provided from a central location by the group or are sub-contracted by the group to outside suppliers. Such a group will typically also employ group heads of programmes, sales, finance, news, human resources and engineering who will maintain direct contact with relevant management and staff on each station. So whilst the station has an internal structure it is also part of a wider organisational structure based on geographical location and specialist functions that includes internal and external entities similar to many large international businesses (Davis 1992).

For practical reasons groups with a large number of stations distributed around the UK may interject a further layer of regional management, while groups with stations conforming to one or two nationwide brands, for example Heart or Galaxy, may employ brand management to ensure consistency among stations carrying that format. As a result management lines of responsibility are not as clear cut as might be implied by such organograms, in this case the Programme Controller might be more concerned to meet the requirements of a Group Head of Programmes than those of his own Managing Director, who is experienced in a different discipline.

While such group structures undoubtedly bring benefits to the station and listeners alike, giving greater and more experienced management oversight compared with a stand-alone service, this must be balanced against the risk of a loss of local identity and pride in a station which may start to feel like the local branch office of a national brand. The ability to communicate a shared vision and motivate staff in all departments is the great leadership challenge facing the overall station manager in such stations.

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Financial management, sales and fundraising

Summary

There is no doubt that strong financial management of a radio station is paramount to its survival, whatever type of station it is. BBC stations have to show that they use their licence fee income effectively, community stations need to generate and manage income from different sources to meet their aims and maintain independence and as Keith states, in commercial radio:

> *A primary objective of the station manager is to operate in a manner that generates the most profit , while maintaining a positive and productive attitude among station employees.*
> (Keith 2004: 56)

In this chapter we will first look at the importance of fixed and variable costs in radio management and how these can impact on the delivery model of the station. We will then consider the importance of costs and cash flow, particularly with regard to establishing a new radio station before moving on to consider how income and costs may be estimated and the potential sources of revenue for a radio station. We then move on to consider how advertising, sponsorship and subscription are forms of income alongside license fees and how community stations face a particularly demanding job raising money for training and community participation on top of the usual station running costs.

Fixed Costs in Radio

In many industries a down-turn in sales may be off-set by a proportional drop in the amount spent on raw materials and labour but in broadcasting it does not cost appreciably less to produce the same programmes for an audience of a few thousand than it does for a million listeners. A popular radio brand does

not have to spend a great deal more on raw materials or staff than another with few listeners.

The costs of running a radio station tend to remain constant in the short term regardless of changing market forces, and are not directly related to the popularity of the service. In the case of the BBC the current licence fee settlement will run for a number of years and the corporation decides how to divide a fairly predictable income between its various services over that period, setting a budget for each. The funders of a community radio service are largely philanthropic in nature and, usually given a lack of precise audience data, unlikely to be directly influenced by changing popularity of different programmes.

It can be seen that, whatever the proposed funding model, it is possible for management to define a fairly precise budget for the costs of their service at the outset, separately considering whether their income over time will make that service sustainable. We will take the issues in this order.

Fixed and Variable Costs of a radio service

The relative costs of producing different kinds of radio are starkly illustrated with reference to the BBC's expenditure on different national radio networks. The BBC Annual Report and Accounts for the period 2006/2007 (BBC 2007:72) gave the cost per hour of BBC-originated programmes for each radio service as:

> Radio 1 £3,100
> Radio 2 £4,100
> Radio 3 £4,200
> Radio 4 £10,500
> Radio 5 Live £6,900

Perhaps, more than anything else, this illustrates that the largest factor determining the cost of radio production today is the number of people required to originate an average hour of the service. The fixed costs of studio facilities, distribution and transmission are very similar for different genres of radio but a service heavy in live music, original drama or worldwide news coverage will spend considerably more on musicians, actors, writers, production staff and journalists than one generated by a computer or a single DJ. People are thus the main variable cost for radio production today. We should not be surprised that, when a station finds its income inadequate to cover outgoings, the first items to be axed or severely cut-back are original

production and news coverage. Plotting the hourly costs of the five BBC networks against their audience figures in the same period clearly illustrates the commercial case for the recorded music based programming in the lower right quadrant of the chart:
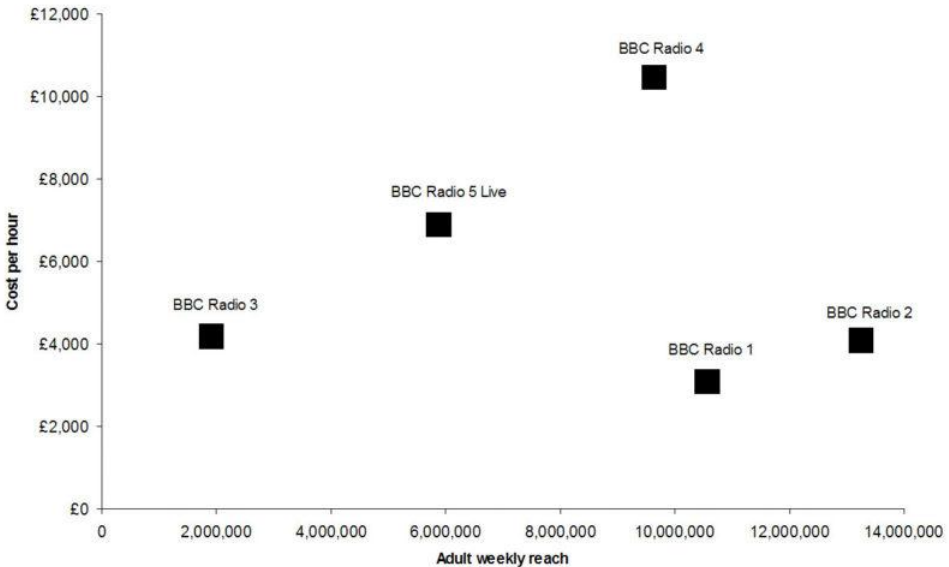
(Sources: BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2006/2007 and Rajar period ending 25 March 2007)

Prior to establishing any serious new radio project it is essential to prepare a business plan, firstly identifying realistically the expected costs of producing the service, secondly estimating the size and character of the anticipated audience and, lastly, quantifying the income, whether from advertisers, sponsors, other funders or the licence fee. It should go without saying that if the latter does not match or exceed the budget cost figure over the lifetime of the project the proposition will need to be reconsidered.

Capital costs

One-off capital expenditure may legitimately be written off in the accounts over a period of years. While the station must find the cash to purchase capital items or pay for the work at the outset, a proportion of the expenditure is shown in the profit and loss accounts across several years as the item is used and depreciates in value. In the case of equipment and building work the period may be up to the expected lifetime of the item. The cost of converting a building might be written off over the whole period of the licence, while it is customary to write off items which require regular replacement, like cars and

computers, over just two or three years. In order to facilitate such standard accountancy practices it is usual to identify capital expenditure budget separately from on-going operational costs.

Operating costs

Broadcasters previously experienced in operating only pirate or temporary stations frequently underestimate both the amounts that must be set aside for, and indeed the sheer diversity of, operating costs. Costs are usually set out under departmental headings: Programming; News; Sales; General Overheads; Administration; Technology; Commercial Production; Marketing; Research; Training; and financial costs such as bank charges, interest, taxation and depreciation. As a typical example the list of detailed costs under programming might include:

> Salaries. Full and part time.
> Employers National Insurance contributions
> Contract presenters
> Freelance contributors
> Music purchased
> Acquired programming
> Consumables
> Jingles, on-air branding
> Newspapers, magazines, internet
> Research
> Weather, traffic and news services etc.
> Outside-broadcast costs
> Competition Prizes
> Vehicle costs
> Expenses
> Training

It is customary to show in the cost budget the entire expenditure on areas such as sponsored competitions, promotions and commercial production even though they may be often directly charged to outside sponsors and clients. The balancing, and ideally greater, income against these headings may then be shown correctly in the station's income projections.

Management accounts

Cost headings like those used above may form the basic structure of the station's management accounts, usually generated monthly, and the company's annual accounts, where they are known as the 'profit and loss' position. In the profit and loss accounts a radio station usually shows costs incurred during the month, offset against revenue for activities performed in that month. While the profit and loss report gives a snapshot of the trading performance of the project, in order to fully understand the financial health of the operation it is necessary to also look at two other reports on the accounts; the cash-flow and the balance sheet. Any serious broadcasting project will have access to specialist accountancy advice so we will limit ourselves to a managerial understanding of these reports.

The monthly profit or loss of a station does not tell us much about the overall financial position of the project. Among other things we also need to know: how many of the facilities are owned by the company and what they are worth today; are there funds from shareholders as yet unspent; how much money does the company owe to other people or organisations; and how much money is outstanding to come into the company. The balance sheet combines the current trading profit or loss with these to show the overall financial position of the company.

Unfortunately money does not flow in and out of a station's bank account in the orderly fashion suggested by the profit and loss accounts. While some smaller projects may insist on pre-payment for advertising, sponsorship or other sales, and pre-payment is often the norm for new or unreliable advertisers even in the largest stations, it is quite usual for a major advertiser to be given credit and to take, typically, up to 56 days to pay the bill (despite the station's terms and conditions specifying shorter periods or immediate payment).

The critical importance of cash flow may best be illustrated by the launch of a new commercial radio service. In setting up a new service the amount of working capital required is frequently underestimated. In addition to gathering enough cash (from shareholders, funders or a parent body) to pay for the physical equipment and facilities, we may need enough money to run the station for some months before any significant revenue starts to come in. It would be prudent to allow for two months of our budgeted monthly outgoings before the station even starts, a first month on-air where the money only flows outwards, followed by one or two months before all the money due to us arrives. It would not be excessive to provide at least one third of the stations budgeted annual expenditure as working capital which will be eaten up in the

pre-operational period and the first year. In reality many new services may take a year or two to become established and to have valid research on which to base their case for funding. Very deep pockets may be required to sustain any new media initiative through these early years.

Cost control

One of the manager's most important duties is the control of costs. It is therefore useful if the budgeted operating costs are grouped under cost centres which correspond to the areas of responsibility of departmental managers. In the case of commercial radio it is perhaps the main role of programme management to produce the required quantity and quality of output without exceeding their budget. Meanwhile the main responsibility of sales management is to maximise net sales revenue (after deducting the direct cost of generating those sales). One team in the station brings the money in, while the other spends, hopefully, slightly less.

A manager overseeing a cost centre must be alert to a natural tendency for spending to increase rather than decrease and, particularly during times of change or growth, constantly question whether established cost items are still necessary. A simple example is a newsroom's range of daily newspapers and periodicals where, over time, a need will be identified for additional publications. Seldom, unless specifically asked, would anyone suggest removing a title from the list. Similarly, many radio presenters point out that any growth in the listening figures for their programme must be largely attributed to one thing: the quality of the presenter. It follows, they argue, that they should be appropriately rewarded with an increased programme fee. Of course the opposite is seldom the case, the same presenters lose no time in explaining, following a fall in ratings, that there are many factors influencing the size and character of the audience which are beyond their control. It would, they argue, be grossly unfair to suggest any reduction in the presenter's remuneration in such circumstances.

Income projections

While the income of a BBC or community station may remain at an agreed fixed figure for a year or two ahead, in commercial radio there are no such certainties. In order to estimate the commercial income of a proposed new service a realistic estimate of the size and profile of the audience is required. In the next chapter we describe how a fully-funded licence applicant might

undertake detailed field research to determine audience projections but a new entrant with limited funding may take advantage of published Rajar results for any similarly sized established stations running a comparable format. An initial model upon which to base a rate-card can be developed by simply scaling these results up or down. The new entrant must however bear in mind that the existing station may have taken many years to establish its popularity and that an over-optimistic audience projection can make life very difficult later, when the station's backers and clients see considerably lower audience figures.

It is possible to forecast the likely advertising income of a conventional service using certain standard industry-wide assumptions which, while not statistically robust, have stood the test of time. Ofcom commercial licence applicants are expected to perform this exercise in order to complete the application form. Taking the adult population living in the Total Survey Area (TSA) and projected weekly reach and average hours listened figures we can make an estimate of what annual revenue might be feasible. Here is a typical calculation using hypothetical round figures:

TSA population (Adults 15+) =1,000,000
Projected weekly reach (%) = 20%
Weekly reach (number of adults15+) = 200,000
Projected average hours listened (per listener per week) = 10
Therefore total hours listened (per week) = 2,000,000

Now we must estimate over how many hours each day we will sell effective advertising. The majority of the total listening hours will probably be achieved between 6 am in the morning and late in the evening and few advertisers want their spots to go to air outside this window. For the purposes of this example, assume that we regard this as18 hours per day, 126 hours per week. Conventionally broadcasters estimate that around 95 per cent of the total listening of 2,000,000 will occur during these popular hours, or 1,900,000 hours per week.

The average hourly audience within our 18 hour day = (2,000,000 x 95%) divided by 126 hours = 15,079 listeners per hour.

Major advertisers, and particularly their advertising agencies, often compare the effectiveness of different advertising outlets according to the "cost per thousand", how much each medium charges to place their message in front of a thousand of their target consumers. Using "cost per thousand" (cpt) figures currently achieved by similar stations currently for a standard 30-

second commercial, and an assumption about how many spots we will broadcast in each of those 18 hours, we can work out our possible annual revenue. For instance if we use an imaginary, but feasible, cpt of £1.20 per thousand listeners and assume that we sell four minutes (eight 30-second spots) of advertising in the average hour:

Cost per thousand for a 30-second spot = £1.20
Average hourly audience 0600 to midnight = 15,000
Therefore average revenue per spot = £18
Advertising revenue per hour (8 spots) = £144
Advertising revenue per day (18 hours) = £2,592
Therefore: Annual Advertising Revenue = £946,080

An alternative but less exact method of calculating likely revenue is to look at the published weekly total hours figure for a comparable station in Rajar and find out their total annual advertising revenue. Dividing the total annual revenue by the weekly total hours will give us an anticipated "yield" figure per weekly hour listened. Lets say we derive a yield of 50 pence per year per weekly listening hour, then the equivalent calculation might look like this:

TSA population (Adults 15+) = 1,000,000
Weekly reach (%) = 20%
Weekly reach (Adults 15+) = 200,000
Average hours listened (per week) =10
Therefore total hours listened (per week) = 2,000,000
Assumed advertising yield = 50p
Therefore total annual advertising revenue = £1,000,000

The annual revenue predicted will be achieved only if, in practice, you are able to sell the assumed number of spots to enough willing clients. Taking the first calculation above, if we assume that there are eight spots on-air in the average hour for 18 hours every day, then a total of 144 commercial spots will be aired each day; 1008 per week. Typically advertisers book a campaign of perhaps five or six spots per day so for 1008 spots we need at least 24 separate advertisers at any one time, each using 42 spots per week. We must convince ourselves that this in achievable target!

The rate card

While few radio sales professionals use a formal rate card in their negotiations with clients it is sensible for the station to have a formal basis for its advertising sales policy. If, for example, we are to achieve a net average income of £18 per spot our asking price would need to be higher to allow for negotiation and provide a margin to pay commission to any advertising agency (typically 15%); a quoted rate of at least £22 per spot would be more appropriate. To regulate demand at various points in the schedule we could price spots higher and lower than this figure, reflecting the relative popularity of our service at different times, and on different days at weekends.

Commercial broadcasters frequently divide the day into convenient segments for advertisement pricing and scheduling purposes. It can be convenient to adopt the dayparts used by Rajar (2008) in reporting audiences, on weekdays these are:

Breakfast peak 0600 - 1000
Mid morning 1000 - 1300
Afternoon 1300 - 1600
PM Drive 1600 – 1900

Typically the spot rate for afternoons might be one third to one half that of breakfast peak time, reducing proportionally for evenings and again for overnight. It is usual to levy a surcharge of up to 100 per cent if the client wishes their spot to be broadcast at a specified, fixed, time. Otherwise spots are scheduled anywhere within the chosen time band at the station's discretion. For many clients a package of spots going out in various guaranteed time bands across the week will be attractive. A typical example is the Total Audience Package (TAP) offered by many stations. This may give the client, say, 35 or 42 spots per week evenly rotated through all day parts, although such packages may omit overnight or when the station may not carry local programmes.

Rate-card prices are usually quoted on the basis of 30-second commercials as this has traditionally been regarded as the "standard" length of commercials in the UK. Rates for other lengths of commercials are commonly quoted relative to the 30 second rate, for example:

10 seconds = 50%
20 seconds = 80%
30 seconds = 100%
40 seconds = 130%

50 seconds = 165%
60 seconds = 180%

A reduction for bulk is often offered but often only for those booking a month at a time. If the average 30 second spot on our station is priced at £22 then a 35-spot TAP might be priced at £700 for one week, or perhaps £2,520 for four weeks, equivalent to an average spot rate of £18.

Larger groups with national coverage use more complex inventory management systems to price and allocate their airtime. While these are beyond the scope of the present book the underlying principles to maximise the income from all available airtime remain the same. At a simpler level many local stations offer smaller advertisers a package such as Image Plus (New Revenue Solutions 2008) where unused inventory is made available more cheaply in return for a flexible commitment to 12 months of airtime.

Cost of sales

New entrants to the radio business often under estimate the amount of sales effort required to attract an adequate level of income to their service. Media advertising is a fiercely competitive field and few advertisers spontaneously contact a radio station to buy airtime. It typically takes at least three face-to-face visits by trained, motivated sales professionals before an advertiser signs a contract. Thus there is an impetus to give clients inducements to book four-week rather than one-week campaigns or to sign-up for three, six or twelve months since the cost of sales can be reduced by selling fewer, longer contracts. Sales staff should still visit the client regularly throughout the contract period, but it is far easier to service an existing client than to start from scratch with a new one.

It is customary for individual sales staff to be targeted to achieve a certain level of sales each month and, upon reaching or exceeding that target, to receive commission of a certain percentage of their total invoiced revenue in that month, usually a few per cent. There may also be fixed bonuses for achieving other specific objectives and in addition, to encourage team work, there is often a further incentive if the whole sales team achieves its total monthly target. A sales manager is often targeted entirely on this team achievement, although they may have their own list of key clients.

Traffic department

A title capable of causing confusion, "traffic" in this context refers to the flow of advertisements onto the air. A great deal of work is involved in keeping track of sales orders and the matching files of audio, scheduling the spots and ensuring the advertiser can be correctly invoiced after transmission. The equivalent of a full-time job on most large stations, in a smaller station traffic may be a large part of the work of a sales administrator or the work may be undertaken centrally for a number of stations in a group.

A specialist computer programme may produce a daily advertising log for use in the studio playout system, showing against each scheduled break the audio file number, title and duration of each commercial to be played. In an automated system the playout computer may also report back to the traffic system the spots correctly aired, otherwise whoever is responsible for the transmission of the spots should sign their section of the log to verify that they went out as scheduled, noting the actual time of transmission alongside each break in order that the client may be correctly invoiced.

Commercial Production

When a service sells radio advertising they are not selling "time" in the way a newspaper might be described as selling "space", but rather opportunities for listeners to hear a message. The best airtime campaigns are devised by the station, the client or their agency to achieve a specific objective and decisions about the creative content of the spots go hand-in-hand with the purchasing of the airtime.

National or multi-national brands may well handle their advertising through a large advertising agency and recording studios in a big metropolitan centre, the first the station will know of the campaign is when the airtime order appears on the traffic system and an audio file is sent to the studio playout system. On the other hand a small local advertiser may rely on their local station to write and produce their commercial.

While a major group of stations may be able to justify a centralised in-house commercial production unit most stations now use specialist production companies and copywriting services. The costs of equipment, experienced production staff, music fees and voice-over sessions are hard to justify on a station producing perhaps one or two new commercials per day.

Any fee paid to actors or musicians to perform in an advertisement usually permits the broadcast their work on a defined number of stations for a limited period (usually one year). If a client wishes to run the same spot to run

on other stations, in the same market or elsewhere they will usually need to pay a higher rate. Equity, the actors union, publishes guidelines for its members based on a sliding scale of minimum rates per commercial depending on the size of the station.

The use of music in commercials is frequently misunderstood, the copyright licence arrangements with Phonographic Performance Limited, the Performing Rights Society and the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society, which give blanket permission to use music in programmes, do not automatically permit the use of their member's music recordings in commercials. The producer must negotiate a separate fee, which can be very expensive, directly with the rights owners, usually the record company and the music publishers, in order to use any part of a record in an advertisement (there can however be a dispensation to use music in an advertisement which is promoting sales of that record or a performance by the artist concerned). To minimse costs commercial producers often purchase libraries of "production music" which they are then able to use in advertisements for a flat fee charged by the producers of such library music.

Sponsorship

Programme sponsorship is a significant additional source of income for today's radio services. According to Ofcom (2007) of the £514 million earned by national and local commercial radio in the UK in 2006, sponsorship generated £91 million (18%).

The proportion of total income attributed to sponsorship has increased slowly as rules governing its inclusion in British broadcasting have gradually relaxed. Commercial involvement in programming was frowned upon in the UK and specifically banned at the launch of commercial television in the 1950s, and at the start of legal commercial radio in the 1970s. Even when, in the 1980's, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) decided that a limited amount of sponsorship might be permitted, for coverage of an event or happening with an existence independent of the broadcaster, they decreed that it be referred to as "co- funding".

Until the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990 came into force, programme items were usually described as being "brought to you in association with...", in order to maintain the image of co-funding, and all sponsorship deals had to be approved in advance by IBA officers. Following the 1990 Act the newly established Radio Authority permitted sponsorship provided ultimate editorial control of sponsored programmes remained with the licensee; endorsement of the sponsor's product within editorial was not

permitted; sponsorship was clearly acknowledged in at least one credit at the beginning or end of the programme or item, every 15 minutes in longer sequences; and that sponsor credits were brief, precise and capable of substantiation. The Radio Authority Code of Advertising Standards and Practice and Programme Sponsorship said sponsor credits "should sound like acknowledgements, not advertisements." News bulletins were, and still remain, specifically excluded from sponsorship.

Under Ofcom's lighter touch regime sponsorship is handled in the same way as advertising with clearance handled centrally by the industry for certain categories of sponsor and with the same list of services and products forbidden from appearing in advertisements or sponsor announcements. Within the guidelines station managers must decide for themselves what they are, and are not, willing to do for a sponsor: How many references will they receive? Will credits be live, pre-recorded or sung as a jingle? Will they receive additional credits in other programmes promoting their show or feature?

When forecasting the potential for sponsorship income on a particular service it is useful to divide sponsorship opportunities into two categories: firstly those the station will broadcast whether or not they are sponsored and where the whole income goes straight to benefit the station's bottom line. Secondly, those special events or items which the service can afford to include in the schedule only if someone else is paying. The station might like a "flying-eye" helicopter, or an outside broadcast from Paris but will only be able to run them if someone else provides the cash. Before accepting such proposals the prudent manager will always ask whether the income for the new costly activity genuinely represents 'new money' or whether the client will simply deduct it from existing advertising or sponsorship funds which would have come to the station anyway.

Community and other non-commercial broadcasters can face a similar quandary. Much public sector funding of radio is conditional on the production of features to tackle a particular issue; the employment of trainees or the provision of some other specific service to the community. Before accepting such a grant the station management must decide whether, taken overall, the funds will actually contribute to the core objectives of the radio service. It is too common for a community station to be full of staff and trainees few of whom are in any way contributing to the main on-air service. As with the commercial case every attempt should be made to direct funding to support the basic objectives of the radio service before diverting funds onto separate projects, no matter how worthy. (See our Section 3 Case Study of Bradford Community Broadcasting for more detail on this area)

While sales management will usually have the final responsibility for the revenue achieved from the sale of sponsorships and promotions the detailed

on-air arrangements must be worked out with, or preferably by, the programmes management team.

Subscription radio

A by-product of radio's move into the digital era is the ability to encode and route signals in a way that was prohibitively expensive in the days of analogue broadcasting. As with television, it is now relatively straightforward to encrypt a broadcast digital radio signal, permitting reception only by those who have paid for it. Other digital platforms, such as those supplied by the internet and 3G mobile telephone technology make possible for the first time programme streaming to registered subscribers.

Fans of this new method of funding radio broadcasting argue that a potential advantage of subscription radio is that, as it does not have to rely on advertising revenue, it does not have to chase audience ratings in the same way as commercial stations. It is suggested that one of the main advantages of the XM and Sirius satellite radio systems in the US is that they provide niche programming that could never be provided by commercial radio or BBC networks funded by a universal licence fee and there is now increasing interest in portable and mobile satellite reception systems that work without the expensive network of terrestrial transmitters needed for DAB.

The meteoric growth of satellite radio in the US was documented in the New York Times (2005):

> *The announcement on Friday by XM Satellite Radio - the bigger of the two satellite radio companies - that it added more than 540,000 subscribers from January through March. Analysts call that remarkable growth for companies charging more than $100 annually for a product that has been free for 80 years.*
> *Total subscribers at XM and its competitor, Sirius Satellite Radio, will probably surpass eight million by the end of year, making satellite radio one of the fastest-growing technologies ever - faster, for example, than cellphones.*

In the USA, where the majority of popular AM and FM stations carry a heavy load of advertisements and there is no nationwide public service alternative the subscription services have a particular appeal. But a number of companies, including Ondas Media and WorldSpace, have been reported to be looking to

launch subscription based satellite radio services across Europe in the next few years.

Ricky Gervais, comedian and co-creator of The Office, is often credited as being one of the earliest examples of a podcaster who made money by selling subscriptions. His first series of podcasts, starting in December 2005, were available free via the Guardian Unlimited website, and the broadcasts were downloaded an average of 261,670 times a week. For seasons two and three, during 2006, Gervais moved to a paid model, charging a subscription of £3.73 for the series or 95 pence for each individual episode.

According to new media consultant Leesa Barnes (2007: 200), while many podcasters like Gervais appeared to have developed a practical subscription model, in reality they had simply moved into audio publishing via the web. Barnes argues that few podcasters have managed to monetise their programming is that the technology to make it happen was originally very complicated, requiring a fairly detailed knowledge of computer programming. Only recently have internet service suppliers begun to offer simple podcasting solutions which are dependent on payment of a subscription fee by the listener and prevent the recipient from sharing their RSS feed with anyone else. According to Barnes (2007: 201) US podcasters are now successfully charging between $1 and $150 per month for subscriptions to their shows.

Ultimately subscription technology may even be seen as offering a more equitable alternative to the universal BBC licence fee - a single licence payment might unlock the full range of BBC content in a household. It may take some time for a public used to receiving radio free of charge to accept the concept of paying for radio at the point of delivery, but not long ago, before Sky TV, the concept of subscribing for a TV service was similarly alien.

Community Radio - thinking outside the funding box

> As long as we in the sector simply sell ourselves as 'radio'
> or 'media' we are open to being under-cut by our
> commercial colleagues. Our USP is as a trusted
> intermediary with the communities that the agencies wish
> to reach. Community Engagement is popping up more
> and more as a statutory requirement for public sector
> bodies and believe me, most are just gasping for an
> effective way to deliver it.
> (Korbel 2008b)

There are now many different models of funding for community stations world wide, each framed by regulations laid down according to each country's broadcasting laws and regulations. Most community stations in the UK have developed a 'mixed economy' approach to funding using grants, advertising, sponsorship and commercial activities, local fundraising (including in-kind and other donations), contracts for public services (Service Level Agreements) and funding relating to the provision of training (Korbel 2008a). It is this variety of sources that contributes to the sustainability of stations.

There are arguments for and against using different forms of income generation - all have implications for paid work at the station and the direction the station takes. Some stations (particularly those serving communities of interest) gladly take advertising as they see the local business community as part of their target audience. Others see it as 'a necessary evil' and balance the need for paying sales people and taking up studio time for producing advertisements with other community training and production commitments. Many stations decide not to take advertising in order to concentrate fully on fundraising directly for training community programming.

In order to successfully raise funds for community radio you need to carefully align what you are applying for with the activities that are at the heart of your radio station. It is necessary to 'think outside the box' when it comes to pitching for funds that will contribute to programme making and station activities as Korbel (2008a) says 'The unique selling point of your station is community not radio'. Community radio can be seen as a tool to deliver projects in large number of areas where there is need for community action so a good starting point for each station is to look at areas like health, crime prevention, women's issues, work with young people, rural communities and tie in community radio programme making with this. (See Bradford Community Broadcasting case study in Section 3 for examples of this and also Community Radio Toolkit website for different funding examples). Although general awareness of the advantages of community radio is now higher now that more stations are on air, many potential funders in the voluntary and statutory sectors will not necessarily see the link between community radio and their activities. Therefore it is a prime function of the station management team to forge links with potential funding partners.

Regulations and income sources for community stations

There are several regulations relating specifically to community radio funding that managers should be aware of and will in turn inform a fundraising policy.

Some of these rules are complicated and have been controversial Not all stations can take advertising: community radio stations with a coverage area which overlaps by 50% or more with that of a small commercial radio station serving between 50,000 and 150,000 adults will not be allowed to take any advertising or programme sponsorship because it is seen as compromising the commercial radio's business. For those stations that can take broadcast advertising this is limited to no more than 50% of a station's income in any one year. In addition, Ofcom requires that no more than 50% of a station's funding can come from a single source, however since 2008 community radio stations have been able to count volunteer input as part of their turnover. To this end stations are required to report to Ofcom about the balance of their sources of income and there are specific guidelines and guidance provided by Ofcom and Community Media Association websites.

Community Radio Fund

When Anthony Everitt evaluated the Access radio stations in 2003 one of his key recommendations was that there should be a fund established to aid in the management of and fundraising for community radio. He recommended that the Community Radio Fund should provide up to 30,000 a year to stations. This has been set up through Ofcom. In the period 2006-7 it made payments to 40 community radio stations, totalling £829,975.44 and in 2007/08 34 community radio stations received a total of £465,015. The Welsh assembly allocated £500,000 to stations in Wales in one year alone. In England the average amount awarded has been about £14,000 and stations have usually received only one payment from the fund. The monies are usually spent on Station Manager or fundraiser posts for a single year. (See below for discussion of this fund).

Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

Here stations are funded in return for broadcasting services to statutory or voluntary organisations. This can take the form of public service announcements, podcasts, a set of programmes on a particular theme and multi-target contracts that will have a range of benefits to the users. Stations have negotiated SLA contracts with council and government departments and services, schools, colleges and universities. Drystone Radio In the Yorkshire Dales had a SLA with the National Parks service to produce 8 podcasts of National Park trails in the area (Tang 2008: 38). Forest of Dean Radio have a 3 year SLA agreement with their local council with various targets to be met In return for funding including getting a set number of new voices on air and

giving support to community groups through broadcasts (op.cit: 40). A detailed guide to developing and setting up SLA's can be found at http://www.commedia.org.uk/about-community-media/publications/publication- items/service-level-agreements/.

National Lottery

The National Lottery has schemes such as Awards for All and the Big Lottery Fund Takeover Radio the children's station in Leicester was awarded £5,000 for training 24 young presenters and the Big Lottery Fund granted £368,000 to Prescap Limited for working in conjunction with Preston FM on a project called 'Improving Social Cohesion and Community Capacity through Community Radio'.

Other sources that can be looked at include funding for international networks, projects and training programmes via funding from the European Commission's Education, Audio Visual and Culture Executive Agency. The Erasmus and Comenius programmes fund work in conjunction with schools, Leonardo da Vinci with higher education and Grundtvig with vocational education and training and adult education. For further information see http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.htm

For further information about funding ideas and opportunities see Community Media Association and Community Radio Toolkit websites. See also section 2.10 for more about raising funds for training courses in community stations.

Issues for community radio fundraisers

Raising money for community stations can be a creative process but for most managers it is a constant headache. In fact due to the large number of licences awarded and the relatively small size of the Community Radio Fund it has meant that stations have to work very hard for stability year on year. There has been much lobbying for a larger fund so that more stations can be sustainable. Mary Dowson CEO of Bradford Community Broadcasting says the UK should offer far better support for the community radio sector:

> *Constant fundraising - and the whole amount of*
> *associated project reporting - takes up an enormous part*
> *of the staff time which could be much better spent on*
> *running a radio station and delivering the projects*

themselves.
(Everitt 2003 b: 34)

At a policy level there have been suggestions that the UK should follow the example of the Irish community radio sector which gets funds every year from a five per cent levy of the television licence fee (see http://www.bci.ie/broadcast_funding_scheme/index.html). Another option that has been mooted is the French model in which community radio is funded by a percentage of commercial broadcasting's advertising revenues. (See Tacchi and Pryce Davies (2001) for a discussion about different international models of community radio funding)

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Applying for a licence

Summary

In this chapter we will look at the various forms of radio broadcast licenses that exist in the UK. We will detail the content of both a commercial and a community radio license application and also discuss the advent of licences for new broadcast services such as DAB.

The BBC, its remit and UK Licensing

Conventional broadcasting stations in the UK are governed either by the BBC Trust or Ofcom. The BBC uniquely operates under a Royal Charter, originally granted in 1927 when the British Broadcasting Company became the British Broadcasting Corporation, that sets out the public purposes of the BBC and is intended to guarantee its editorial independence from government. The current Royal Charter, the eighth since 1927, requires the BBC to obtain a "Licence and Agreement" from the relevant minister with responsibility for broadcasting matters. Originally the Postmaster General, later the Home Secretary, today this is the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Licence and Agreement also details matters such as the BBC's regulatory obligations and funding and also stipulates that the BBC must provide the World Service to users outside the UK in languages approved by the Foreign Secretary.

   The BBC Trust itself issues a licence for each of the BBC's UK public services, detailing, among other matters, its remit, aims, objectives and how it is to be distributed. Before launching a new service, or substantially changing an existing one, the BBC Charter requires the Trust to undertake a Public Value Test, which includes a Market Impact Assessment carried out by communications regulator Ofcom intended to ensure that new BBC services do not conflict with the development of a vibrant and dynamic commercial sector.

   All non-BBC UK based broadcasting stations that use radio waves to freely distribute programmes require a licence from Ofcom. Licensing arrangements vary considerably for the different categories of radio licence,

from requiring a considerable cash bid to being virtually available on demand. Relevant licences described below cover:

National analogue commercial radio
Local analogue commercial radio
Community Radio
Radio restricted services
DAB national commercial radio multiplexes
DAB local radio multiplexes
Digital sound programmes
Digital additional services
Radio licensable content services

No broadcasting licence is required for a service distributed only via the internet, although appropriate copyright licences may well be required. See section 2.9 for a discussion of copyright issues.

National analogue commercial radio

The three national analogue commercial radio licences are awarded by a cash-bid process under the terms of the Broadcasting Act 1990 that specified that that one must be awarded to a 'non-pop' station (currently Classic FM) and one for a predominantly speech-based service (curently talkSPORT). Classic FM has a national FM licence while talkSPORT and Absolute Radio are AM only.

Licences were issued for a period of eight years but as an inducement to take up places on the national DAB multiplexes, national radio licensees were entitled to automatic renewal for a further eight years.

To win the original licences stations had to commit to making considerable annual licence payments consisting of both a cash sum (that was inflation linked) and a percentage of qualifying revenue (PQR). By Ofcom's own calculations (2006:5) these payments, in total for the three services, would by now have reached £7 million pounds per year, collected by Ofcom and paid into HM Treasury. Given the gradual swing away from AM listening, increasing digital listening and greater media competition, Ofcom took the opportunity of the licence extension process to review the financial commitments made by these existing operators. In a move estimated to reduce annual payments to less than £1.5 million per year qualifying revenue was completely removed for AM services talkSPORT and Virgin (now Absolute) Radio, and reduced to 6 per cent (from 14 per cent) for Classic FM. The annual

cash sums payable became £50,000 for Classic FM and £100,000 for talkSPORT and Absolute Radio.

Ofcom has no current plans to advertise any new national analogue licences. The exiting licences expire in September 2011 in the case of Classic FM, 30 April 2012 for Absolute Radio and 31 December 2012 for talkSPORT. Under the Communications Act 2000 any replacement licence would be issued for a term of twelve years but discussion of an 'analogue switch-off' suggests that this is very unlikely to happen.

Local analogue commercial radio

Unlike national analogue licences there is no requirement for cash bids nor a commitment to pay the Treasury a share of advertising and sponsorship revenue when applying for a local radio licence. Ofcom is simply required to award licences for local commercial radio services by open competition to the applicant who best meets the statutory criteria set out in the Broadcasting Act 1990. These are:

- The ability of the applicant to maintain the service for the twelve year licence period.
- The extent to which the proposed service would cater for the tastes and interests of people living in the area.
- The extent to which the proposed service would broaden listener choice.
- The extent to which there is demand or support for the service in the area.

In practice the Ofcom licensing process, like that of the Radio Authority before it, was led by technical analysis of the availability of AM and FM frequencies across the UK. Engineers identified an available frequency or frequencies, and where there was some evident demand for a new service, Ofcom advertised for applicants. The advertisement specified the area to be served together with some guidance on the frequency or frequencies and transmitter powers likely to be approved; it was up to the applicant to choose a programme format that they felt best met the needs of the area. There was usually a three-month period between the advertisement and the closing date for applications.

While Ofcom feels there are few, if any, new frequencies available for analogue commercial radio in the UK, almost 300 existing licences will expire during the next few years and be open to new applicants. When an existing

licence comes up for re- advertisement Ofcom invites declarations of intent from the existing licensee or anyone else. In order to deter spurious statements of intent a cash deposit measured in tens of thousands of pounds is required, refundable when a complete application is submitted. If only the existing licensee declares an interest Ofcom can re-award the licence under a simplified 'fast-track' procedure, otherwise the licence is fully re- advertised.

Licence advertisements appear on the Ofcom website and include the application form that must be carefully and comprehensively completed. In practice the Ofcom questions form the basis for a document, typically between 50 and 100 A4 pages, submitted electronically to Ofcom, usually as a pdf file.

Applications are expected to be clear, concise and simple in layout and style. Over- elaborate applications are strongly discouraged and while a limited number of charts is acceptable, applications must not include photographs or illustrations. The questions on the application form are designed to test applicants' proposals against the statutory criteria in Section 105 of the 1990 Broadcasting Act.

In particular, in assessing the application Ofcom needs to satisfy itself that the company has access to sufficient financial, human and technical resources to maintain the proposed service. The regulator has great experience of the financial position of existing licensees and can usually spot if the business plan, in terms of costs, audience levels and revenue, would not be likely to work with the proposed programming format. Under this section of the Act, even if the proposal were the only application received, Ofcom would not be able to grant a licence to a group without a robust financial plan.

Details are required of the involvement by the applicant and its major shareholders in activities which could trigger concerns under the ownership regulations, such as advertising agencies, other media and publicly funded, political or religious bodies. Identifying the individuals who will serve as directors is an important element in assuring Ofcom that the company will know what it is doing if granted the licence. In the case of a station that will be a subsidiary of an established group it may be sufficient to nominate some of the group's national directors but a new local project should ensure the board includes experience of radio broadcasting as well as finance, local business and the community.

Financial projections must include profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and cash- flow forecasts, it is usual to provide these for the pre-operational period and the first thee years of the licence. In order to justify commercial revenue assumptions the applicant will need to give details of the area expected to be covered, the estimated population and the expected listening figures for the first three years. All the assumptions must be justified by research or relevant experience.

The programming 'format' is at the heart of the application and, in reality, is about the only part of the licence to which the station must conform absolutely after the award of the licence, the wording forming part of the licence. A blank Ofcom-standard format form is supplied and requires completion with station name, number of daily broadcast hours and the amount of locally-made programming and news bulletins. There is space for details of any intention to provide the service from the studios of another station and for any proposal to share programming with another service. Section 314(1) of the Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to ensure:

- that programmes consisting of or including local material are included in such services but, in the case of each such service, only if and to the extent (if any) that Ofcom considers appropriate in that case; and
- that, where such programmes are included in such a service, what appears to Ofcom to be a suitable proportion of them consists of locally-made programmes.

Ofcom's current localness guidelines state that each FM station produce a minimum of 10 hours a day of locally-made programming during weekday daytimes (this should include breakfast) which should include local material, and a minimum of 4 hours a day of locally-made programming at weekends (in daytime) which should include local material. Applicants are free to propose more or less localness as appropriate to the service and area concerned, bearing in mind that the regulator looks for realistic, appropriate and deliverable proposals.

A section on the programming philosophy of the station is an opportunity to set out in more detail and more colourfully the ways in which the service will cater for the tastes and interests of people in the area and broaden the range of programming available from local commercial services. Note that legislation does not require Ofcom to consider whether the new station will broaden choice in relation to existing BBC or national commercial services, although in practice a new local station would be ill- advised to go head-to-head with any of them. Most applicants also include a basic weekday programme schedule at the end of this section.

The 'Evidence of demand' section of the application form is entirely concerned with the results of formal research into the identified demand for the proposed service. Applicants for the larger local and regional licences may spend over £30,000 in commissioning and analysing formal market research studies as part of their application process. Ofcom does not appear to expect anything like as much to be spent on research by applicants for smaller licences but any research used must be robust and fairly conducted. A

summary of the objectives, methodology and conclusions of the research must be included in the application with full data tables submitted separately.

A section headed 'Evidence of Support' gives the applicant the opportunity to include expressions of support from potential audience and prospective local advertisers. Many applicants include quotations from letters supporting their bid submitted by leaders of local public, charitable or commercial bodies. Ofcom (2008) 'does not believe that generic support for the establishment of a new radio service is as meaningful as evidence of considered support for a specific applicant's proposals', so any such letters should relate to the value of the proposed service rather than simply saying that a new radio station would be a good thing. In Ofcom's (2008) view; 'evidence of local demand, as demonstrated by formal audience research or analysis, is a more meaningful and cogent measure than evidence of local support as demonstrated by letters or petitions'. As a result applicant groups now devote more time and effort to formal research than to public meetings and presentations.

An application must conclude with a "Declaration" that neither the applicant nor any director or person concerned in the management of the company is disqualified to hold a licence, that nobody connected with the application or operating the service has been convicted within the past five years of an unlicensed broadcasting offence, in other words running a pirate radio station, and that anything else which might influence Ofcom's judgement as to whether the applicants are fit and proper persons to have a radio licence have been made known to Ofcom.

A non-refundable application fee must be received by Ofcom by the specified closing date. At time of writing fees range from £1,000 for an AM licence or £5,000 for a FM licence in an area of less than 400,000 adults up to £50,000 for a FM licence in a region or city with an adult (15+) population greater than 4.5 million. Funds must be transferred by BACS or CHAPS directly into the Ofcom bank account.

All applications received are made public via the Ofcom website, apart from specified financial information and anything which Ofcom agrees in advance should remain confidential. The regulator's staff read through applications, scoring each section against the four statutory criteria in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal in their briefing to the monthly meeting of the Radio Licensing Committee (RLC) that makes the final decision on licence awards. The RLC usually makes a decision within two to four months of the closing date, winners being notified by phone, the outcome being emailed to all applicants and posted on the Ofcom website.

Within a week or so of the decision Ofcom customarily issues a statement setting out reasons for the award to the successful applicant, but this does not extend to an analysis of why other bids were rejected.

Community Radio

As befits the voluntary nature of much of the sector, while applying for a community radio licence is hardly straightforward it does not require the level of professional technical and business planning, nor the standard of audience research expected of a commercial licence application.

Community radio stations are intended to be provided on a not-for-profit basis focusing on the delivery of specific social benefits for a particular geographical community or a community of interest. As the licences are designed to cover smaller geographical areas than generally would be viable for commercial radio, it is possible to re-allocate frequencies used in the existing larger commercial and BBC transmission areas. Ofcom therefore does not define the exact locations where it wishes to offer community radio licences but invites applications from any group within a specified region of the country. It is up to the applicant group to make a case for a particular area to receive their proposed service.

The Community Radio Order 2004 (HMSO 2004) requires that a community radio service must:

- Be provided primarily for the good of members of the public or of particular communities and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals providing the service.
- Be intended primarily to serve one or more communities - whether or not it also serves other members of the public. (A community is defined as either people who live or work or undergo education or training in a particular area or locality, or people who have one or more interests or characteristics in common).
- Not be provided in order to make a financial profit, and uses any profit produced wholly and exclusively to secure or improve the future provision of the service or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the target community.
- Offer members of the target community opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service.
- Be accountable to the target community.

The Community Radio Order sets out the specific selection criteria used by Ofcom when considering Community Radio licence awards. Some are similar to those asked of a commercial station: to be able to maintain the proposed service throughout the licence period; to cater for the tastes and interests of members of the target community; to broaden the range of programmes provided by (non-BBC) local radio services, and; to demonstrate local demand and support for the introduction of the proposed service. Some are specific: the extent to which the proposed service would result in the delivery of social gain to the public or relevant community; the extent to which those operating the proposed service would be accountable to the target community and the degree of access to the station facilities by members of the target community.

Much of the application form follows the content of the commercial radio procedure outlined previously but there are some important changes and additions. A study of these indicates some of things a group must consider before embarking on a licence application:

Section One asks applicants to supply a short Opening Statement describing their organisation, its objectives, the nature of the proposed radio station, the community which it intends to serve and its broadcasting philosophy.

Section Two asks for information on the organisation applying for the licence. Only a 'body corporate' (not an individual) can hold a community radio licence and Ofcom wants to know whether it is, or will be, for example, a company limited by guarantee or community interest company. Registered Charities are not eligible to hold the licence unless also a corporate body.

As with commercial radio applications, the next section asks for information on the directors of the company and, if applicable major shareholders, including any involvement in specified activities. In addressing the requirements of Section 105(1)(a) of the 1990 Broadcasting Act Ofcom needs to know about the experience and expertise of the group, its structure, management and staffing. Section Four of the application also asks for details of the station's financial position, assets and proposals for funding the ongoing operation.

The community licence form requests a brief history of the group, including when it was formed, links with other community organisations and membership. Ofcom wants to know of any previous broadcasting experience in the group, including past licence applications, internet broadcasting or running Restricted Service Licence stations. The community radio form also places far greater emphasis on the management structure of the organisation and if the posts are paid or voluntary.

Financial questions cover existing assets, pre-launch income and expenditure, and first year income and expenditure against specified headings. The Community Radio Order 2004 requires that stations be funded from multiple sources with no one source comprising more than 50% of operational income, Ofcom asks whether it is proposed to partially fund the service with spot advertising or sponsorship which would count as one source for the purposes of this rule and therefore must account for less than 50% of the total. Fortunately, Ofcom is also willing to count in-kind contributions to the establishment and running of the service. Details of these and other conditions are published in Ofcom's *Notes of Guidance for Community Radio Licence Applicants and Licensees* which may be downloaded from http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun_radio/.

Section Five of the application deals with technical issues and requires detailed information on the proposed transmission system, without which Ofcom would not be able to ensure that a suitable frequency was available. Applicants may request an AM or FM licence, however given the generally greater cost of AM systems, poor night-time reception and a general drift of listening away from the AM bands, few take this option. A transmission site, power and aerial height must be given together with photographs of the aerial site and maps of expected signal strength. For FM transmission the applicant must also say whether they intend to broadcast in stereo and if they will carry Radio Data System messages, the merits of which are discussed in a later section.

Since Ofcom, as well as regulating broadcast issues, is in charge of licensing all transmitters in the UK to prevent interference between services, they need to know that the community group will have expert support in commissioning and maintaining the transmitter, and so ask for names of any outside contractors and the manufacturers of key pieces of transmission equipment.

The programming questions in section six relate to the community (or communities) the proposed station would serve and the programming that it would provide.

The Community Radio Order 2004 defines a 'community' as:

> (a) the persons who live or work or undergo education or training in a particular area or locality, or;
>
> (b) persons who (whether or not they fall within paragraph (a)) have one or more interests or characteristics in common.

Looking at the community the station intends to serve the applicant must answer specific questions on where they live, size of the population concerned and any relevant socio-economic information. A general description of the proposed programming then follows outlining its approach and objectives. As with the commercial radio formats previously described, Ofcom asks for a commitment to a certain number of hours of programme output per day, on weekdays and weekends, including any plans to repeat or automate or originate programming other than in the local area. The balance between music and speech output must be expressed as a ratio, with broad details of the genres of music and types, and languages, of speech programming proposed. It is perfectly acceptable to show how these durations, proportions may change over time as the service becomes more established or has greater support from volunteers.

The sections of the application form on catering for the tastes and interests of the target community, or communities, and on how the service will be different and distinct from the existing offerings of local (non-BBC) stations, should be answered with reference to careful research among the target audience, particularly focussing on their un-served radio needs, and by monitoring the output of relevant stations to identify the difference between their current output and the proposed programming.

Ofcom suggests that the evidence of demand and support supplied in section seven can include, for example: letters from statutory or voluntary sector organisations which expect to contribute practically and/or financially to the operation or which would expect to collaborate with the station in joint activities; evidence of interest in the service generated through RSL activities; results of research; letters of support from local politicians, educational or religious bodies; or support from the business sector. As with commercial applications, Ofcom does not attach great value to numerous examples of similar generic or form letters of support generated by the group, preferring expressions of considered support for the specific proposals. The application form may include brief extracts from letters or research reports which should be submitted in full as separate appendices.

Section Eight measure the additional requirement, under Section 105(1)(e) of the 1990 Broadcasting Act, as modified by the Community Radio Order 2004, that a community radio service provides primarily for the good of members of the public, or of the target community, and in order to deliver 'social gain' (both on air as part of its broadcast output and through other activities). The Community Radio Order lists four mandatory social gain objectives and a further (non-exhaustive) list of seven other social gain objectives that may be applicable. After some general questions about the

purpose and objectives of the service, applicants are specifically asked how they will meet the mandatory objectives:

> (a) Target Audience. How the target audience includes individuals who are otherwise underserved by broadcasting services and how the proposed programming will fill the need.

> (b) Discussion and opinion. How the proposed service will "facilitate discussion and the expression of opinion".

> (c) Education and Training. How the station proposes to provide education or training to individuals not employed by station.

> (d) Community Understanding and Links. How the group proposes to build a better understanding of its target community and strengthen links within it.

Applicants must come up with convincing answers under each of these headings if they are to justify the award of a community licence and should show how the station might meet other 'objectives of a social nature' including, but not limited to, as many as possible on the list suggested by The Community Radio Order:

> (a) the delivery of services provided by local authorities and other services of a social nature and the increasing, and wider dissemination, of knowledge about those services and about local amenities;

> (b) the promotion of economic development and of social enterprises;

> (c) the promotion of employment;

> (d) the provision of opportunities for the gaining of work experience;

> (e) the promotion of social inclusion;

> (f) the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity;

(g) the promotion of civic participation and volunteering.

Another issue in the community application form but not in its commercial equivalent is the need to ensure accountability and accessibility, which are tested in sections nine and ten respectively. In section nine the station must explain how members of the target community will be able to contact the service and influence its operation, how the station will formally or informally collect feedback and how suggestions and criticisms will be acted upon. In section Ten the applicant explains how it will allow access by members of the relevant community to the station facilities and provide training in the use of those facilities.

The application, alongside all others received for the region under consideration, will be made publicly available on Ofcom's website. The applicant must let Ofcom know if they wish certain material to be kept confidential, including personal contact details, staffing proposals and financial matters.

Help can be found with community licence applications from the Community Media Association and Community Radio Toolkit websites. Alex Green, Station Manager at ALL FM, Manchester summed up his feelings about submitting their application:

> It's a very daunting process. You've got these 35 blank
> pages, which increase to around 55 when you've filled
> them in. You've got to break it down into smaller pieces.
> Then it's not so daunting. I booked three weeks clear in my
> diary and at the end of that it was written. So it wasn't
> something that was done over a massive period of time,
> but equally it's not going to be done in an afternoon. "We
> finally submitted it about 30 mins before the deadline. It's
> the fine-tuning of it - sending it back and forward between
> ourselves, quibbling about words. We could have gone on
> forever. Eventually you have to just give up and press
> 'send'.
> Fogg, Korbel and Brooks (2006 : 40)

Radio restricted service licences

Short-term Restricted Service Licences (RSLs) are a well established facility for those wanting to broadcast for a special event, for trial broadcasts and for training and education. RSLs are usually issued for a maximum of 28 days operating with a low-power transmitter in a limited geographical area. Except in the London area within the M25, a person or group may hold two short-term RSLs in the same area in any twelve month period provided there is a four month gap between the broadcast of each service.

Exceptionally, in areas where there is no existing commercial or community radio service, Ofcom may grant a licence for a longer period, on FM, at no additional cost. The maximum period likely to be allowed is 84 days, once in a twelve month period, with a second RSL of 28 days permitted after a four month gap. Ofcom also accepts applications for up to 28 days of non-consecutive broadcasts at low power from the same site, extending across an agreed period of time, for coverage of a series of events. Typical uses are at football stadiums or race tracks, but the licences are not restricted to sports events provided the radio service is focussed on events happening at the site of the service.

The application form may be downloaded from the Ofcom website, is straightforward and licences generally are awarded on first-come-first-served basis. Because Ofcom has a general statutory duty to ensure that radio services appeal to a variety of tastes and interests (Section 3 of the Communications Act 2003), the programme format of a restricted service should broaden audience choice and so be different to anything available by way of commercial local radio in the same area. Ofcom may however permit a trial service with a format similar to an existing local commercial radio service to operate in the same area when the local commercial radio licence will be re-advertised within a year and the RSL group intends to compete for that licence.

Each application must be accompanied by an application fee of £400. In the event that the application is successful two licences fees must be paid before transmissions can begin, one for a broadcasting licence under the Broadcasting Act 1990 and the other for a transmission licence under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006. Both are issued by Ofcom. For an AM licence, at time of writing, Ofcom charges £10 per day for the broadcasting licence plus £15 per day for the transmitting licence, for low power FM the charges are £10 plus £25, and for up to 25 watts on FM the daily tariff is £30 plus £40. By way of example the common 28-day FM RSL will cost a total of £1,960 in Ofcom licence fees.

A separate category of long-term RSL permits a station to provide a continuous service within a single site occupied by an establishment, such as a

university, hospital, shopping centre, marina or military base. These licences were introduced to replace the ad-hoc arrangements permitting some university and hospital stations to broadcast within their own premises using an inductive loop and are issued for a maximum of five years but are automatically renewable.

Stations are usually permitted to use up to 1 watt of radiated power on an AM frequency but FM frequencies are available in some less populous areas of the UK at a usual maximum radiated power of just 50 milliWatts.

The annual cost of a long-term RSL licence varies depending upon whether it is for a service on freely-radiating AM, FM or induction loop. For FM and induction-loop services the fee is currently is £140 per year, £275 for a freely-radiating FM licence. In each case an additional £100 annual Wireless Telegraphy Act licence fee must be paid.

DAB national commercial radio multiplex licences

DAB radio works in a fundamentally different way to traditional AM and FM radio and this is reflected in the very different licensing arrangements. As explained later in this publication, DAB is broadcast as a collection of audio and data services bundled onto a single frequency, the bundle being known as a multiplex. The average multiplex has 1.2 megabits per second of usable capacity that allows for around eight or nine stations depending on the digital quality required for each.

It is these multiplexes which are licensed by Ofcom and from time to time the regulator advertises for companies who wish to operate multiplexes nationally or in different regions of the country. The company who wins the licence then has to find a mix of radio services to fulfil its application obligation to Ofcom. In practice most multiplexes have been awarded to consortia of existing radio groups who fill many of the available slots themselves. Each multiplex operator may separately advertise for programme services that then pay to fill the remaining capacity. The BBC also operates a national multiplex and local BBC stations are guaranteed a slot on their local commercial multiplexes.

Ofcom is required to award national radio multiplex licences in an open competition to the applicant who best meets statutory criteria set out in the Broadcasting Act 1996 and considers:

- the extent to which the award of the licence to the applicant would be calculated to promote the development of digital sound broadcasting in the UK (otherwise than by satellite);

- how much of the potential coverage area applicants plan to serve, and by what timetable this will be achieved;
- whether applicants appear able to establish the service and maintain it during the licence period;
- to what extent the new radio services proposed by applicants appeal to a variety of tastes and interests;
- how applicants will encourage listeners to invest in new radio sets;
- whether applicants have behaved in a way likely to ensure fair and effective competition in contracting with those radio stations or data services who wish to appear on the multiplex.

There are currently two DAB national commercial radio multiplex licences, the first held by Digital One, the second was awarded to 4 Digital Group, led by Channel 4 Radio Limited in 2007 but is not now expected to appear on-air. The licences are issued for a twelve year period.

DAB local radio multiplex licences

A new local or regional station wanting to broadcast on DAB must reach an agreement with the operator of an existing or soon to be licensed multiplex. The multiplex operators recoup their considerable capital outlay by charging a fee for each service carried on their frequencies. Such fees are subject to confidential commercial negotiation, and depend on the amount of digital bandwidth required but generally are reported to be region of £50,000 to £100,000 per annum.

At the time of writing, current DAB multiplex operators include:

Switchdigital (Aberdeen, Central Scotland, and London);

CE Digital Ltd. (Birmingham, London, Manchester);

Now Digital (Bournemouth, Bristol & Bath, Coventry, Exeter & Torbay, Leicester, Peterborough, Southend & Chelmsford, Swindon & West Wiltshire, Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury & Telford, Norwich, Nottingham, Reading & Basingstoke, Plymouth & Cornwall, Cambridge, Cardiff & Newport, South Hampshire, Sussex Coast, Kent, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire & Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire);

MXR (North East England, North West England, South

Wales & Severn Estuary, West Midlands, Yorkshire);

Digital Radio Group (London);

Arqiva (Ayr);

Emap Digital Radio (Dundee & Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Northern Ireland, Leeds, Liverpool, South Yorkshire, Teesside, Tyne & Wear, Humberside, Central Lancashire);

UTV-Emap Digital Ltd. (Swansea, Stoke on Trent, Bradford/Huddersfield)

MuxCo (Wrexham & Chester, Hereford & Worcester, North Yorkshire)

In most cases the major participants in each existing multiplex consortium are the company or companies owning the heritage analogue commercial radio licences in the relevant area or region. As further spectrum becomes available Ofcom may advertise for further multiplex operators in specific regions around the UK. When making the award of a twelve year DAB local radio multiplex licence, Ofcom is required to take into account:

- how much of the potential coverage area applicants plan to serve, and by what timetable this will be achieved;
- whether applicants appear able to establish the service and maintain it during the licence period;
- to what extent the radio services proposed by applicants appeal to a variety of local tastes and interests. The legislation also requires the broadening of local digital choice to be taken into account;
- evidence of local demand or support for applicants' proposals;
- whether applicants have behaved in a way likely to ensure fair and effective competition in contracting with those radio stations or data services who wish to appear on the multiplex.

Digital sound programme licences

Although a new radio service wishing to broadcast solely via a DAB or Freeview terrestrial multiplex does not require its own transmitting licence, the station must apply to Ofcom for a Digital Sound Programme (DSP) licence. It is then up to the service to negotiate the financial terms for carriage of their audio on the chosen multiplex.

DSP licences are generally issued on request for an indefinite period unless the licence is surrendered or revoked. Beyond the usual exclusion of disqualified persons, including local authorities, political, religious and publicly-funded bodies, advertising agencies and anyone convicted of running a pirate radio station, there are few restrictions on who can apply for a licence and no specific programming obligations beyond the need to comply with the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

The application form is very straightforward and must be accompanied by an application fee of £250 and the first annual fee of £100.

Digital additional services licences

Anyone wishing to broadcast text or data services via a broadcast multiplex not related to the programmes on that multiplex, for example graphic, video or paging services, must have a Digital Additional Services (DAS) licence which is generally issued by Ofcom on request following a similar procedure to that for DSP licences.

Radio licensable content service licences

These licences are required by stations who have arranged to provide a service via satellite or cable. A radio licensable content service (RLCS) is defined by Ofcom (2005: 2) as: "a service provided in digital or analogue form broadcast from a satellite or distributed using an electronic communications network that is to be made available for reception by members of the public and consists of sound programmes." RLCS licences are not needed for internet services or a service is distributed only to listeners within a single set of premises. Licences are generally issued on request following a similar procedure to that used for DSP licences, and are presently subject to an application fee of £250 and an annual licence fee of £575.

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Section 2.5

Managing programme content

Summary

In the next three sections we look at three areas of managing programme content: firstly, techniques for designing and managing programmes to keep the audience listening; secondly, managing different aspects of music and programming, and; thirdly, managing two specialist areas of speech - radio news and phone-ins.

Introduction

To gain a broadcasting licence from Ofcom it is necessary to specify, in suitably broad terms, what audience the station intends to serve and what programming mix will be provided to meet that audience's tastes and needs (see Section 2.4 Applying for a licence). BBC management, similarly, must apply to the BBC Trust and then the government's Department of Culture Media and Sport before launching a new service, detailing the audience need that will be served and outlining the proposed programming.

The average listener is not particularly interested in the business of radio, they are more worried about getting to work on time, fetching kids from school, or finding a job. For most, radio is just another utility that exists only when required and switched off when no longer useful. If the station does not meet the perceived needs of the listener within a short time they will switch to another and will stay with the new service until that station misjudges their needs. Winning stations have managers who recognise this and aim their programming at people with other things on their minds.

To build and hold the maximum possible audience for a given format there are two possible strategies:

1. Never make mistakes in judging the needs of your core audience, or;

2. Ensure the competing stations make mistakes more often than you do

The first is unrealistic so competitive programme management is all about the second option. Whilst we strive to eliminate technical problems that may annoy listeners, such as items failing to happen and dead air, correct programming is far more important. While a small operation may never be able to achieve the technical perfection of a BBC network station, they should know the wants and needs of their more closely defined target audience far better and can more often do the right thing at the right moment.

Knowing the wants and needs of the target listener is critical and so, before we start drawing up even an outline programme schedule, we must decide who we are going to talk to. Research will show if there is a gap in the market, its size and wants. If we broadcast digitally to all western Europe then an audience of train-spotting brass- band enthusiasts may be viable; if our FM licence covers a community of 10,000 people then perhaps we need to appeal to all of them, at least for some of the time.

Once the regular listeners are identified it is necessary to define, usually through research, what needs to be broadcast to keep them listening. This forms the basis of the station's format. Unfortunately many do not think about formats but about variety of music and programme features. Often this involves using the channel to play their own favourite music and talk about their own interests, and justify this by saying that no other radio station provides exactly that service. The management of an effective radio service requires empathy with the target listener, an understanding of their wants and needs, and is more than a technical conduit connecting audio to a receiver. As Garrison Keillor (1992: 45) wrote, a radio station is not just the audio equivalent of a printing press or a web server:

> *Radio... was a raw primitive gorgeous device that unfortunately had been discovered too late. In the proper order of things, it should have come somewhere between the wheel and the printing press. It belonged to the age of bards and storytellers who squatted by the fire, when all news and knowledge was transmitted by telling. Coming at the wrong time, radio was inhibited by prior developments such as literature.*

The public will not listen to a service because we say they should, we have to provide something they want, or believe they need, and be able to describe to them, preferably in just a single sentence, what we are going to do for them. We can provide lots of other things as well, of course, but our programming philosophy must remain faithful to that single sentence. The programme philosophy is further expressed in station marketing 'straplines' which

reinforce the station philosophy in the mind of the listener to, for instance, BBC Radio 1's 'In new music we trust', Smooth Radio's 'Playing the best music from the past five decades, Love Life, Love Music' or the community station Radio Teesdale's 'It's yours'.

The station's positioning statement must relate the service to the listener, avoiding empty hyperbole. A classic positioning line, adopted by WINS New York in 1965 and since adapted by many all-news stations, is: 'You give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the world'. In just a few words that tells you that the station offers a rolling news service focusing on national and international stories and is a promise of what they will provide for the listener. In today's instant news culture 22 minutes seems a long time to wait, so 1010 WINS carries the simple but equally effective strap line 'All news. All the time'.

Having made a contract with the listener through this repeated positioning of the brand it is crucial to deliver what has been promised. The manager must set up and maintain systems to ensure the station remains true to its promise at all key times of the day and week. There must be a clear station music policy and a well defined house-style for the selection and presentation of speech material, and all peak-time programmes must adhere to them.

Fortunately, listeners have become conditioned to appreciate slightly different programming in the evenings and weekend afternoons, but during the day they usually expect their chosen station to provide a predictable service that remains true to the established format. Skilled programme managers recognise that, within this broad format, different audiences are available at different times of day and different days of the week. So it is perfectly sensible, even with the most tightly targeted station, to vary programming in different day parts. But the manager must always ask: 'Does our target listener want it - or is it just convenient to us?"

Presentation style

Most formats give a central role to a programme host. Whether cast as an announcer, chairman, or disc jockey, the host voice will act as a guide and link to the various programme elements and can define the tone and attitude of the service. Listeners are invited to identify with, and relate to, this embodiment of the station's values and style.

While managers are careful to select suitable candidates for such central on-air roles, it is equally important to define what they talk about, based on the known or suspected interests of the required listener. In local radio it is

possible to set out five reasons why a presenter should choose to talk about something on the air:

> 1. It is topical (in radio this usually means it has to do with today)
>
> 2. It relates to the transmission area (it affects, interests or concerns local people)
>
> 3. It relates to the listener (giving them something they personally need or want)
>
> 4. It relates to the presenter (what they've been up to, conveying their own personality)
>
> 5. It relates to the station (a trail for another programme, a promotion, or some community initiative backed by the station).

It would be unusual for all five requirements to be met in every piece of speech but as long as at least one is present it could be argued that the item earns its keep. The really solid-gold link contains strong elements of all five, as in: 'Big FM is presenting Elvis Presley live on stage tonight at the Bigtown Arena, I'll be there from 7 o'clock, and I've got some traffic news for you if you are planning to drive there from the Grange area.'

In local radio the manager must ensure all presenters understand the geographic proposition put in front of listeners and potential listeners. For the listener to feel that the local service is their station it must position its presenters where the listener is – not where the studio happens to be located. A station serving listeners across the Midlands can reasonably say 'down in London' or 'up in Scotland' but not 'Up in Walsall' or 'Down in Solihull'. For the same reason it should avoid phrases like 'Out at the airport', or 'Down there in the suburbs'. The listener who works at the airport does not think she is 'out' anywhere, she thinks she is 'here'. Much the same principle might be adapted to a national or international station where listeners are defined by a shared interest, background or demographic quality, substituting the language of inclusion in an interest group (you, we) and exclusion (they).

Show preparation

A common complaint about music-based radio stations is that the presenters talk too much. It is unprepared, irrelevant waffle that causes the most concern. Many 'disc- jockeys' are wedded to reading out little snippets culled from the morning's tabloids or cut and pasted from a 'show-prep' web site. A favourite song has yet to finish and the presenter talks about a Guatemalan pig farmer who found something strange in his cornflakes.

There is a long-standing debate about how much, and what type of, preparation should go into a typical DJ-led sequence. It is generally assumed that a presenter will spend some time before each show collecting material, in the office, at home or (ideally) out and about in the real world. Few disc-jockeys can busk all the links for a three hour program, to 'show and go' as the common expression puts it, most spend hours in front of a computer finding all the usual 'this day in history' and topical show- business material which is the staple of so many shows.

The ability to cut-and-paste stories to make up the topical links seems the answer to a presenter's dreams. Unfortunately the broadcaster may have lifted the story from a web site who took their 'facts' from a tabloid paper who in turn subbed them down from an original piece in a foreign magazine. Any relationship to the original story, and any claim to topicality will have been lost along the way and there will be no suggestion of relevance to the station's target market. The programming manager cannot simply set targets for how long a presenter must spend 'prepping' the show, or for the quantity of material required. It is the quality and originality of the material that matters judged by regular monitoring and feedback. The role of radio broadcasting is to be immediate and relevant, not to be the recycling plant of the media world, original thought and work must be encouraged.

It is not suggested that anniversary dates, surveys and the utterances of wacky academics have no place in programme planning, they are indeed valuable 'hooks' which can be used to justify the further pursuit of a topic. Many of the items on the revered BBC Radio Four Today programme validate using just such introductions.

Show preparation can only be as good as the understanding of the presenter, producer and/or researcher of the programme's target audience. The live radio sequence must anticipate what the listener wants to be told, the level of detail, when and for how long.

Before a show a local radio presenter will always ask themselves at least these six questions:

What sort of a day is it?
What is everybody in town talking about?
What is today's big news story?
What big event is coming up?
What sports stories are the listeners following?
What films or TV shows do they want to see?

The show should be developed around these ideas, plus any station-wide promotions, and regular features. The definition of perfect content is straightforward: hot topics are anything that the target listener will talk about today. During Wimbledon fortnight listeners might appreciate regular updates on major tennis matches, similarly it might be appropriate to reflect news on big football, cricket and rugby matches, major court cases and industrial disputes. To help programme staff identify hot topics in future programmes, managers at some stations encourage new team members to travel around the target area by public transport, to go to social gatherings of the target audience, and to simply listen to what these people are talking about.

Designing a live programme

The idea of segmentation, dividing a programme up into easily digestible parts has long been popular with radio broadcasters and listeners. Crisell states that it is 'ideal for broadcasters and advertisers because it homogenizes the output, making the commercial breaks and informational elements seem all of a piece with the music' (Crisell 1994: 214) and useful for the listener because they can drop in and out of a programme as they tend to the demands of everyday life (op.cit).

It may sound strange to talk about 'designing' a radio show, but just like any other product intended to meet a need or satisfy a market programming must be conceived with these clear objectives in mind. Before launching a new programme the programme manager should sit down with a pen and a few blank pieces of paper and design the layout of each individual hour.

Every hour is different and no two editions of a programme should sound exactly the same but there should be an underlying structure to the programming (see also Norberg (1996) for detailed description of various structuring devises used by U.S. commercial radio programmers). Regular listeners appreciate a clear pattern within a regularly scheduled show and it is one of the more subtle ways to build brand loyalty. Listeners know where to find the items they want to hear, just like they know where to look in their

favourite daily newspaper. Other station sounds like hard work by comparison. And for the presenter a good framework means that they never run out of time for the commercials, or forget to include a regular feature. The simplest and clearest way to design a programme is to use a "clock", sometimes called a wheel, to display the features in each hour. The clock for one hour on an imaginary station is shown here:
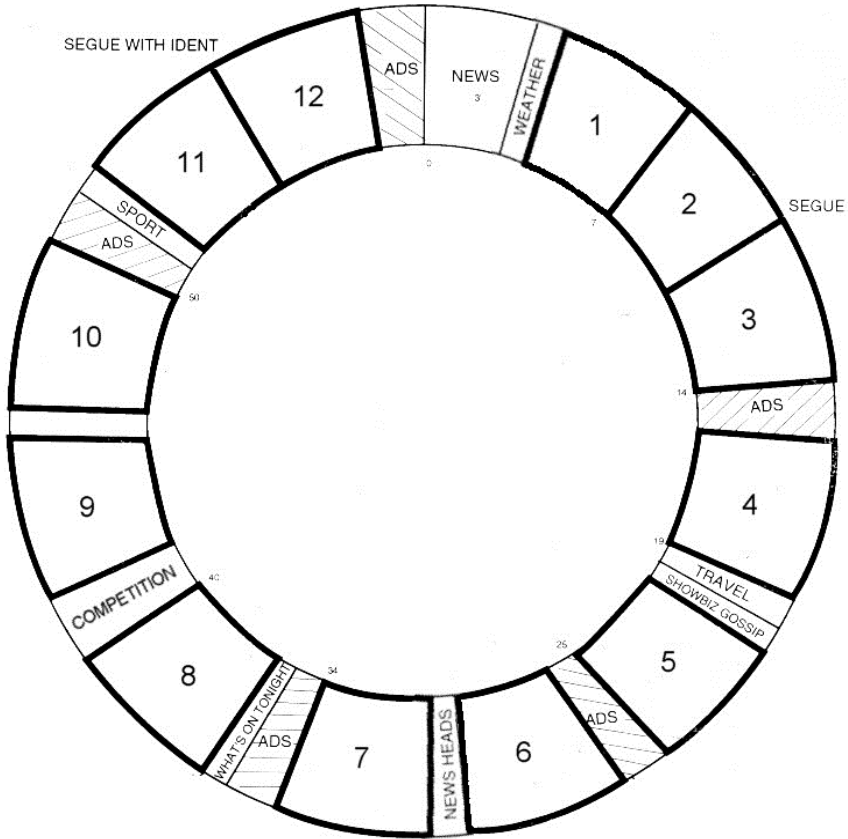
At a glance we can see how the features have been spread around the hour, we can tell our music computer how many tracks of music we will need and tell the traffic computer when to schedule the advertisements. The clock will clearly show if we bunch too many features into one segment, whilst we might want to create a music sweep of several uninterrupted tracks at a certain point, we might also want to avoid a long block of speech where the news, ads, weather traffic news and a feature all run together. Usefully, and unlike a simple list of features on a running order, the clock is unforgiving if you try to fit more than 60 minutes of content into the hour.

Looking at some individual items in clockwise order:

NEWS: Here we have allowed for a three-minute national bulletin from a satellite feed followed by a locally-read weather forecast. After a brief introduction we move straight into the first record. One minute is more than often needed for the weather but allows for a few other words from the presenter before or after the script. We always round-up the length of each item to allow for other links.

SONG 1: We establish a typical duration for the music we would play in this hour. This varies with format, a fifties rock & roll programme will play a lot of short tracks, while a classical format will need more flexibility to play longer pieces. We do not bother with half minutes, if the average track is three minutes 30 seconds long then allowing four minutes for this first disc and three minutes for the next works out fine in practice.

SONG 2: No specific time is allocated between songs 1 and 2 so any link will have to be brief, and probably make maximum use of any long fade of song 1, or long instrumental introduction on song 2. SONG 3 is shown as segued from song 2 - it follows without any interruption.

ADS: In this hour there are four commercial breaks of two minutes each and one of one minute. In practice there may be more or less than this sold on any particular day. We try to show the expected duration on an average day, NOT the maximum.

Notice that, in the remainder of this hour, all the links bar one have a major feature, or commercial break, attached. In this busy sequence, typical of local commercial radio breakfast or 'drive-time' shows, the presenter is left with only one major opportunity to add a one-off feature of their own making to the hour.

While the advertising pattern shown in the sample clock will be familiar to most commercial radio listeners, there is no rule that insists that commercials should run in groups of three or four or more. As long as the advertising messages are identifiably distinct from the surrounding programme they might even be run singly, dotted throughout the hour. Such

regular and predictable commercial interruptions might not be conducive to good programming but the other extreme of a single hourly break with, say, twelve individual spots in it would not be acceptable to advertisers, particularly those in the middle of the sequence. Worldwide research into the effectiveness of radio advertising, considering such factors as length of commercial break, number of other adverts, position in the break and the use of comedy and music (RAEL 2002 and RAB 2008) provides a general consensus that the advertisement is more effective in a shorter break. It is the programme manager who usually must decide how and when to accommodate the required number of advertising slots in the programme clocks, often balancing the expressed desire of listeners for longer spells of uninterrupted programming against their objection to breaks that run for more than a couple of minutes at a time.

The same clock might serve as a design for all the hours of one particular show and some tightly formatted stations can use the same clock 24 hours a day. However it is more common to find variations in each hour, more traffic news at breakfast, no local news at night, extra features in the evening, fewer songs in hours attracting more advertising or with longer news bulletins, for example.

In preparing a new programme, the manager should sit down with the presenter and others involved with the show and talk through each hour using the clocks, making sure they agree that they are workable and agreeing any necessary changes. Master copies of the clocks are often kept in the on-air studio or are available on screen of computer play-out software. Each presenter is expected to refer to their clock throughout the relevant hour and they will find it much easier to spot when their timings are going adrift, and to do something about it. The clock is also invaluable to a stand-in presenter who might at short notice have to run the same sequence. But the best reason for insisting that the team builds its regular show on a clear framework is that it enables them to change things during a live programme when necessary while still finding their way back to the basic format afterwards. It is easier to be spontaneous and include a surprise item if you know exactly what you must drop to make way for it.

Self-editing in the live show

Day-to-day production responsibility for many programmes now rests with the people presenting them. Without a separate producer the host may be left alone in a soundproof box, out of sight and without anyone to supply instant feedback, to look excited or bored, or to provide hand signals suggesting it is

time to move on to the next item. Broadcasters must be encouraged to develop their own techniques to ensure they stay on the rails during each live link.

Music-led stations often impress upon their presenters the principle of 'one thought per link'. Although this is usually softened to allow for trailing ahead, identifying music or cueing the next feature, the underlying philosophy is that the link is an opportunity to engage the listener with one big thought. The 'thought' might be the subject of an interview, a humorous story, news item, promotion, competition or an appeal for help. Anything else in that link should be clearly secondary.

Having planned what they are going to do in each link, the presenter must not let their mouth run away and do something else. In music radio they should finish the task allocated for a link and then stop talking and play the next song. Any good idea that occurs halfway through a link should be saved until later, when they have had time to think it through properly. Management can encourage this good practice with regular feedback and dissection of past programmes with presenters. Managers should stress that presenters are only as good as the best piece they were unable to use, the great radio presenter always having unused material left at the end of their show.

Regular coaching of presenters also helps ensure that the selection and rejection of content meets the policies and priorities of the station. Stories abound of keen disc- jockey types who proudly manage to play 15 songs in an hour while failing to insert any advertisements and arriving late for the next hourly news. Conversely, often it is the music that suffers when time is tight, songs are faded out too early when upon cold reflection they would realise they had talked too long during an earlier link. Staff on a music-led radio station must understand that rarely should the music be shortened to give way to unscheduled speech.

The programme manager must define, explicitly or implicitly, a pecking-order for dropping things from an hour. For example, in a music led local radio service this might read:

First to drop: Irrelevant chit-chat.

Second: Temporary items which do not appear regularly.

Third: Regular features which only appear in this show (can promise to do it tomorrow).

Last to drop: Features which also appearing or are trailed in other shows (for example major station-wide competitions, big promotions).

Never drop without senior permission: Anything regularly scheduled in all programmes (News bulletins, advertisements etc).

Repetition of material

Whilst a frequent source of complaint from listeners, there are editorial reasons for scheduling the same item repeatedly, whether a programme trail on BBC Radio 4 or a current playlist hit on local radio.

The first reason is simply that Rajar data shows that an item must be repeated many times on a single station before even half of the weekly audience of that station will have heard it at least once. Rajar indicates that the average listener hears a single station for typically between 8 and 12 hours per week, so we can suppose that they listen for a total of only around one and a quarter and one and a half hours on the average day. Although this might be spread over two or more listening sessions a policy of playing a programme item every two hours does not appear excessive in ensuring they will hear it at least once.

The management of programme repetition can have implications for the marketing of the service. While the BBC Radio 4 audience appear to welcome both the lunchtime repeat of the previous evening's episode of long-running soap The Archers, and a third transmission as part of an omnibus edition on Sunday, dedicated listeners to a music station can become irritated by the repetition of some current songs, sometimes as frequently as every two hours. One response has been for stations to brand themselves as "the home of the no-repeat workday" where no song will be played more than once between 9 and 5. Nevertheless it remains common in music radio for a handful of current songs, usually designated the A-list, to be played in rotation so as to appear every two or three hours. Where research shows that a particular song is currently very popular with the station's target listeners the programme manager will wish to ensure that most hear it whenever they switch the service on.

The second reason for building repetition into a radio schedule applies mainly to promotional or advertising material. It is generally believed in the advertising community that the average listener needs to hear a typical commercial three or four times before they fully react to the message. Radio sales people say that this is not a weakness of radio, but rather that radio advertisements work their way deeper into the listener's brain before they are aware of them and argue that that is why radio is such a powerful tool.

The general assumption is that effective radio campaigns require spots to be sold and scheduled as packages of typically 28, 35 or 42 spots per week. It follows that a programme trail or public service message on a non-commercial service must be broadcast with similar frequency to achieve a measurable response. Rather than promoting everything a little it is better to focus, for perhaps a week or so, on a few programmes, features or issues and to promote them heavily with frequent repetition of the message. The line 'repetition builds reputation' is frequently quoted in this regard, variously attributed to a number of American radio gurus.

Outside programme suppliers

Most stations take some of their programming directly from outside suppliers. For example, across the UK, the Independent Radio News (IRN) network feeds some 300 analogue and digital stations, each taking the live hourly bulletins or the same material in kit form, with scripts and audio 'cuts' delivered via a dedicated digital satellite system or via the Internet. Every year, IRN broadcasts 22,000 news bulletins and over 30,000 audio clips, 40,000 scripts and cues are distributed.

A number of other commercial operations offer a variety of traffic, sports, entertainment and financial news bulletins, usually funded by sponsorship revenue paid directly to the originating company. At the most basic level the client stations receive the topical programme material free of charge in return for transmitting it complete with the built-in sponsor credits and, in some cases, a campaign of promotional trails, also containing the sponsor reference, must also be aired at other times. Examples include the Entertainment News from UBC Media, two-minute self-contained, fully-produced entertainment bulletins provided three times a day and heard on nearly 150 commercial radio stations across the UK, and bulletins from traffic and travel specialist Trafficlink which provides voice and data services to many commercial radio stations and the BBC (the latter paying for its service).

Under the terms of the Broadcasting Act 1990 (HMSO 1990) all programming on commercial and community radio may be sponsored with exception of news bulletins and any 'news desk presentation'. The Broadcasting Act 1990 Section 90(1)(b) requires that "any news given in whatever form is presented with due accuracy and impartiality." Ofcom (2005) feels that sponsorship could compromise this requirement and IRN news cannot therefore be funded under a sponsorship model. Instead IRN licenses the use of its material in return for a slice of the client stations' commercial airtime (in the case of the smaller community radio services and Restricted

Service Licence stations IRN currently permits access to their material in return for a relatively small fixed fee). Stations taking the live IRN hourly bulletins, or using IRN national and international material alongside their own local stories to build their own 'mixed' bulletins, must broadcast a specific advertisement following each morning peak time bulletin. These spots, marketed under the brand "Newslink", fund the service with any annual surplus being distributed among the client services. IRN is now owned by the major radio companies GCap and Bauer. Since March 2009, the service is produced by Sky News under contract to the commercial broadcasters.

In addition to the hourly bulletins and international and national news coverage, IRN also offers its own sports, financial and entertainment news feeds. In addition to the dedicated satellite feed the IRN Net Newsroom is a fast way for stations to access national and international news. As well as audio clips, the net service offers downloadable scripts, headlines, packages, what's coming up in the next hour and daily prospects. Access to the service is limited to clients of IRN.

Full-length syndicated and live networked programmes are supplied to many stations often under sponsorship deals requiring the broadcast of a number of promotional trails across the week in addition to the sponsor credits included by the producer in the programme itself. The longest running example of these was The Network Chart Show for many years relayed by most commercial radio stations each Sunday afternoon, now replaced by a number of different initiatives.

Competitions

"Tune in to win" seems a perfect marketing proposition to put to potential listeners, and most commercial stations use it from time to time in some way or another, but evidence that competition prizes actually influence radio listening is difficult to identify. A multitude of factors influence the reported listening to any station and it is not possible to isolate the importance of a single factor such as a competition.

In July 2007, after a series of damaging revelations about the use of listeners contributions, including some to BBC flagships such as Blue Peter and Children in Need, BBC Director General Mark Thompson announced a total suspension of all phone-related competitions on BBC television and radio. The ban remained in place on most services throughout the remainder of the year until after the publication of the BBC's first Code of Conduct for competitions and voting in November 2007, and, were competitions an important factor in influencing listeners to BBC services, might have been

expected to impact on reported listening. In fact, during the Rajar period ending December 2007 (Rajar 2007), while total hours listened to all radio dropped by 3.7 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, BBC radio services in total increased their lead over all commercial radio, gaining a 55.4 per cent share of all UK listening.

Clearly importance of competitions must vary with the format and listener proposition of the station. It seems likely that BBC local radio was more adversely affected by the competition ban than the network services who could afford to be more content-led and for whom listener competitions are at best a side-show, but even here there is no consistent conclusion to be drawn from the Rajar figures.

Just as with any other form of programme content, station management should have a policy on competitions, a strategy based on the needs and wants of the target listener. Too many presenters regard a give-away as a quick fix for a situation where they have nothing else to talk about in their show, but for maximum audience impact it is better to have one big game happening somewhere on the station during the week, with every programme talking it up, than to run dozens of insignificant unexciting competitions all over the schedule.

The programme manager may bring all prizes under central control and not allow anyone to give away anything without permission. Not only does this allow the manager to put together fewer, bigger promotions (one big competition could give away a lot of those smaller prizes) but it can also ensure the competitions are run in a proper and fair manner while making sure that the available prizes get to the programmes which need them rather than staying with the presenters who are best at blagging freebies.

When designing a radio competition, as in many other aspects of the business, the manger should remember the maxim KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid). Many great radio ideas sink without trace under the sheer weight of complications added during the production process. The manager should be clear what they need the game to achieve. If it is to increase the station's weekly reach then they are looking for something which non-listeners will hear about so they feel encouraged to tune-in and play. This often suggests some publicity in other media, or a game card which they collect from a client, or something which comes through their door. The game will happen at predictable time or times which can be advertised in other media and spread by word of mouth. The message is as simple as: "Tune-in at 7.15 a.m. daily and listen for your chance to win."

It is commonly thought that, where there is flexibility about when non-listeners should be encouraged to tune-in to take part in a promotion, the station should pick a time just ahead of the breakfast-peak, say at around 7.15,

as this can give the biggest impact on overall listening figures. There are simply more people able to respond to the publicity at that time of day, and most of them could stay for an hour before leaving. If, on the other hand, the aim is to hold on to existing listeners, to encourage brand loyalty and increase average hours listened, then the manager might look for a game which runs throughout the day, or even across the week. The times might not be entirely predictable, because in this case the underlying message is: "Stay tuned ....the longer you listen the more chances there are to win."

The station must be realistic about the power of any such promotion. It may not be reasonable to expect the average listener to remain tuned for four hours just to hear the outcome of a simple quiz. The sad fact is that most listeners will not stay with any programming that long, even for the most fascinating stunt, they have lives to live in the real world. It is more realistic to time the promotion to get just an extra 15 minutes out of them on the average day, a realistic, achievable target that could add significantly to the Rajar figures.

The majority of commercial radio competitions involve prizes donated by outside suppliers, an arrangement seen as acceptable as long as rules on sponsorship and accounting for commercial revenue are not breached. It is not usually necessary to set up a complicated contra-deal, with commercial airtime being traded for the prize, it may be sufficient to offer a mention of the donor each time their prize is described. Allowing for pre-promotional trails, the appeal for entrants, the competition itself and the final announcement of the winner, this can amount to a considerable number of credits for the supplier. Nevertheless such deals are a frequent cause of friction between sales and programme managers. While the sales manager will see such a relationship as a strong basis for further sponsorship and advertising sales the programmer will be concerned that the prize fits the lifestyle and aspirations of the station's target audience. The programme managers should be pro-active in working with the sales team to find a great prize, often defined as something which the listener might never buy for themselves but which they have always wanted, exactly those items which make the best birthday presents.

Where the programmes department organise a prize they can sometimes be accused of under-cutting the sales department. If the local pizza shop discovers that they can get ten mentions each evening for the effort of delivering one pizza they will be unlikely to show any interest in the sales manager's advertising rate card. A good rule of thumb is to look at the yield of the average sponsorship credit, or ten second commercial spot, on the station. If someone is paying you £200 per week for twenty sponsor credits, then it is reasonable to equate a prize worth £10 with only one free plug on-the-air. The

station cannot be rigid about this, but, for the programme manager, putting a decent value on their own airtime should be a matter of pride.

Although not generally available as part of a deal with the supplier, a cash prize has generally broader appeal than any specific item, being useable by any listener. Cash further offers the possibility that the prize can be snowballed, with perhaps £20 being added on each day there is no winner. Such growing cash piles can become popular talking points among listeners and can increase brand loyalty.

Where possible the prize should be something unique which money cannot buy: the chance to meet a big star backstage; a journey in the cab of a high-speed train through the Channel Tunnel or the opportunity to push the button which demolishes an old chimney. This may require creativity in packaging what is already on offer: turning a restaurant meal into a candle-lit champagne dinner for two served personally by the head chef; getting some copies of a hot new CD signed by the artist; preferring one pair of VIP "Access All Areas" backstage passes to twenty ordinary concert tickets.

While the prize is be the bait which encourages the listeners to play the game it should not appear to be the reason for the game. The programme manager should never allow a presenter to say: "I've got six of these to give away, so this is what we're going to do..."   The greatest prize must simply be the final crowning touch to a perfect promotion.

Many of the best radio competitions start with a simple idea, perhaps a line from a song or a clever title. And the great ones stay simple. Here are ten basic principles behind the design of simple but devastatingly effective on-air promotions:

> 1. Recognise that the majority of listeners will not, in fact, enter the competition. For them the game must be fun to listen to, it must be an entertaining piece of radio. The success of a promotion cannot be judged by counting the number of entries received, the impact on non-participants will always be more important.

> 2. Find a snappy title for the promotion and make sure that all presenters always refer to it by this name.

> 3. Look for a topical "hook" for the promotion. Something connected with the lifestyle of the target listener. Can you tie-in with a new film or leisure craze?

> 4. Do not make the listeners jump through too many hoops to enter the contest. If you cannot explain the entire game in two sentences it is

too complicated. Avoid contest mechanisms where the listener has to "register" in order to play. If only those listeners who have sent in an entry are to selected why should anyone else keep listening?

5. Keep the game as open as possible for as long as possible. Avoid games which lead to semi-finals and finals. Once the listener knows they have not won a place in the semi-finals their hopes of winning the big prize have vanished, and the competition has lost 90 per cent of its interest for them. If possible design the game so that any listener believes that they could win right up to the last possible moment.

6. Unless a purchase is required, avoid skill-testing questions if possible. Ask the listener to call when they hear a particular song, or if you read out their birth-date or postcode, and take a certain numbered caller to air as an instant winner. Where any purchase or payment is required from the listener as a condition of entry then there must be a reasonable element of skill involved in winning or it may be regarded as an illegal lottery.

7. The most entertaining quiz questions are those where the answer is very difficult to work out or remember until it is revealed, when it immediately seems blindingly obvious. Sponsors will often suggest questions about their product, which may also form the prize, but it is better to devise a clever alternative based on the lifestyle and interests of the target listener. The people who already know all about the product are not the ones the client needs to impress.

8. Ensure the entry mechanism is available to most of the target listeners at the relevant times. Some target groups are more likely to be attracted to a text competition than telephone or email.

9. Design the game so you can keep it moving with high production values. The station must retain control of when it will begin and end, how long each segment will last and how it will sound. A specially prepared music bed is useful in giving the game shape and identity.

10. From the beginning make it clear how the winner will be selected. For example do not say the first correct call or text will be the winner. Some listeners will say they were disadvantaged and the station will lose all control over how long the promotion lasts on air. Better to say that you will pick a reasonably high numbered caller, and count the

calls lighting up the switchboard before picking the first entrant or to set a time limit and say the first correct answer drawn out wins.

Even where every care is taken in devising and operating a competition any station will sooner or later receive a complaint alleging unfairness. As with any complaint, it is vital that the issue is dealt with promptly and politely. The usual defence is to claim that the game was played in accordance with the rules, but, unlike in print or on product packaging where small print is available, the full rules of a competition are rarely broadcast in a radio programme. A common solution is to devise standard rules which will apply to any game or competition broadcast by the station. The rules should be specific enough to cover all the usual causes of misunderstanding or complaint, but general enough to allow variations in the specific mechanism of each promotion. Only the conditions specific to the present game need be broadcast, the listener being referred to the station's web site for the general rules and conditions. Different services will want to draft standard rules to suit their own style and policies and it is a good idea to get legal advice, but the standard rules will probably include some common elements:

1. The competition is not open to employees (or members of their immediate families) of the radio station or anyone connected with the promotion.

2. By entering the listener is deemed to agree to abide by the standard rules.

3. Any specific broadcast instructions for each promotion form part of the rules.

4. Entries must be received by the radio station before the closing date and/or time mentioned on-air.

5. Where the prize may be won by a numbered caller or participant (as in the 97th correct caller) the selection of the winning entrant will be at the sole discretion of the station.

6. The station cannot be held responsible for any difficulty in communicating with the radio station by telephone, test, email, post or other means, or for the non-delivery, delay or loss of any entry.

7. For copyright reasons, that all entries become the property of the Company (unless otherwise stated) and cannot be returned and that the entrant agrees to their name and home town being published on-the-air and elsewhere. By entering they will be deemed to agree to their participation being broadcast and recorded.

8. For legal reasons age limits may apply to the winners of certain prizes. The station cannot present a prize to a person who, for any reason, would not be allowed by law to purchase or use the prize or where the supply to that person would be unlawful.

9. Only the stated prize or prizes will be won, there will not be a cash alternative to a specified prize. In the event of the stated prize being unavailable the station can arrange the supply of an appropriate alternative of similar value at the station's sole discretion.

10. In the event that there is more than one winner of a prize which is by its nature divisible (for example a cash prize) then the prize may be shared between the winners. In the event of there being more than one winner of a prize which is not divisible the decision of the station as to the ultimate winner shall be final.

11. While the station will use its best endeavours to ensure that prizes are received by the winner it cannot be held responsible if the prize fails to arrive. The station will notify the winner of the arrangements for collection or delivery of the prize, if it is not claimed or collected within 14 days it may remain the property of the station.

12. The station has the right to amend or end any promotion without prior notice.

13. In the event of any dispute or ambiguity over the running of the promotion, the decision of the station is final.

Point three above is particularly crucial in ensuring, for example, that, as long as the station stated clearly on-the-air when inviting entries that the game was only open to people called Bill or that entrants had to say a certain phrase when they rang, then that condition became part of the rules. A presenter cannot be permitted to change the instructions after some people have already entered, the manager must run through the mechanism carefully with the

relevant presenters, to anticipate and iron out any snags, before it is launched or promoted on the air.

In practice few complaints relate to the conduct of a game on the air, they are more usually occasioned by the winner not receiving the expected prize and often this is a result of radio station itself being let down by a supplier. A promotion has been arranged with an outside company in which they supply goods to give away to listeners in exchange for related on-air mentions. The promotion is agreed, everyone at the station, the client and their agency is excited about it, and it goes on-air. But human nature is such that, after the fun is over, nobody notices that the prize has not arrived at the station, a situation worsened when it emerges that nobody in the station has retained a formal written record of the names and addresses of the winners announced on the air.

Effective management of on-air competitions requires a clear paper trail from start to finish. Many programme managers will not permit a prize to be offered on the air until and unless it is in the physical possession of the station. A prize with no physical existence, for example the offer of a restaurant meal or VIP treatment at a big event, must be confirmed in writing before the promotion goes ahead. When the prize is not a small physical object it is usually most convenient to give the lucky listener a letter proving them to be the winner and entitling them to claim the prize from the supplier at a convenient time. The client or sponsor might be encouraged to originate the letter on their own letterhead and give it to the station before the promotion is launched.

Fairness and audience response

It is generally recognised that a broadcaster has an editorial right and duty to decide what and who to include, or not include, in a programme. Guy Starkey (2004:84) observed: 'Ideally every caller who is allowed to speak in a programme will have been spoken to before hand, either by a producer or researcher, who should attempt to identify those who will sound most interesting, have something to say and not be too much of a liability.'

Some managers specify that all listener contributions should be pre-recorded as a guaranteed method of quality control, with apparently live telephone contributions to DJ-style programmes being recorded some minutes earlier. Usually the studio mixer is configured to feed recorded material, typically music or advertisements, directly to the listener while at the same desk the presenter can talk with the caller – digitally recording the result for

rapid replay and even simple editing – before broadcasting only the more successful items.

While this degree of selection and editorial control over listener participants has been practised for many years without any significant controversy, the increasing use of premium-rate numbers drew attention to some of the practices and raised new management issues which were publicly brought to a head by a succession of television revelations in 2007.

Traditionally the broadcaster did not gain financially from the telephone revenue, nor indeed from the postage, generated by their thousands of respondents. The cost of participating was limited to the price of a standard stamp or telephone call and listeners generally understood that decisions on their inclusion in a programme were akin to a lottery. The coincidence of the rapid growth of an independent telecommunications sector able to offer specialised telephone services and the slowing up of traditional revenue sources attracted many commercial broadcasters to start using premium rate numbers for voice and text responses to their programmes.

A number of arrangements are offered by telecommunications suppliers, but in general the premium rate call revenue is split three ways between the caller's network supplier, the telecommunications company providing the call handling and the broadcaster. At it simplest the broadcaster's share is used to fund a competition prize or other programming element which would not otherwise be affordable, but increasingly, particularly in nationwide commercial television, the call revenue was seen as sufficient to support and justify the entire production. Inevitably such a programming model led to suspicions that programmes were being shaped to maximise the number of phone or text calls and indignation when it was realised that some callers were being invited to spend money on calls when they had no prospect of being selected for the programme.

This focus on the propriety of broadcasters' dealings with their viewers and listeners has heightened the importance of ensuring appropriate procedures are employed in managing audience response to radio stations. However carefully the station manages its competitions, things do go wrong in live broadcasts: there may be no correct answer or even no entrants at all; the text, phone or email system may fail; or there may have been a mistake in the question or supposed correct answer. In these circumstances it is natural for the staff to adopt the show business adage that the show must go on and to endeavour to fake a winner or encourage people around the station to act as contestants.

Following a number of revelations of abnormalities in high profile commercial television programmes, in March 2007, ITV appointed Deloitte & Touche LLP to carry out a comprehensive review of the use of premium rate

interactive services (PRS) in programming on all ITV channels. The review (ITV 2007:3) identified some serious issues which were of equal concern to management in radio broadcasting:

> • editorial discretion being applied by the relevant production team in the process of selection of a competition winner or result of a viewer vote. Whilst this appears to have been done with the aim of producing the most entertaining programmes possible, clearly the exercise of editorial discretion in this way is fundamentally incompatible with fair conduct of viewer competitions or voting;

> • lack of proper consideration being given, in pre-production planning of individual programmes, to ensuring fairness in the use of PRS; late receipt of a minority of competition entrants or votes from specific platforms, with the result that some entries or votes from that platform were not entered into the relevant competition or vote; and

> • failure to blank out PRS (premium rate) numbers on some programming in a time-shifted service when the relevant competition had already been concluded but a caller would still be charged.

Although the resulting press furore focussed on major ITV and BBC television programming it engendered considerable soul searching in the radio community. It became clear that in future radio stations were expected to be honest and transparent in their conduct of radio competitions. In January 2008, finding a competition on BBC Regional Television to have been in breach of its guidelines, Ofcom (2008b) issued a warning: 'Ofcom underlines to broadcasters that if a material problem arises with the conduct of a competition, viewers or listeners must be informed as soon as possible. Broadcasters must not proceed with the competition without informing the audience of that problem if it is likely to affect viewers or listeners' decision to participate.'

The Deloitte report identified three specific areas of management failure in ITV's handling of audience response:

> • programme producers, staff and supporting companies have not always recognised or had a respect for the impact of their actions (often driven by editorial decisions) on the integrity of the interactive event and its participants who are paying to enter a competition or to vote;

• a lack of agreed and consistently applied processes, controls and ways of working between the many parties that are often involved in the end to end process; and

• supporting technology, which is in the most part supplied by third party suppliers, and the environment in which it is used, have lacked the reliability and resilience consistently to deliver the required level of services and to prevent errors arising.

It would be an understatement to say there still exists a grey area in to what extent radio stations now feel able to manage audience participation to produce a more entertaining, exciting or informative result. Are we to believe that a presenter, on 97 FM, who says she is going to take the first caller on line 97 actually has access to a 97-line switchboard? Are a range of incorrect answers deliberately read out to extend the excitement before randomly choosing a winning response later in the show? If there is no financial benefit to the station or presenter and no corruption in the selection of the final winner do such creative touches matter? It is perhaps inevitable in any creative undertaking that the artist is asked to compromise between complete honesty and the artifice necessary to communicate the desired idea or emotion.

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Section 2.6

Managing music programming

Format descriptions

Tim Wall's (2003) case study of popular music radio brings together some useful discussion about the history and development of music radio formats and programming practices within different radio sectors. He cites Negus (1992) who analyzed how North American influenced commercial radio 'places an emphasis on the centralized, routine and information-led nature of music programming' (Wall, 2003: 115) whereas producers on UK public service broadcaster BBC Radio 1 have more freedom to choose their music, particularly in the evening slots.

In the USA there are many shorthand descriptions used to summarise commonly found radio station formats, particularly music based ones. The radio audience research body (Arbitron 2008) offers the following list, which is by no means comprehensive and where several formats are frequently divided into sub-genres:

80s Hits
Active Rock
Adult Contemporary (AC)
Adult Hits
Adult Standards/MOR
Album Adult Alternative (AAA)
Album Oriented Rock (AOR)
All News
All Sports
Alternative
Children's Radio
Classical
Classic Country
Classic Hits
Classic Rock
Contemporary Christian
Contemporary Inspirational

Country
Easy Listening
Educational
Family Hits
Gospel
Hot AC
Jazz
Latino
Urban
Mexican Regional
Modern AC
New AC (NAC)/Smooth Jazz
New Country
News/Talk/Information
Nostalgia
Oldies
Other
Pop Contemporary Hit Radio
Religious
Rhythmic AC
Rhythmic Contemporary Hit Radio
Rhythmic Oldies
Soft AC
Southern Gospel
Spanish Adult Hits
Spanish Contemporary
Spanish News/Talk
Spanish Oldies
Spanish Religious
Spanish Tropical
Spanish Variety
Talk/Personality
Tejano
Urban AC
Urban Contemporary
Urban Oldies
Variety
World Ethnic

In any radio station few subjects generate as much heated debate and managerial anguish as music policy. This is where the desire for creativity and spontaneity can conflict with the need for a consistent brand image and station sound. In establishing the need for a radio station to have a music policy at all, we would suggest that there are two kinds of music radio programme: those where the individual tracks of music are secondary to the speech content, whether in the form of disc-jockey banter or structured features; and those where the selection of each piece of music is central to the purpose of the show, where the programme is essentially about the music featured.

This is not to say that the choice of music is not a central element of all programmes on a music-based radio service. As Wilby and Conroy (1994:50) point out:

> *Music is not a means of providing a break or relief from speech, even if it enables a presenter to set up the next guest interview in the studio. From a listener's perspective, music is an integral part of the station's output. A production team is responsible for presenting its programme as part of the station's overall flow of output and to ensure that the music is blended in to prevent an undue impression of the programme lurching from one item to the next.*

Our distinction between the two types of programme rather reflects the way the typical listener uses radio at different times and the criteria used to recruit suitable radio presenters for each. Presenters are seldom appointed without the programme manager having heard them perform on a previous station, in a 'demo' recording or at an audition. For the typical daytime sequence the manager will be looking for presentation skills, entertainment value and how their persona will fit with the station's brand values, but the selection process rarely includes any detailed questioning of their specific tastes in music, musical knowledge or the contents of their personal iPod. By contrast these are exactly the personal qualifications sought in the presenter or producer of a credible specialist music programme.

While the knowledgeable and talented specialist music presenter can be left to choose the appropriate tracks for their own show, it would be presumptuous for a general presenter to believe that they should select the music to be heard for several hours each day. More commonly the music played in the daytime sequences is selected centrally, by a Head of Music at each station or operating across a group, frequently using a computer program such as Selector from RCS.

The development of a successful music policy often requires that the size of the universe of available tracks is reduced. While this conflicts with the oft-quoted desire of the audience for a greater variety of music the experience of a great many radio services over half a century is compelling.

> *The call for variety is not a call for a large number of*
> *titles. How do they win with fewer records? By making*
> *sure every record is right. That requires music testing and*
> *careful attention to rotation and flow.*
> (Shane 1991: 118)

The concept of a winning format having a limited playlist was born in the United States of the 1950s. Top 40 radio was the brainchild of Todd Storz, owner of radio station KOWH in Omaha, Nebraska who noticed that juke-box users selected a relatively small number of songs very regularly. While not disputing the role of Storz, others say the invention of Top 40 radio may be traced to some 1950 University of Omaha research that indicated that listeners listed music as a major reason for using the radio. Storz acquired the research and decided to play the top current songs in heavy rotation. Later, after buying WTIX in New Orleans, he decided to trump a rival's Top 20 show by adding another 20 songs and extending the programme by an hour, producing the first Top 40 sequence. The format is generally regarded as having been perfected by programmer Gordon McLendon at his station KLIF in Dallas, Texas.

When playing 40 tracks exclusively or extensively throughout all programmes there was a risk that the audience would become fatigued if they always appeared in the same order. In addition sales figures and audience research suggested that a handful of songs were always particularly popular in any given week. The solution was simply to organise the seven-inch 45 rpm singles into at least two separate boxes. The presenter simply had to take one from each box in turn, returning the used disc to the back of the original box. In this way a typical 'A-list' box might contain just five or six of the most popular current hits while the 'B-list' box contained a much larger number of songs, including those formerly on the A-list and new releases yet to reach their peak. By taking from each box in turn a pseudo-random sequence was generated while ensuring an even distribution of the most popular material.

Depending on the size of the B-list the repetition of songs might vary from once every two hours for the top songs to once per four or five hours for the others. The same system was applied at stations playing a wider range of music by scheduling a sequence where, perhaps, only every second or third or fourth song was taken from the current playlist boxes, in turn, the other tracks being

drawn from specified eras of 'oldies'. As a result repetition of the top current hits was automatically less frequent on stations also playing oldies.

Keeping track of which songs had been played in each programme was a huge administrative burden which was lifted with the introduction of computerised music scheduling systems such as Selector from RCS in the early 1970s. While different software offers a range of options all such programs are driven by three main sets of data:

1. The universe of music tracks, each identified, in addition to title and artist and general category, by a number of characteristics including: duration; length of intro; how it ends; texture; tempo; era; whether male or female vocal or instrumental. Some tracks could be stipulated to be good 'hour starters' while others might have scheduling restrictions limiting them to only certain times of day. The song database will also contain the copyright details required for accurate reporting to the collection societies.

2. The requirements of each music slot in the programming 'clock' for each hour of the week, specifying what category, style or era of music would be acceptable and what musical limitations might be placed on that slot.

3. Scheduling rules applying to all programmes, or in different hours, programmes, dayparts or day of the week. Such rules typically require the computer to avoid playing two songs by the same artist in the same hour and specify minimum repetition intervals for songs in different categories (A-list, B-list, different eras). The program can be asked to avoid playing a song in the same daypart until it had been played at a specified number of other times of day, and to consider, for example, the previous Friday's music schedule when devising the music for Monday's programmes. Depending on the station format the program can be required to ensure appropriate quotas of music from a range of eras are always included in a specified time period.

The total library of songs may be divided into categories by era or other defining characteristic. Most stations playing a proportion of current hits maintain the classic A-list and B-list system, possibly adding other lists for new releases or more challenging material which might only be used in some programmes. Partly as a result of stations' promises of performance, which traditionally stipulated fixed proportions of a station's output to be drawn from specified decades, oldies are frequently divided into eras reflecting the

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sixties, seventies, eighties, nineties and 'noughties'. Reflecting the fact that a song often attains its greatest popularity with radio listeners some weeks or months after it has peaked in the charts a 'recurrent playlist' of such tracks is included on some stations. One other common category contains Christmas songs, which will only be included in the computer's selection criteria during December each year. Scheduling software is versatile enough to cope with a wide range of programming policies and styles, each service being able to specify its own set of criteria, music categories, and scheduling rules. RCS Selector has for example been used not only by most commercial stations in the UK but also by stations as diverse as Classic FM and BBC Radio Two.

Although a typical music radio stations may only have between 500 and 2000 tracks on rotation at any one time, the task of appropriately categorising each individual track and grading it on a numeric scale for sound, texture, speed and the like is very time consuming and requires the skills of an experienced manager. Stations belonging to a larger group often avoid the work altogether by importing complete databases from others, making only slight adjustments to suit their own needs. The group may go further and schedule all music centrally, either producing a separate log for each service or with similar stations in different parts of the country playing the same songs in the same order.

Clearly a computer program is ideally suited to the task of remembering when each of hundreds of tracks was last played and using a number of complex and conflicting rules to decide when best to play it, however most music programmers expect to go through the resulting daily logs, modifying the sequence to improve the flow and feel of the programming. The finished log can be imported into a station's studio playout system where the specified tracks can be lined up automatically for a presenter to play at the specified time in what is usually referred to as 'live-assist' mode or to be fired off automatically during unattended periods.

Even within the most tightly scheduled music sequence the presenter is usually allowed to deviate from the computer's selection to respond to current events or enhance other programme items by featuring an appropriate alternative track - for example, following the news of the death of a famous musical star, playing a tastefully selected song from the artist, or using a well known piece of music to set-up an interview, feature or competition featuring the relevant artist. Often this leeway is restricted to the new song replacing another of the same age, category or genre in the hour, so as not to disrupt the overall station sound.

The presenter is expected to over-ride the computer's choice of song where it would appear to be inappropriate or in bad taste to play it, perhaps following a news report. Such unfortunate song placement is a surprisingly

common occurrence, Wilby and Conroy (1994: 53) mention Chris Rea's *Road to Hell* following a news item on improvements to the M25 motorway, and Manfred Mann's *Oh No, Not My Baby* in the middle of a phone-in discussion on fostering and adoption. We have experience of Rod Stewart's *Sailing* cued-up ready to follow a shock newsflash of the death of Lord Louis Mountbatten, killed by an IRA bomb blast on his boat in Ireland, and the Boomtown Rats' *I Don't Like Mondays*, based on the shooting spree of a 16-year-old girl at a school playground in California, was played by a local station straight after the announcement of a fatal school stabbing in Middlesbrough.

Within a computer scheduled music programme individual musical features, such as the ubiquitous 'Golden Hour' of oldies from specific years, are frequently programmed by the presenters themselves using strict criteria from a pre-agreed list of suitable 'safe' tracks. Many programme managers demand rigid adherence to the music policy not only as a result of a mistrust of the individual presenter's musical tastes but also because they understand that the full benefits of centralised music scheduling can only accrue to a station which accurately follows the pattern of tracks scheduled. Wilfully playing the wrong songs is regarded as a sackable offence on most stations.

At all times the manager is concerned not to give a listener a reason to switch away from the station due to an ill-judged choice of music. As a result there is a tendency towards playing it safe by including only those tracks that are melodic and familiar and would not offend or disturb the average target listener. Most services adopt a more relaxed music policy during some off-peak hours when it may be possible to attract listeners in greater numbers with a more specialist offering while not scaring away any substantial number of the usual listeners. Traditionally the early evening hours are seen as the best time for experimentation or diversification. If well trailed in popular daytime shows such programmes also offer the opportunity to encourage the listener to make a specific 'appointment to listen' to a special interest program. During the small hours of the morning, however, the available audience is so small that the manager will not normally wish to waste substantial resources and the station will revert to an automated sequence following the basic station music policy as the most cost-effective way to serve a small but loyal group of listeners.

Record requests - audience interaction

Radio broadcasters have always recognised the importance of listener participation from their earliest calls for reception reports, through the hugely popular record request shows of the 1950s and the local radio phone-in

phenomenon of the 1970s, to today's premium-rate text competitions. In part this is driven by the fact that listener-produced content can be cheap and plentiful but Crisell (1992: 81) also suggests a station includes audience response in order to: 'verify that the station or channel has an audience and that this audience is capable of understanding and responding to the message which the station transmits.' Including audience response in a programme identifies and characterises the station's listeners and meets a need to convince the individual listener that they are not alone in enjoying the programme and make them comfortable with their choice.

Most modern request shows are sufficiently "managed" to ensure the listeners only have a choice from within the limited realm of music the station might play at the given time of day anyway.

The increasing availability of music on demand, especially from portable and mobile devices, makes the traditional request show somewhat redundant but other channels of audience response are booming in the age of Twitter. Easy access to the internet, mobile texting and multimedia messaging are now widespread and future technical developments will increase the opportunity for listeners to contribute high-quality audio to live programmes. Currently audience response often appears as a simple feature within a show, or as an informal opportunity to respond to something in a programme, but can be built up as programme sequence in its own right. The two cases most likely to require regular management intervention are phone-ins and competitions, they provide useful examples of the range of issues faced by programme managers and are explored in the following sections.

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Section 2.7

Managing news and phone-ins

There is no reason why a radio service has to include news at all, subject to any promises made in a licence application. Some highly local stations may include only local news, arguing that this is their unique selling proposition; others include news bulletins only at certain times of day. Any policy restricting the inclusion of news must however be a calculated gamble. If we accept that our listeners will leave us from time to time to get their fix of current news, particularly during a major incident or event, we trust that they will subsequently switch back to us rather than our competitors.

Consumer research by Ofcom (2007) suggests that, despite the rise of the Internet and user-generated content, traditional media continue to serve as the main suppliers of news. Although television is by far the most important medium for local, national and world news, newspapers and radio are still highly valued as news sources. Accepting that it is hard to beat the appeal of the BBC's main news channels at times of national crisis, for many stations the promise of routine news on the hour gives them comfort that the listener will not normally feel the need to switch away simply to check that all is all right with the world.

The production of mixed local, national and international bulletins every hour is nevertheless time-consuming and labour-intensive and therefore an expensive proposition for every radio service to consider. While the mixed bulletin is arguably the best option for the listener - the news leading on a local story when its significance merits it or by integrating it into a less prominent part of the bulletin if that is more appropriate - many managers question the cost. It can be hard to justify the employment of a trained journalist in collating and presenting material drawn from elsewhere rather than in newsgathering specifically of interest to the particular station.

While, with the introduction of digital systems capable of 'capturing' the audio cuts and importing them directly into the studio playout system, much of the backroom work in preparing the bulletin can now be eliminated, authoritative news presentation still requires some understanding of the stories (or at least of the correct pronunciations) and time must be spent reviewing the network content prior to presenting the live bulletin. One

alternative, often practised by smaller stations, is to opt-in to the live national bulletin exactly on the hour, at peak times following it immediately with a separate sequence of news from the local area. This mirrors the traditional scheduling of many BBC and ITV regional television news programmes. However the typically shorter duration of the radio news bulletins can exacerbate difficulties when a regional story is also prominently covered in the national news.

We should make a distinction between 'THE news', a short broadcast programme presenting information about recent events and 'news'-information about important or interesting new happenings. Few radio services can survive without providing some form of news for their listeners. Without topical information a radio station is little more than a delivery channel for piped music or entertainment that might just as easily be supplied on CD or downloaded from the internet. However the days of the three-minute bulletin at the top of every hour are numbered in a developed radio market where the average listener chooses to listen to at least two or three radio stations every week. Where radio listeners used to be scared of de-tuning their radio set in case they could not find their favourite station again today's listener has no such fears. If one service provides an attractive range of music and another supplies news every hour, the listener can become their own programme controller, switching across for news whenever they feel the need while enjoying undisturbed music at other times.

While a new service might not feel the urge to provide THE news each hour, listeners expect the radio station to be expert on its own particular field. Listeners to a jazz station could reasonably expect to be kept up-to-date with relevant gigs, new recordings, etc., while any community, local or regional service should strive to become essential listening for anyone wanting to know what is going on in their patch.

Research in Australia has shown that community radio audiences want and value local news. However they want it delivered in non-traditional ways such as within specialist programmes (Meadows et al 2005). A recent small-scale survey in to how the new community stations were managing news output in the UK (Mitchell 2008) showed that news was largely produced by volunteers -there were virtually no paid reporters or newsroom staff due to there being very little training or funding for sustainable news services. The majority of community stations took IRN or similar on the hour and most of the news was produced as community events listings or specialist news provided by volunteers as part of programmes. A notable exception where the production of community news was funded and managed differently was at Bradford Community Broadcasting who have ten community reporters from

different parts of Bradford contributing features to a daily programme. (See our case study in Section 3 for more detail).

There is a risk that radio management define the work of the radio journalist simply as providing the hourly news bulletins. The tradition of a comprehensive bulletin at the top of each hour was developed by the BBC long before the introduction of UK commercial and community radio. However, whilst the regular hourly bulletin may help in building listening hours with the listener being aware that, if they stay around, at an easily memorable point in each hour they will hear a complete update, this should not encourage stations to delay interesting news items for up to sixty minutes. Equally important is a feeling, which may be instilled in each listener by their regularly hearing spontaneous news updates, that they will not be missing out on any exciting news by sticking with their first choice station.

UK commercial radio stations operate under individual 'Formats' agreed with Ofcom that may define the hours during which a full news service must be supplied and community broadcasters may have made a similar commitment. While commercial broadcasters frequently complain of undue detailed restrictions imposed by their Format obligations, the Formats are largely based on promises made by the broadcasters in their original licence applications and almost all appear to have been informed by similar assumptions about the ideal distribution of news bulletins.

If in music radio it is the music that is the deciding factor in the listener's choice of stations then programmers will wish to avoid any interruption to the flow of music that does not offer substantial compensation in either audience appeal or revenue. Experience suggests that, while news is an important reason for listening to the radio first thing in the morning, it becomes less important as the day goes on. However a strength of radio broadcasting is that it is the only medium which can brief you for the day ahead while you busy yourself with other preparations. Later in the day listeners often have a much wider choice of media available to serve their information needs. In the USA many stations cease to supply local news bulletins after breakfast time.

While on smaller services the same individual may research, prepare and present the news bulletin in larger operations the functions of reporter, editor and news presenter will be separate roles. Economies of scale frequently lead to reporters providing copy and recorded reports for more than one station, editors preparing bulletins to be used by a number of services, or newsreaders appearing on more than one station. In the 1960s, when the two American operated pirate radio stations were based on the same ship off the Essex coast, Radio England used the same newsreader as Britain Radio, reading the bulletin live on-the-hour on one frequency and the on each half hour on the other. In 1967, when the BBC split the Light Programme to become Radios

One and Two, they adopted the same economy measure - and the half-hour bulletins remain on BBC Radio One to this day.

Recognising that the skills of the radio journalist may be different to those of a great news presenter, particularly at the junior levels employed by many local radio services, most radio station groups have started to introduce news hubs. The individual hourly bulletins for a number of radio stations may be prepared and presented at a central location, usually at a larger station, while the journalists employed at each station focus their efforts on newsgathering on their patch. Although the pre-recording of news bulletins is officially frowned upon (Ofcom 2008: 28) this is frequently required if the same voice is to present separate hourly bulletins on more than one station. Such arrangements are undoubtedly capable of freeing solo journalists on smaller stations from the tyranny of the hourly news reading deadline, but their introduction gives rise to inevitable suspicions that the main motive for these changes is the possibility of reducing costs.

The introduction of news hubs and other co-located programming at neighbouring local stations reflects a change in attitude by the broadcast regulator Ofcom. Until recently a local service was expected to originate from within its own locality but following detailed research (Ofcom 2007) the policy on localness has been relaxed Ofcom (2008: 28) stating:

> *For listeners, it is the quality, relevance, timeliness and accuracy of the news that matters, not where it is read from. However, in order to provide a comprehensive local news service in touch with the area it is covering, Ofcom believes each station should have direct and accountable editorial responsibility for covering its licensed area. It also believes that the appropriate provision of professional journalistic cover, based within the licence area, on days when local news provision is a Format obligation, is a reasonable minimum expectation.*

For further specialist reading in the area of managing newsrooms see Chantler and Harris (1997) and Boyd (2001), and for wider critical perspectives on radio journalism see Starkey and Crisell (2008).

Unexpected news

Perhaps the greatest test of a station's news provision, and of its understanding of its listeners' attitudes and needs, comes during a major unexpected news

event or tragedy. Independent Radio News has a system in place to alert its client stations to the death of major figures such as the Queen, Prince Of Wales, Prince William, Prince Harry and the Prime Minister. Known as the Obituary Procedure, or "Obit Alarm" the system can also be used in the event of a major international or national disaster such as 9/11. Stations can be alerted via an alarm signal and by messages on their news screens which will instruct them when to opt-in to a special broadcast announcement and any network programming from IRN. In the event of a royal death the next top-of-hour IRN bulletin will be five minutes long followed ay a one-minute version of the national anthem. The BBC has similar internal systems.

As a mark of respect, or in recognition of the scale of the disaster, normal programming is suspended and most stations will not use any jingles or music idents, nor will any commercials or promotions be broadcast. Stations should be prepared in advance for such situations by having a compilation of more serious music prepared, recorded on CD or as a special playlist on the playout system. Depending on the music format of the station the choice of music will vary but the main aim is to avoid anything where the title, lyrics or connotations of the music could be distasteful. Instrumentals are a popular choice and common examples are Albatross by Fleetwood Mac and Song for Guy by Elton John along with a range of classical music.

Of course news of a major happening may also arrive at the studio from a range of other sources. Indeed when the Queen Mother died in 2002 staff at IRN pressed the wrong button and failed to alert their 258 stations to the news, as a result many presenters first heard the news from their TV monitors or via friends. However it is crucial that presenters are trained not to put any such announcements from other sources on-air without checking the information first. Journalists will normally wish to confirm news from two or three sources and IRN or central BBC news resources are the natural port of call.

Staff should be empowered to suspend normal programming and join network coverage where possible without waiting for senior management approval but the most senior managers will need to decide what happens next. How long to maintain special programming and which regular features and programmes should be suspended requires understanding of the expectations of the station's audience and the general mood in the country. Often the return to normal is a gradual process managed over several days. For example the first breakfast show is likely to be considerably toned down.

Programme Features

Many of the staple features of traditional radio services require input from outside suppliers and organisations with whom the manager must negotiate content guidelines, commercial terms and technical delivery arrangements. Take for example the weather forecast - a reliable and up to date summary must be a valuable option for any broadcaster. Forecasts, whilst widely available on the internet, in the press, and on TV, provided by the Meteorological Office or one of the independent forecasting companies, are generally covered by copyright. The station would be expected to pay a fee for the right to broadcast anything more than a very basic summary. UK weather centres offer such services on a commercial basis and will quote a price if given details of how many separate daily forecasts are needed, in what detail and for what area. In the commercial sector the expense of receiving a customised forecast can be offset by income from a weather sponsor, or suitable forecasts may be available without additional cost from a national news supplier. As a minimum the station will probably need to receive at least one forecast early each morning, for use in the breakfast show onwards, and another updated script in mid-afternoon that includes the outlook for tomorrow.

The weather forecast also offers a clear example of the importance of identifying what information is, and is not required by the target listener. Too often valuable time in a breakfast show is occupied by a presenter quoting a detailed forecast for "overnight tonight". The listener has just woken up to a new day, what they really needs to know is what clothes to wear. Only a few listeners, such as farmers, will generally be concerned about rain in the middle of the next night, and they can receive detailed forecasts by a variety of other more efficient means. On a Tuesday lunchtime the listener will be interested in the rest of that day and the outlook for Wednesday, on a Friday lunchtime they will want to know about the weekend ahead, and the prospects for a Bank Holiday Monday. By five in the afternoon the prospects for the rest of the day generally pale into insignificance - the listener now wants to know about tomorrow.

Similar rigour should be applied to the selection of content for any traffic and travel news bulletins. The attitudes towards traffic reporting in UK radio may have been influenced by practice in the United States but it is easy to forget that "drive-time" is really no such thing for the majority of our UK listeners. In southern California there is little public transport and radio stations may have a captive audience for one and a half hours every morning and evening as listeners sit trapped, bumper to bumper, in their cars as helicopters and planes circle above reporting on every minute detail of the traffic flow. However 23 per cent of households in the UK have no car, rising to

39 per cent in London and the majority of remaining households have only one car (Transport for London 2007: 49). No great statistical analysis is required to appreciate that the majority of UK radio listeners are not going to be driving themselves anywhere in their own car today. As a result most local radio stations habitually combine news on the roads with information about buses, trains and planes.

Traffic specialists such as Trafficlink provide regular road updates to many commercial radio stations and the BBC in the form of scripted information or voiced live by their own reporters. An alternative is to combine details of planned road works, supplied by County Councils, with information from local police control rooms but the station must find someone with the time to make the necessary check calls and compile the details for the studio. However the traffic news is compiled, it is worthwhile suggesting that listeners text or call the studios (if it is safe to do so) with details of any hold-ups they may have missed, not only does this provide a free source of information, it offers another opportunity to build a bond with listeners.

The most impressive solution is to give a traffic reporter a grandstand view in a 'flying eye' helicopter or light aircraft. Helicopters cost far more to hire than light aircraft but operate nearer to the ground and in conditions of poorer visibility. The station will need a special licence to operate an outside broadcast radio link from an aeroplane and the power level will be restricted, however, due to the altitude, a remarkable range can be achieved with quite low-powered equipment. While the 'eye-in-the-sky' is superficially impressive, in practice the talkback frequency to the aircraft is frequently used to pass details of road problems up to the flying eye so that they can in turn relay them back down to the listeners. The plane cannot be everywhere at once and the station needs to ensure they don't appear to miss anything important. Aircraft are frequently hired from a flying club or aircraft charter operator at a local airport, enabling the plane to report as soon as it becomes airborne with considerable savings over paying for it to fly to and from a more distant field each day.

It is less exciting, and often harder, to obtain reliable information about public transport. Inevitably bus and rail operators may wish to receive as little publicity as possible when services fail, and cannot be relied upon to inform the media. There is no substitute for the person at the station who has the task, in the breakfast show and during the afternoon rush-hour, of ringing round the public transport companies to check on the buses, trains, ferries and 'planes. A rapport hopefully develops with the people at the other end, who may even remember to text or ring the station when anything unexpected happens.

The choice of whether the main show presenter should read the traffic news depends on the station style. In a fast moving "morning team" style of

show it may be thought better to use a separate voice who often develops into another character in their own right. If the traffic news is a minor feature in an otherwise straightforward specialist music format then it is best presented in a low-key way by the regular voice.

Phone - Ins

Some of the greatest editorial challenges in radio are met during a live topical phone-in where critical editorial decisions must often be made within seconds and usually by the presenter themselves. There is no time for upward-referral or an exchange of email, the manager can only prepare the ground, set clear guidelines and provide the tools for the presenter to respond appropriately to any likely scenario.

One common precaution is to route the phone-in programme through a electronic delay which when fed with the completed programme at their input reproduce it a few seconds later at their output. Commonly the delay can be built up over a period of a few minutes of speech, the unit imperceptibly lengthening the pauses between words until the required delay, usually around seven seconds, is achieved. The presenter and/or producer is armed with a button in the studio which when pressed immediately 'dumps' the last seven seconds of audio - to the listener it is as if they never happened. If the call is faded out and a suitable comment made any contentious material can be edited from the 'live' programme, it is a question of judgement whether the caller may be allowed to continue, after a suitable admonishment, or is dropped from the programme or even banned from all future participation.

Effective use of the 'dump' button requires split-second decision-making but often the experienced presenter will be forewarned by danger signals, finger hovering over the button. A long build-up to a joke, or when a caller is accompanied by voices in the background, creaking doors, whispering or giggling, suggest that the presenter should be prepared to get rid of the call at any moment. Although often referred to as 'profanity delay' UK experience suggests such systems are used as frequently to remove legally contentious material as to censor obscene or offensive language.

There is no statutory requirement to employ a delay in live broadcasts in the UK, and many stations do not have the facility. It has however been suggested, for a station challenged in the courts for the broadcast of contentious comments, the worst-case scenario is for the station to have such equipment and not to have employed it.

Among the issues the manager must anticipate, in no particular order, are:

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Editorial control

The presenter must recognise that, on a minute-by-minute basis, they have the authority and responsibilities of the producer or editor of the programme. While there may be a telephone assistant making choices on the selection of participants and topics it is the presenter who makes the ultimate decisions.

Presentation

Depending on format and available audience, the manager may require the presenter to adopt the manner of a 'shock-jock' or of an agony-aunt, or any style in between, but the presenter should usually appear responsible, prepared to listen, ready to put an opposing point of view and, above all, to be approachable to a potential caller from the station's target listener base. Ideally there are three distinct phases to the perfect 'phone-in call:

1. The presenter helps the caller to put across their point of view, developing their argument with phrases such as: "so are you suggesting.....?" or "and when exactly is this happening?"

2. If appropriate, the presenter challenges the caller without giving away his/her own personal viewpoint, using phrases such as: "But surely many people would argue that..." or "But other people believe that...."

3. If the caller has the potential to contribute further, the presenter moves the caller onto another topic, if necessary repeating the first two phases.

The presenter must keep the programme moving. They should not stretch a call just because they do not have another one to go to, nothing kills a phone-in faster than a long boring call. The programme should have a sense of momentum, if it is broken for music, news bulletins or advertisements it can be a mistake to announce that it will be returning to the same caller or topic after the break. Any listener uninterested in the current contribution may take the pause as an opportunity to switch off. It is far better to offer a change after the break, while trailing a possible return to the previous topic a little later.

Taste and decency

Phone in presenters must remember that the station's guidelines on taste and decency apply in all respects to material in 'phone-in programmes, even when uttered by a listener rather than the presenter. There is no 'watershed' at 9 pm

in radio. Audience expectations of different services at different times of day vary considerably and these are increasingly considered by Ofcom when deliberating on any alleged lapse of standards. While callers may occasionally start to move away from good taste, the presenter must never lower the tone of the discussion. If something contentious is broadcast any offence can be substantially minimised if the presenter immediately and sincerely apologises for the comment or expression used by the contributor.

Personal bias

While there is no specific ban on radio presenters having their own point of view, only a requirement for the station's programmes when taken as a whole to be fair and impartial, in practice a 'phone-in presenter should hesitate before giving away his or her own position on any matter of current controversy. Aside from the complexities of ensuring an adequate supply of opposing views, once the listeners know the presenter's real views their ability to act as a devils advocate in future discussions becomes severely limited.

Advice and counselling

Whilst the radio presenter may perform a useful function just by listening to a person's problems, they must be careful not to offer advice that could turn out to be misleading or even harmful. If the station runs a phone-in on personal issues, or a general phone-in which may attract needy callers, the manager should endeavour to ensure a list of contact details for reputable local help and advice organisations are compiled and kept available at the 'phone-in switchboard. It may on occasions be most responsible to refer a caller directly to an organisation that can offer experienced and trained help without putting the caller on the air.

Politics

Licensed broadcast channels are required to maintain a balance over a series of programmes. There is, generally, no reason why a political figure cannot spontaneously contribute to a phone-in programme providing the same access is available to equivalent figures of other parties in future programmes. The position is slightly different where the political figure is specifically invited to take part; in such a case the manager should ensure a similar invitation is extended to representatives of the other relevant major parties. An exception is if they are not appearing in a political context but to plug a cookery book or perform on the spoons, in which case political balance is not an issue. In the

'pending period' before an election far more stringent rules apply and many 'phone-ins, while still dealing with the issues in a fair and balanced way, choose not to permit anyone standing for office to participate.

Libel

Any statement which implies a lack of honesty, ability, competence or skill on the part of any person or body may be defamatory. If it is broadcast then it does not matter whether the words are said by the presenter or a listener participating in the programme, the presenter and the station can be held responsible. Listeners are unlikely to be aware that it is not safe to repeat a defamatory statement previously uttered by someone else in a newspaper or on the internet; nor safe because they personally know it to be true - unless they could prove it to the standard required by a court of law; or safe merely because it does not name the person or organisation concerned. The manager must ensure a phone-in presenter realises that the test of a libel action is whether the words are such as would reasonably lead even one person acquainted with the plaintiff to believe they were the person referred to. While journalists are able to use the defences of justification, fair comment, and privilege, these are quite technical and cannot usually apply to a live phone-in where the presenter is unable to instantly check the accuracy or source of the statements being made by a caller.

Court cases

When a major crime or trial is in the headlines, listeners will naturally wish to comment on the reports during a phone-in. Such comments must not be broadcast, and station's guidelines should stress that callers are required to confine themselves to a general discussion of crime and punishment not the details of a specific active case. Court reporters know that it is usually an offence to identify any juvenile involved in court proceedings, or the victim of a sexual offence but ordinary phone-in callers who personally know the case may blurt them out and the availability of a delay system can be invaluable in preventing potential contempt of court.

Selection of callers

A few loyal listeners can hijack a programme and make it their own club if not subjected to careful controls. Depending on format and size of the market the manager should discuss this issue with the presenter, possibly setting a limit on how often an individual caller may appear on the show. In the interests of

growing the audience 'first time callers' should be constantly encouraged and positively welcomed to the programme.

While occasional live contributions can be included between other items in most programmes without noticeable additional effort or expense, the continuous talk-radio style phone-in usually requires additional resources so that a telephone assistant may screen callers and select a steady flow for the studio. Specialist broadcast telephone systems, now usually software driven, allow the assistant to answer all incoming calls while forwarding two or three to the studio at any time. The host may be presented on-screen with a name, line number and brief description of the topic and is free to switch each caller onto a desk fader when required. While lining up the next couple of calls prevents a hiatus in the event of an on-air caller hanging up or becoming boring, it can require the listener to hold a call for a considerable time while waiting in the queue. The station must decide if it can afford to ring all callers back, saving their telephone bills and with the additional advantage of giving some confirmation of their identity.

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Section 2.8

Station imaging and marketing

Summary

In this chapter we will consider how a radio station may market and promote itself. This includes both on-air marketing via station identity, jingles and call signs, and off- air marketing including research, SWOT analysis and press coverage. We end with a consideration of how publicity may be managed to promote media coverage for different types of radio stations.

Marketing Radio

In many ways making managerial decisions about marketing a radio service should be simpler than in other undertakings. It is in the nature of radio broadcasting in today's segmented listening market that successful programme managers must already know their target audience and the brand values which should attract and hold their attention. They are not marketing an inanimate and prosaic piece of household hardware but rather a product that comes complete with its image and style already defined.

Marketing and promotion may be conducted on-air using the station's own airtime or off-air through its website or using other media and real-world opportunities, the balance between these depending on the objective. While a relatively successful station can increase its total listening hours simply by talking on-air to existing listeners, enticing them to listen longer, it could take a very long time to increase the weekly reach of a station without using other opportunities to address non-listeners. In radio the most common demand made of marketing can be summarised as increased 'visibility', not in response to the obvious visual deficiencies of the medium but rather a recognition of the way people use radio in their everyday life. Radio can be promoted to a driver while they are driving, office workers during their working day and web surfers while they are using the internet. And in each case they may be able to respond to the invitation immediately.

The key objectives of off-air branding for the radio station are: to introduce new listeners to the brand (telling them how to find it); to encourage further use by previous listeners; and to reinforce the choice made by current

listeners. On-air branding has just two main objectives: to encourage the existing listener to stay longer and return sooner; and to encourage them to talk about the station to non- listeners.

The three ages of station identification

Since the 1920s there have been no statutory rules governing the naming of UK broadcast services unlike many countries where formal call signs must be used at least hourly. There is simply a requirement that the station name be agreed with the regulator, Ofcom, and that the signal be regularly identified using that name.

Throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s, there was a simple convention for naming most new stations. A single defining word, often denoting the location of the station, was prefaced by the word radio: *Radio Luxembourg; Radio Moscow; Radio Caroline; Radio Three* or *Radio Newcastle*. In a few cases, simply because it sounded better, the word radio was appended to the one-word station definition, hence *Isle of Wight Radio* or *Three Counties Radio*. It was the US influenced ship-based pirate stations of the 1960s which started to add some marketing gloss to station identification, bringing us *'Wonderful' Radio London* and *'Swinging' Radio England*.

In the late 1980s it became evident that more listening occurred on FM than AM thus providing an opportunity for the first time to split transmitters to provide distinct services on AM and FM. Told 'use it or lose' it by the IBA commercial broadcasters were encouraged to find alternative uses for their AM frequencies or to see them licensed to new operators under the 1990 Broadcasting Act. Assuming that older listeners were more likely to be wedded to their old medium wave receivers most stations opted to start a new oldies or speech-based service on AM while marketing the FM service to a younger audience profile. Freeing up so many frequencies in this way not only virtually doubled the number of local commercial services but also enabled the establishment of three national AM networks which became *Virgin Radio, talkSport* and *BBC Radio Five Live*.

The inclusion of a wavelength or frequency in station names had been widespread for many years: *199 Radio Caroline; Radio 390* and *Laser 558* for example and while in the USA a frequency was commonly attached to station call letters, this option was not readily available to UK stations broadcasting on two wavebands. Now, benefiting from a more clearly defined position on the dial and driven by a substantial increase in competition, many stations were able for the first time to incorporate their effective radio 'address' as part of their basic station name. For a while the commercial radio naming convention

was to replace the word radio with the letters FM for a station on that band and the frequency in kilohertz for an AM service (frequencies having replaced wavelengths on most medium wave radio dials). Hence in the Leeds area the old *Radio Aire* became *Aire FM* and *Magic 828*. This convention was so widely understood that many cable, satellite or closed user group stations with no VHF transmission capability, for example in-store or hospital radio services, chose to identify themselves in the form *Whatever FM*.

In this third age of radio managers must reassess this conventional pattern of station identification. Recognising that the letters FM may become a liability for a service whose future lies in digital delivery, some stations have reverted to their earlier style of name, *Aire FM* again becoming *Radio Aire*. Others feel best served by finding a simple brand or identity that sums up in one or two words the station proposition, leaving out any technical parameters as obvious in context.

Where the unique selling proposition (USP) of a local service is its relationship with a particular city or its area then identifying with the area using a local place name or landmark must surely be unbeatable. Defining a local identity using the name of a river was particularly popular in the early days of independent local radio, *Clyde, Forth, Tees, Trent* and *Orwell* are a few examples, while other local references included *Capital* in London, *Piccadilly* in Manchester and *Spire* in Salisbury. The same principle applies to a service where the USP is its format or brand values. *Classic FM* or *talkSport* are precise descriptions of the services to be expected, in a 'it does what it says on the can' sense, but well chosen single word names such as *Kerrang!, Heart* or *Smooth* can similarly convey a great deal of relevant information to the potential listener.

Whatever name is chosen it is essential that the station branding be consistent and forceful. For as long as audience measurement relies on listeners remembering which stations they heard at different times of day, apparent success is dependent upon reliable recall of the station name. Some stations require presenters to use the station name in every single link while others rely more on station branding using pre- recorded station identification, a readily recognisable 'jingle' or musical motif to provide the audio equivalent of a product logo. A similar function can be performed by the 'continuity announcer' appearing between programmes. Even on BBC Radio Four audio elements such as the chimes of Big Ben, the Greenwich time signal pips, the dated strains of 'Sailing By' before the shipping forecast and familiar programme signature tunes perform the same function of station imaging.

Jingles

While the primary purpose of a recorded station identification ('ident') is to aid listeners recall the station name, so that it is correctly credited in a research diary, the carefully produced ident can convey more than the name of the station. With skilful use of music and sound effects - what Michael Keith (1987: 30) calls 'image orchestration' - it can communicate an image, slogan, feeling or emotion about the station and make the whole concept more memorable.

For Wilby and Conroy (1994: 56) musical station idents: 'reinforce the station identity through repetition of a common aural theme: the sound of the voice, the catch melody line, the name of the station itself. While the familiarity of their sound contributes to the station's brand image, a selection of different versions is available for presenters to use.'

The use of a variety of jingles from the same package create a total sound or atmosphere for the station. Wilby and Conroy (1994: 56) continue: 'Jingles work both as signposts and as aural punctuation for output; they mark particular points in a programme by acting as bridges between items and enabling a presenter to round off one item before changing the direction or mood of the programme to set up the next one.' They also provide: 'a pedestal upon which the personality of the presenter is placed. A professional-sounding jingle that proclaims "Chris Shendo on CWFM" contributes to the presenter's authority and 'personality' status.'

Defending BBC Radio One's use of American-style jingles in 1978, then Radio One Controller Johnny Beerling (1978) supplied a useful description of their history:

> *I have to admit they are very American, because the whole thing came from America in the first place. Over there they had a very similar situation to us in that they had a very overcrowded medium wave band, they had a number of stations broadcasting in any particular town, and there was a need in an attractive way for station identification.*

He also explains the process of jingle production at Radio One in the '70s and '80s:

> *There's a fairly incredible degree of sophistication and technique involved in making these jingles and it's a very specialised thing actually. John (Wolfert, founder of JAM, the US jingle company) comes over each year and*

*obviously he's making a variety of jingles for numerous
American stations and he brings along the demonstration
packages and we all sit down, perhaps with one or two of
the other producers, and we work out how to re-write
them, perhaps using their existing music tracks. On other
occasions we have what are called custom tracks where
the music is specially written for us.*
(Beerling interview op.cit.)

Today jingles are available from a variety of sources. Advanced studio technology is far more widely accessible and popular musical styles have fragmented. Stations generally commission a package of perhaps 12 to 20 different 'cuts' or versions from a recording session, each available in different mixes, using a combination of music, effects and voice-overs. Additional matching production 'beds' can be used as a basis for local production, meeting the need for higher production values when promoting changing features and events. Using a professional voice-over artist to identify individual presenters and programme features is also a cheaper option when the schedule may be subject to unexpected changes.

It is now becoming increasingly common for a group programme director to stipulate that all the stations within a group, with a similar format or the same brand, should use identical jingles with only the station name and any frequencies changed. Partly an economic measure, production costs will drop dramatically for such a bulk purchase from the jingle company, this also gives more control over the sound and image of perhaps dozens of stations scattered across a wide area.

Jingles are generally licensed for use in a specific geographic territory for a fixed period, commonly two years, after which they may be re-licensed for a reduced fee. The licence guarantees that no other station in the same transmission area will be permitted to use the same package.

Of course, not all radio channels use jingles - BBC Radio 4 for instance identifies itself through continuity and presenters in live programmes reminding listeners once in a while that 'You're listening to xyz on Radio 4'.

Off-air marketing

The challenges of marketing a radio station have changed considerably over the past 40 years. When the first local radio stations were launched each tended to use an almost standard marketing kit: some mugs, baseball caps and tee-shirts to sell or give away, car stickers to distribute, programme listings in

the local press and, for commercial stations, a nicely printed rate card to show to clients. With a free newspaper-style handout distributed door-to-door before launch and a few road show appearances at the main summer events the manager could claim to have made the area aware of the new service, and that was all that was required or expected. It was generally accepted that the role of radio station marketing was simply to raise awareness of the brand and where it could be found on the radio dial. It was assumed that awareness would lead to trial listening and it was up to the programmers to convert that into a long-term relationship with the service.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, in most parts of the United Kingdom the choice of radio listening was very limited. There were four BBC national networks, perhaps one BBC local station, distinguished by a high proportion of public-service motivated speech, and in the larger population centres a commercial station dominated by pop music. For the potential advertiser the choice was limited to one monopoly service in each major town or city. Only London had two commercial services, LBC and Capital, from the outset in 1973.

The steady increase in the number of stations competing for attention has been mirrored in the growth in marketing expenditure and effort in the radio sector. In most areas there are more than a dozen analogue (AM and FM) radio services targeting listeners and a greater number of digital services available via DAB, Freeview, Sky satellite receivers or the internet. In any section of the economy such an expansion in choice can be expected to lead to an increase in specialisation of each brand and the establishment of niches. Now every station has, to a greater or lesser degree, a target audience in mind. Radio station marketing is now as much about differentiation as awareness.

The marketing of a radio station often must also satisfy different groups. The BBC must be acutely aware that its promotion of, say, Radio One, is seen and heard not only by its target audience of young adults but also by the politicians who ultimately hold the future of the corporation in their hands. A community radio station's publicity must similarly seem appropriate to those who support the aims of the project with cash, in-kind contributions or voluntary effort.

Commercial radio, as observed earlier, is an unusual business where you make one thing and sell something completely different. The service must be promoted to the listening audience while at the same time made attractive to the advertisers who are expected to buy access to that audience. As broadcast radio is a mass-market product advertisers will be aware of the messages and brand values communicated to listeners and these must not conflict with the sales message given.

Designing a radio marketing strategy

1. Identify the geographic territory to be covered. In the case of an Ofcom licence advertisement this may already be clearly defined, for a new digital service it may be constrained by the available or affordable carriage on multiplexes or other platforms or, in the case of international broadcasting, by limitations of copyright agreements.

2. Research the market for programming within the territory covered by the proposed new service. Are there any gaps in the market where existing stations are not catering for the needs of their listeners and non-listeners? Are these opportunities large enough, in terms of potential audience, to support a new radio station? In music radio it is common to use market research to conduct a 'format search' designed to find unsatisfied demand for broadcasting of particular genres or ages of music. Such research must clearly identify the types of people who would find the proposed format attractive. The format search may identify a number of different market gaps that can be put forward for consideration in the final stage.

3. Test the market for the new advertising opportunities that could be offered by a service carrying the new format. The study must include both existing radio advertisers and companies exclusively using other media or not currently advertising at all in the territory. Advertisers in other media will always tell you why they are not satisfied with their existing options. The identity of these companies is easily uncovered as rival media cannot keep client lists secret, a look through their pages or a week's monitoring of their programmes will quickly yield a valuable list of their typical advertisers. Non-advertising companies can be identified from telephone or business directories, a web search and the membership of bodies such as a local Chamber of Commerce.

Many companies found in such searches can be disregarded as advertising prospects as they are essentially suppliers of obscure services or products to a small number of other firms or organisations and do not frequently need to market themselves to the general public. Where a narrow range of format or formats has already been defined the business search might be narrowed to those companies obviously interested in the audiences expected to result. These companies can be interviewed to find out whether they currently advertise their products or services, in which media, and to what effect. They may currently object to price, coverage, demographics, the perceived difficulty in buying or making-up advertisements, or they may

believe that certain media simply do not work for their business. The study would try to establish how many of what sort of listeners the new service would need in order to satisfy each prospective advertiser, and how much they might feel able to spend annually. Only if an identified gap in the listening market overlaps with the needs of sufficient potential clients, with enough spending power to fund the service, is the project viable.

Subsequent marketing of the service must focus on the findings of such studies: Who will listen to the service, and why? Who will support the service, and for what reasons? The image projected by the radio brand must reflect these assumptions.

As radio services become more specialised in seeking out niche audiences it becomes ever more the case that those people ultimately controlling their funding may not be numbered among their listeners. To an extent this has been true for many years, the government ministers responsible for deciding on future BBC funding may not be a heavy users of some of the corporation's channels, the account manager at a big London advertising agency, or grant manager at a major charity or funding body may not even live within the service area of a local station. A vital function of marketing is to project an image of success, both in attracting the target audience and in performing some social or commercial function within that community.

Station SWOT Analysis

Before considering what marketing materials or activities are required the manager should clarify exactly what they are intended to achieve. For an established service, or if there is a clear view of a new market niche and how it will be served, it may be instructive to conduct a SWOT analysis (internal Strengths and Weaknesses; external Opportunities and Threats) of the station. For example for an imaginary service in relation to its rivals in a local market:

Strengths:

> The biggest most loyal audience.
> The best-known breakfast presenter.
> The most broadly popular format.
> Established reputation with major advertisers.

Weaknesses:

> There is no budget for marketing.
> Few people listen in the evenings
> Clients say the advertising is too expensive.
> The signal is weak in the west.

Opportunities:

> The licence will be re-advertised next year.
> A transmitter power increase may be permitted.
> There is an unserved audience for local soccer commentary.
> There is an upturn in the local economy.
> The station is rarely mentioned in the press.

Threats:

> A possible challenge for the licence.
> Rajar suggests BBC Radio One is getting popular again.
> A new station with a similar format is soon to launch.

The marketing strategy should build on the present strengths, minimising the weaknesses, while addressing specific needs and opportunities for the future and minimising the threats. Taking the example above, the station might launch a campaign aimed at promoting the already successful breakfast show to BBC Radio One listeners in the east of the region.

Whilst tempting to put marketing effort behind the weakest aspects of the schedule rather than the strongest this is generally misguided. Adding 20 per cent to the audience figures of an off-peak programme with only a few thousand listeners can take as much effort and expense as adding the same proportion to a popular show with ten times the audience. The off-peak programming can then be promoted on-air to the larger audience attracted at peak time with much greater benefits to the whole station.

While an obvious additional function of marketing in the community and voluntary sector is to attract voluntary support, some community stations have found it invaluable in boosting the morale of their hard working volunteers. The wider acknowledgement of the service and its benefits to the community gives validity to their efforts, not least in the minds of their partners, families and friends, which cannot be achieved solely on the air.

Reaching your market

Having identified the market and the objectives of the campaign the station management must work out the most cost-effective way to reach that market and position the brand firmly in their minds. A good start would be to look at where the potential listeners gather. Cinema advertising, poster sites in railway stations, shopping precincts or football grounds, or internet viral marketing could be most appropriate for different brands. Advertising on a bus back is optimal if you need to talk to car drivers, bus sides are better for pedestrians. Newspaper advertisements are more useful if they appear alongside editorial likely to be read by the target group.

A major on-air competition for a prize attractive to the target audience may be widely promoted using other media and yet be self-funding when both the prize and the costs of the promotion are met by a client wishing to promote their product as an aspirational object. Competitions are also increasingly funded by premium rate call or text revenue.

If a station needs to dominate listening in a particular clearly defined area, then door- to-door distribution of a promotional handout is often cost-effective. Direct-mail or free newspaper distribution companies can target only certain neighbourhoods or cover a whole town. While it may cost £15 to £20 per thousand homes to have a pre- printed leaflet delivered, direct-mail does lend itself to sponsorship by advertising clients who could include their promotions on the back of the station's material.

Using press, internet and direct-mail marketing the station can use responses to build up a database of current and potential listeners by including a competition-entry coupon, or a priority request form, to be returned to the station. For maximum benefit the form should ask for their age, sex, and email address and telephone number as well as their name and address. In the UK managers must be aware of the conditions of the Data Protection Act, the station may need a licence under the Act and must obey rules on passing information to third parties. In particular listener's details must not be given to other bodies without having gained the listener's general permission to do so and managers are advised to get legal advice on any such project.

Adding to the database the names, addresses, email details and other information on listeners who enter competitions, or send in requests or dedications, the station soon has a valuable resource which can enable it to build a relationship with core listeners. In many businesses 20% of customers generate 80% of the sales, and they frequently advise companies to concentrate their marketing on that 20% - this is the Pareto effect. In radio we have our core customers too and they are the ones who respond most often to our promotions.

Stories abound of more aggressive database marketing in the USA. One station reputedly took a major poster site and invited listeners of rival station WXYZ to ring a toll-free number to win $1000. The station was able to compile a database of WXYZ listeners' names and addresses. Shortly afterwards those listeners received a mail- shot inviting them to listen to the first station to win even more cash.

If using the optimum mechanism to reach the right target audience is important, so too is choosing the right message to communicate. The proposition must reflect the brand values of the radio service and the aspirations, needs and tastes of the target listener and importantly how the service will benefit the listener. Too often we promote what we do, our schedule and personalities, rather than sell the benefits. A station promoting 'news on the hour' would be better advised to say 'nobody keeps you more up to date'. A claim to play 'the best music' might be more effective as 'we play the music you want to hear'. The station should use every opportunity to tell the listener why they should listen, what's in it for them, not what a good time the station is having, they should be able to hear that for themselves when they tune in.

Using local involvement

Many cash-strapped smaller services survive with no marketing budget whatsoever, while maintaining a visible presence within their market remains important all promotional activity must be funded by other partners. For example printing car stickers might be funded by selling the peel-off backing to a sponsor who might use it as a discount voucher, the income also being sufficient to cover the cost of an on-air promotion to encourage people to display the stickers. The stickers can be widely distributed through retail outlets in return for listeners being encouraged to visit their premises to collect them.

Community stations have found it useful to 'piggyback' on partner organisations' publicity drives or have added questions onto questionnaires distributed by other bodies that might help them get information for station marketing. Stations also have used partnerships with educational organisations, for example university business or media departments to carry out audience research or focus group studies.

Public Events

Commercial stations have long achieved greater public visibility by appearing at events or commercial premises with all expenses met by the organiser of the event or owner of the location. Indeed commercial services generally expect to make a profit on such activity by charging for on-air promotion, through sponsorship of the coverage or advertising of the event.

Careful thought should be given to what the radio station wants to bring to a public event. Outside bodies and members of the public will frequently request that the station does an outside broadcast or a 'road-show' but the station manager should look for the best way to use each individual opportunity to promote the correct station image and produce attractive and useful programming. We have never seen evidence that listeners choose their radio station on the basis of a roadshow seen in the corner of a muddy field. However the relevance of a radio brand to its target listeners gathered at a relevant event can only be heightened by the station being seen to be involved in the fun and games, to be supporting the good cause and to be acting as a host for the proceedings. Many managers avoid any booking that involves their station being the main attraction at a particular time and place, fearing loss of face if no crowd gathers and understanding that such an event will only attract the core loyal followers of the station, who may well not represent the station's top marketing priority. On both counts it is better to become thoroughly involved with a public event, hosting the switching-on of the Christmas lights (usually aided by a TV personality), staffing the public address at the start of a fun-run or, if really brave, judging a bonny baby competition.

Often the traditional radio road-show prevents the station from appearing relevant to its target listeners attending the event. In the early 1980s we recall hearing a programme on the then Radio Tees broadcast live from a big air-show at Teesside Airport. The local station had evidently set up a roadshow inside a marquee near the runway: jets roared overhead and the presenter offered cheap prizes to kids in the audience who could answer simple pop questions. The irrelevance of this activity to the event was emphasised when the presenter apologised for the noise of the aircraft which kept drowning him out. Those listening elsewhere would surely have preferred either their normal programme or a short commentary on the exciting air display, the huge crowds attracted to the airport on the sunny summer afternoon were not there to see a young disc-jockey giving away hit singles in a tent. Years later the same station, re-launched as TFM responded to a similar opportunity by arranging for a breakfast presenter to be strapped to the top of a bi-plane to broadcast from a 'wing-walk' during the press event prior to the big day, combining

relevant interesting programming with a great deal of pre-publicity to benefit the event and press coverage for the station.

Effective public performances cannot usually be combined with live radio broadcasting. There are few things in life so boring to watch as a radio show being presented properly. Radio at its best is a one-to-one medium, the presenter genuinely concerned to please his listener at home will take time to describe what he or she can see around them, the colour of the sky, the size of the crowd, all the things obvious to the immediate audience. Similarly good stage presentation does not translate very well to the radio, at a public appearance there should be a great deal of physical activity and visual gags which all too easily appear as in-jokes which alienate the listener elsewhere. It is usually preferable to broadcast from a public event without becoming part of the entertainment, a common arrangement being to schedule one presenter to prepare some short succinct programme inserts backstage while a colleague works the crowds from the stage. For a discussion of the technical aspects of outside broadcasting see Section 2.11.

For a music-led service concert appearances by artists relevant to their music policy offer opportunities for non-monetary marketing deals. Publicity people at local music venues have advance knowledge of planned concerts by core artists and tour promoters will frequently agree to a deal which brings them guaranteed advance publicity in return for including the station name and logo on tickets and posters. At major events the promoters will be especially keen to build bridges with the local authorities and may welcome any help you can offer to broadcast public safety, traffic and parking announcements. The station should ask for a reasonable number of complimentary tickets as competition prizes and for staff or clients who wish to attend, together with the exclusive right to make the first public announcement of the concert and backstage access for interviews. Similarly, community stations who promote live local music can use their airtime to promote gigs at local venues. This may have a knock on effect of bringing new listeners to the station with interests in local music.

Free publicity and marketing

A radio service actively involved in its target community can achieve a high level of visibility for little or no cost if it seizes every relevant opportunity. Many small stations only spend significant sums on promotion was during their pre-launch and launch period, before they establish any currency of their own in air-time to barter. Such initial marketing expenditure is usually built

into the capital costs of setting up the station and is not available as an on-going budget.

Chances for free marketing can appear from unexpected directions and the station manager must encourage all staff to keep look out for unusal opportunities. Staff at WGGY-FM who, upon realising the US version of the comedy show The Office would be set in their home town of Scranton, sent a goodie bag of props to the production team. Their "Froggy 101" bumper sticker can be seen decorating the office walls in the US hit series.

Free Press coverage

The principle of looking out for the free marketing opportunity is nowhere more significant than in any station's handing of press coverage. Managers must keep a constant watch for any unexpected opportunity for news stories on the station and its people while also taking the time to artificially generate original stories.

Barnard Castle based community radio station Radio Teesdale enjoys a good relationship with the weekly local paper covering the same area. The Teesdale Mercury included occasional stories about the service and encouraged volunteer recruitment while the launch of the project and major milestones were reflected in the regional press, but the wider press and media showed no interest in the establishment and successful operation of the station.

A breakfast show presenter had very competently hosted the programme for almost a year when one morning he inexplicably forgot to press a vital button when first entering the studio. He spent the first hour of his show talking to himself while the station's automated overnight computer system continued to play a sequence of music and station identification. Once the station manager had managed to get his attention on the studio phone the DJ finally went on-air and explained his absence to the listeners. A reporter for the regional daily newspaper heard the item and contacted the station who were happy to maximise the opportunity for a bit of local publicity. The resulting small item in the following day's Northern Echo however led to international press and media attention, with pieces appearing in the UK tabloids and in press and radio reports around the world. The station, almost entirely run by volunteers, subsequently reported a significant increase in interest in the station, not only in international and national recognition but most importantly among local people wishing to become involved in the project.

Creating publicity

Radio services often find it frustratingly difficult to get publicity in the press and other media when they have a success story to tell. This is particularly true of commercial radio, where the press will often see the station as a competitor for limited advertising revenue but the effect can also be felt by public service and community broadcasters. Those working in the traditional print media have good reason to be concerned about the drift towards electronic media and the radio station manager should be aware of such editorial prejudices.

Nevertheless, although some local newspapers appear particularly threatened by local radio, they are always looking for ways to expand their readership and may be receptive to proposals for co-promotion. For example a competition, publicised in their pages and on-air, designed to encourage listeners to become readers and vice versa. More simply, if a paper or magazine is planning a supplement on something of interest to target listeners, managers may be able to agree a legitimate deal where the supplement prominently carries the station's logo, positioning statement and frequency and is the material is described as being published jointly with the station in return for free promotions for the publication on the air.

On the news pages it is easy to complain that press releases from radio stations are usually ignored, but is a story which boils down to 'Newsreader reads bulletin' or 'DJ plays song' really news? As illustrated by the Radio Teesdale coverage, an unexpected happening or bad news tends to gather a far greater number of column centimetres. To be sure of coverage, many broadcasters find that they must go outside the comfort of their normal routine, or even their station, and create a happening that the public, and therefore the other media, cannot ignore.

All news is good news - the deliberate use of controversy?

Much of what is broadcast is, quite appropriately, a reflection or coverage of things going on the outside world and such programme material is hard to manage or bend to the needs of the publicity machine. Competitions however can be entirely developed by promotions or programming staff to meet the publicity needs of the station, maximising the word-of-mouth profile of the station. Few stations have played this card so effectively as Birmingham's heritage commercial radio brand. BRMB's 'Two Strangers and a Wedding' competition was one of the most infamous publicity stunts in UK commercial radio history, causing moral outrage among those who believe marriage vows

are sacred. Listeners competed for a wedding supplied by the station, including a free honeymoon in the Bahamas, with a wedding night in the £750 per night Chamberlain Suite at the Hyatt Hotel, and on their return to Birmingham the free use of a Ford Puma sports car and an apartment in the city's exclusive Symphony Court development. The prizes, including dresses, cars and the reception, were worth an estimated £50,000.

The promotion, first held on two stations in Australia, involved matching complete strangers by asking them questions on race, religion, prejudices and sexual attitudes. The winners, Carla Germaine, a 23 year old former model, and 28 year old sales manager Greg Cordell, did not meet prior to the ceremony and had to sign a pre-nuptial agreement preventing them from making any claims on the other's property if the marriage were to fail.

At the Radio Academy Festival in Birmingham five years later, PR expert Mark Borkowski (2004) described the promotion, heavily criticised by churches and MPs, as among the best ever radio publicity stunts: 'It was something that everybody was talking about. It was a precursor to Big Brother and other reality TV shows.'

Substantial media coverage was guaranteed when church leaders wrote publicly to the station (BBC News 1999) urging it to reconsider the promotion. In the letter the three joint presidents of Birmingham Churches Together, the Bishop of Birmingham, the city's Catholic Archbishop and Free Churches representative wrote: 'Both marriage and the human beings involved are too important to be manipulated in this way.'

Borkowski told delegates the promotion involved a lot of risk, 'But they increased their audience reach from 27 per cent to 40 per cent. It had humour, risk and a bit of rock'n'roll' (op cit). BRMB repeated the same promotion in 2006 and again received national attention, largely due to the carefully orchestrated controversy.

The risks involved in such high-profile controversial publicity stunts became all too apparent when, in August 2001, BRMB held another major competition. Called 'The Coolest Seats in Town' contestants wishing to win tickets and VIP passes to Birmingham's Party in the Park music festival were required to sit on dry ice - solid carbon dioxide - which has a temperature of minus 78 degrees Celsius.

Following the event, held outside BRMB's Broad Street studios, four members of the public were rushed to hospital suffering from severe frostbite, three underwent extensive skin grafts and remained in hospital for several weeks. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) subsequently brought a prosecution under Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974, which requires employers to ensure people not in their employment but who may be affected by their activities are not exposed to risks. The station, then

part of the giant Capital Radio Group, admitted breaching the law at a hearing at Birmingham Magistrates Court in January 2003 and was fined £15,000 (BBC News, 2003).

The sometimes tricky relationship between commercial radio and the music business was highlighted, again at BRMB, when a presenter appeared to walk out of the studio in mid show (Guardian 2001). Listeners to the breakfast show on Friday 13 April heard Graham Mack say: 'I'm supposed to play Stan by Eminem. He's a bigot, he's a criminal, and he's on probation.' Mack went on to say that he did not get on with BRMB programme controller Adam Bridge, and then put a call from Bridge on-the-air: 'Maybe I'm stupid, but I selected Eminem. I don't pay for your opinion - just play the bloody song.' Mack told him the call was going out live before saying: 'I'm out of here - if you want it played, you bloody play it.'

Graham Mack may have held strong views about the US rapper but many in broadcasting found it surprising that an internal phone call could find its way onto the air, fortunate that another presenter was ready to take over the remaining half hour of the programme, and convenient that this was Mack's last day sitting in for the show's regular host, Les Ross, who was on leave. Stunt or not, the events certainly generated national headlines (Radio Magazine 2001), the Daily Mirror for example running with 'Eminem row DJ walks out'.

A similar event provoked much speculation in the radio industry in June 2004. Following an edition of the Classic Gold Digital breakfast show in which veteran DJ Tony Blackburn played Cliff Richard's 1963 hit Summer Holiday the presenter received an e- mail from head of programmes Paul Baker stating that the station should not be playing the singer. Next day Blackburn responded by tearing up the warning live on air and defiantly played two Cliff hits back to back: 'We Don't Talk Any More' and 'Living Doll'. He was immediately suspended from the station for breaking the Classic Gold music policy, prompting national news coverage.

'We shouldn't be playing Cliff Richard,' Paul Baker was quoted as writing to Blackburn (Independent, 2004): 'We might carry out research on him, but for now we have a policy decision that he doesn't match our brand values. He's not on the playlist, and you must stop playing him.'

After a few days in the headlines, with the media gathering quotes from Sir Cliff Richard, usefully available at Wimbledon, and even from Peter Hain MP, it was announced that the DJ would be returning to the Classic Gold breakfast show and that Cliff's songs would join the station's playlist (BBC News, 2004). 'I enjoy working with Classic Gold and doing my breakfast show immensely,' Blackburn was quoted as saying. 'I'm also pleased that we're going

to be playing Cliff Richard records. It's the listeners who have come out on top.'

'Game, set and match!' responded Jimmy Young in the Sunday Express (Radio Magazine 2004). Regardless of the truth behind the headlines the result was an amount of publicity for Classic Gold network that money could not buy, and all focused on the station's format and brand values.

Marketing Community Radio

Many of the ideas and techniques outlined here are relevant to public service and community radio. Phil Korbell, director of Radio Regen is passionate about community radio's unique role in the 'marketing mix':

> *It is easy for community radio to under sell itself - we're the small fry, we might be new to radio and selling, we're not glossy and don't have RAJAR figures. BUT what we're selling is different and unique - a meaningful, trusted and dynamic relationship with a targeted audience. And which other media outlet can, hand on heart, say that they can do that at such a local level, day in, day out? So it is vital to get away from the idea that we're just small local radio stations - we are way different to that and much more effective for it.*
> (Korbel, 2006)

The community radio sector in the UK can learn some marketing lessons from countries where this sector has been established for longer (see for instance the Marketing Community Radio guide produced in Australia which is available on the Community Radio Toolkit website). In the UK radiothons have been set up to raise money for charitable causes (for instance the digital channel Gaydar raising funds for AIDS charities and UK Radio Aid uniting commercial stations across the UK to raise money for tsunami charities. The 'radiothon' is also used as a marketing and fundraising tool by US and Australian community radios to keep their stations on the air. Once or twice a year the station's usual schedule is suspended and every hour is spent fundraising for and promoting the station. The radiothon is reinforced by emails to listeners and website appeals. The station staff will have planned for this well in advance and will offer prizes and subscriber inducements. The general idea is that if you value the service then you don't want to lose it!

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Section 2.9

Legal issues for managers

Summary

A radio station is generally constituted as a private company or a department of a larger company and is subject to all the laws and regulations governing any such body. In handling the specific challenges of public broadcasting it is all too easy for the manager to lose sight of general legal requirements in fields such as employment, health and safety and taxation. While in no way wishing to minimise the importance of such issues for the radio manager, up-to-date information on these areas of legislation is widely available and we will here concentrate on matters more specific to broadcasting.

Licence conditions

The specific requirements specified in a station's licence and the general policies set out in Ofcom's Broadcasting Code (Ofcom 2005) have the force of law and are punishable by fines or, ultimately, the revocation of the licence. Experience suggests the manager should take particular care to ensure compliance in four areas: any limitations on the style and content of programming specified in the service's 'format' document; harm and offence; fairness and impartiality, and; commercial references in programming.

Taste, decency and offence

There has been a long tradition of discussion about what is acceptable for broadcast - as David Hendy wrote 'one person's freedom of expression was always someone else's filth.' (Hendy 2007: 316). Previously well established standards of 'taste and decency' were replaced in the Communications Act 2003 by arguably slightly less subjective tests of 'harm and offence'. Managers responsible for programme making should familiarise themselves with both the Code and Ofcom's interpretation of it in response to complaints, as reported regularly in their Broadcast Bulletins (see www.ofcom.org.uk). Section Two of the code (Ofcom 2005) specifies that 'generally accepted

standards' must be applied to the contents of television and radio services so as to provide adequate protection for members of the public from the inclusion of 'harmful and/or offensive material' and goes on to introduce the importance of context in such decisions:

> *In applying generally accepted standards broadcasters must ensure that material which may cause offence is justified by the context (see meaning of "context" below). Such material may include, but is not limited to, offensive language, violence, sex, sexual violence, humiliation, distress, violation of human dignity, discriminatory treatment or language (for example on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion, beliefs and sexual orientation). Appropriate information should also be broadcast where it would assist in avoiding or minimising offence.*
> *Context includes (but is not limited to):*

- *the editorial content of the programme, programmes or series;*
- *the service on which the material is broadcast;*
- *the time of broadcast;*
- *what other programmes are scheduled before and after the programme or programmes concerned;*
- *the degree of harm or offence likely to be caused by the inclusion of any particular sort of material in programmes generally or programmes of a particular description;*
- *the likely size and composition of the potential audience and likely expectation of the audience;*
- *the extent to which the nature of the content can be brought to the attention of the potential audience for example by giving information; and*
- *the effect of the material on viewers or listeners who may come across it unawares.*

(Ofcom 2005: 17)

A repeated disregard for accepted standards of taste and decency can result in a station receiving a substantial Ofcom fine and, in extreme cases, losing its licence.

In a medium dominated by live programmes radio managers must rely on their staff and presenters to understand where the lines must be drawn. There

is no universally applied list of banned words or phrases, material appropriate to one service at a particular time of day might be completely unacceptable at any time elsewhere. Ofcom tends to be guided by its own research into what listeners find offensive, and by listeners' reasonable expectations of a specific programme in a particular service.

The programme manager must consider the target audience and image of the service, the likely age and demographic make up of the audience and the objectives of an individual programme before setting out guidelines for their own station. There is inevitable pressure on the manager from broadcasters who have heard a particular word being used on another station, or an unedited version of a song being played, to permit the same on their own service. If in doubt a clear understanding of the values and tastes of the target listener and solid grasp of the station's brand values will usually define the correct course of action.

The manager should accept no excuses for lapses by the presenter in a live programme, stressing in advance that, if the presenters or production staff are in any doubt about the suitability of an item they should leave it out until they have an opportunity to refer the matter upwards, usually to Programme Controller level. Where, with hindsight, something has gone out which might cause problems, staff should be encouraged to tell the Programme Controller as complaints can sometimes be deflected, with offence minimised, if the management ready for them. This requirement places an obligation on the manager to be far less threatening in her or his demeanour when something is brought to their attention by those involved than when it is highlighted by complaints from third parties.

In drawing up employment contracts for on-air staff and freelancers a clause should be considered requiring employees to take all necessary measures to avoid anything which would be in any way illegal, needlessly offensive, scandalous, or defamatory. New broadcasters may believe that these concerns are limited to the use of smutty vocabulary, and may seek a definitive list of what they may, and may not, say on the air. It is the responsibility of their manager to ensure they appreciate the greater degree of offence often caused by sexual innuendo, sexism, racism, religious intolerance and incautious remarks about matters in the news.

During interviews and where listeners participate in a programme the presenter must be aware of their responsibility to control the conversation and the behaviour of the contributor. If the guest suddenly becomes offensive or defamatory any damage can be considerably reduced if the presenter is heard to respond quickly and responsibly. Production staff should be expected to take the precaution of pre-recording any participation by anyone who has a reputation for offensive behaviour.

Handling Complaints

In general the staff at Ofcom do not concern themselves with detailed programming issues unless someone draws a matter to their attention. If good management can prevent any complaint reaching their desks the station will never have to answer to them for any mistakes. The same could be said of the courts and where mistakes happen efficient management can defuse a complaint at an early enough stage to save a lot of time, trouble and expense. Unfortunately, even where the complaint is without merit, if it goes further than the station the manager will have to go to the trouble of providing copies of logging recordings, written transcripts and explanations. The amount of work, particularly if solicitors become involved, can be out of all proportion to any offence caused to the average listener.

The key in handling an original complaint is to remember that the average listener is not likely to complain to any other authority if they are satisfied with the response they receive initially from the radio station. Thus ALL complaints must be brought immediately to the attention of senior management. This is easy enough if the complaint arrives by email, post or telephone during the working day, but it must also apply if your presenter takes an angry call on a 'phone-in line at 2 o'clock in the morning. Whoever receives the comments should make a brief note of them and tell the listener that their comments will be passed to the manager for immediate attention. The listener should be told that they will receive a response from the manager as soon as possible but no further discussion should take place.

Managers find it helpful to adopt a strategy of matching force: if the listener complained by telephone in the evening then respond by telephone in the evening; if they sent an email, respond by email; if the complaint arrived in a formal letter they should receive a polite formal letter in reply; if they turn up unexpectedly in reception then if possible meet them and discuss the matter there. With an appointment the manager might see them in his or her office. Whatever the means of response it is crucial to keep a thorough record of everything said, sent or received. Most importantly, if the listener has engaged the services of a solicitor then they should receive a response from the radio station's solicitor. It flows from a policy of matched force that if they increase the stakes by involving the legal profession the station must too. There are some situations where the manager would be well advised to contact a solicitor first. Suppose someone complains that they have been defamed by a comment in the breakfast show. If, when the manager listens to the logging recorder, there seems to be a case to answer, it is safest to discuss tactics with the company's solicitor before responding. The radio station's indemnity insurance will probably require that legal advice is taken in such situations,

possibly involving the insurers legal advisors. Your solicitor may well suggest that you reply in apologetic terms without admitting the libel.

All complaints should be retained on file centrally, together with copies of any correspondence and notes of conversations. The station must also hang on to a copy of the relevant programme audio. While the station is always required to retain logging recordings for 42 days Ofcom expects any contentious audio to be immediately saved to a more permanent medium and stored until any possibility of an appeal to Ofcom has passed. The recordings are made using purpose-designed hard-disc recorders, computers running widely available logging software, or, in older installations, on special DAT tape machines or even VHS long-play video recorders giving 8 hours per tape.

Failure to supply a recording when requested by Ofcom can lead to a substantial fine and a serious black mark against the licence holder. As a result, depending on the security of the system used, some stations limit access to the recordings to management only. This avoids a daily queue of people wanting to extract audio for a podcast, make a dub of a spectacular "blooper" or to take air-checks of their greatest moments with a view to future employment. In such cases staff must be aware of the need to make separate recordings for such purposes, which as logging quality is often compromised in order to compress the stored files is not a bad idea anyway.

In general it is regarded as good practice to refuse to release copies of material from your logging tapes to outsiders. Typical routine requests might come from programme contributors wanting a record of their appearance or from advertisers querying whether their spots went out on time. Only in the event of a legal query would the station release a dub, or a transcript, and perhaps then only with the approval of the company solicitor. However some situations, for example a complaint occasioned by a listener mis-hearing an innocent remark, can best be tackled by playing a copy of the offending item to the complainant, in person or perhaps just down the phone.

News reporting

Few murder trials attracted the level of interest shown in the case of the deaths of schoolgirls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham. The trial of Ian Huntley was a topic of conversation wherever people gathered and it might therefore have seemed natural, even appropriate, to reflect it in a popular local-radio breakfast show.

On Beacon FM's breakfast show, broadcast while the trial was continuing, presenters Mark Peters and Lisa Freame asked their listeners if they thought Huntley's defence was believable. Peters was reported as saying, 'It's almost

like the most unbelievably made-up story in the world ever, really, isn't it? Well, I personally think it is. I can't believe any member of the jury is going to believe that story.'

Co-host Lisa Freame then read out some text messages from listeners, which blamed Huntley for the girls' deaths. The broadcast led to the suspension and ultimate departure from the station of the two presenters and an investigation by the Attorney General, who considered prosecuting the pair for contempt of court.

Had the presenters been journalists they would have been aware that their comments clearly breached the basic rules of court reporting, which prohibit any comment on the guilt or innocence of a person on trial. Two listeners were amazed that the presenters did not realise this (Media Guardian 2003), 'You are at serious risk of prejudicing a trial. He could walk free because of what u [sic] are doing. Don't u [sic] know the first thing about contempt of court?' said one message.

A text from another listener read: 'Do you idiots not understand the principle of sub judice? You can't comment on the trial. It's against the law. You're in a LOT of trouble!'

25 years earlier media law expert Walter Greenwood and co-author of the journalists' bible McNae's Essential Law for Journalists (Greenwood and Welsh 2005), suggested to a group of trainees that the first big legal action against a UK commercial radio station would most probably be occasioned by words spoken by a DJ or presenter rather than a trained radio journalist. He was surprised then, and would be now, to discover that many people are put in control of live programmes without receiving any training in the relevant law.

There are three broad areas of the law which managers should always be aware of in live programming:

Libel

Any statement which implies a lack of honesty, ability, competence or skill on the part of any person or body may be defamatory. If it is broadcast it does not matter whether the words are said by the presenter, a caller, or someone in a news bulletin. If a caller utters a defamatory remark and we broadcast it then it is possible that the caller, the presenter or the radio station, or any combination of them, can be sued for libel.

Presenters frequently fail to realise that an item is not safe because they are merely repeating a defamatory statement uttered by another. For example if they repeat a defamatory item from a newspaper the station also becomes responsible for publishing that statement. And an item is not safe because you

know it to be true - you must have the evidence to prove it to be true to the satisfaction of a court.

Armed with a misunderstanding of how television programmes like *Have I Got News For* You operate, presenters may incorrectly believe that the judicious insertion of the word 'allegedly' or avoiding the actual name of the person or body involved will keep them safe. The test of a libel action is whether the words would reasonably lead persons acquainted with the plaintiff to believe he was the person referred to and that they would think less of him as a result.

Particularly during a radio 'phone-in it is necessary to be wary of the 'creeping libel'. During a long call the listener may reveal where they live or work, for example, and later criticise a "local" company or individual without naming them. Taking the whole call into account the identity of who is being defamed may be obvious to at least one listener, and one listener is all that is needed.

Journalists are able to use the defences of justification, fair comment and privilege, but these are beyond the scope of this book. The manager must ensure that their staff are properly trained in these areas, or know to refer any contentious items to someone who is prior to broadcast. Intention is irrelevant, an item is not safe merely because the broadcaster can later show they did not intend to defame the person or that they made an honest mistake.

Contempt of court

As with the Soham case, when a major crime or trial is in the headlines, listeners will naturally wish to comment on the reports by text, email or during a phone-in. Such comments must not be broadcast, callers must stick to a general discussion of crime and punishment not the details of a specific active case.

In general the media cannot carry any discussion of a case once a person has been arrested or charged or a warrant has been issued for his arrest, or if a civil case has been set down for trial. Discussion is only possible again once a person is sentenced or acquitted, or when the case is discontinued. Broadcasters must take special care never to suggest that anyone released without charge or found not guilty is in fact guilty, or that those 'helping the police' may be guilty.

Identification of children and victims of sexual offences

It is usually an offence to identify any juvenile involved in court proceedings. Neither should a radio station report any other particulars about the juvenile that could lead to their identification. The news journalists will have avoided giving any such details but a listener who personally knows the case may blurt them out before you can stop them. Programme staff should also realise that children in care, or involved in a divorce or separation may be the subject of a court order and that the station must prevent their parents or friends from identifying them.

There are normally similar restrictions on identifying the victim in a case of alleged rape. While court reports will have avoided giving clues to the identity of the victim, programme presenters must be careful not to allow anything to be added to the story that could aid identification.

The radio manager must be ready to react quickly when a mistake has been made and a legal line has been crossed. While a rapid retraction or apology will not remove the original transgression it has frequently be held to mitigate the seriousness of the offence in any subsequent hearing or investigation.

Advertising regulations

Under the Communications Act 2003, the statutory regulator Ofcom was encouraged to contract-out such functions to a co-regulatory partnerships where possible to give effective self-regulation to the sector. Since November 2004, after public consultation and parliamentary approval, the regulation of broadcast advertising has been the responsibility of the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) under contract from Ofcom. The BCAP Radio Advertising Standards Code (BCAP 2008) sets out the regulations that govern advertisements on any radio station licensed by Ofcom. The rules are framed to ensure that advertisements are 'legal, decent, honest and truthful' and do not mislead or cause harm or serious or widespread offence and require central script approval for 'Special Categories' of advertising and sponsorship credits. BCAP, which comprises representatives of radio broadcasters and advertisers, RadioCentre and the RACC, owns and periodically amends the Code.

This central script clearance function required under the code is carried out by the Radio Advertising Clearance Centre (RACC), part of the commercial radio trade body RadioCentre, and funded by commercial radio stations who

pay copy clearance fees. The RACC also centrally clears national advertising and sponsorship credits to benefit national advertisers and agencies.

All commercials and sponsor credits must be cleared (checked for compliance with the Code) in advance of broadcast, either by the Radio Advertising Clearance Centre (RACC) or, if they are not in a 'special category' and are not going to be broadcast in more than one locality, simply by relevant staff at the station concerned. The special categories are set out in the BCAP Code (2008: 5) and include most of the products and services likely to cause complaint or concern. Examples include:

> Advertising aimed specifically at children;
> Environmental claims;
> Consumer credit, investment and complex financial advertising;
> Political, industrial and public controversy matters;
> Alcoholic drink;
> Medical and health products;
> Food and nutrition claims;
> Contraception, condoms and family planning products and services;
> Sex shops, Stripograms etc;
> Competitions, Lotteries, Betting and Gaming;
> Dating, Introduction or Marriage Agencies or Services;
> 18-certificate films and videos;
> Religious advertising;
> Charities.

The Code (BCAP 2008: 70) also includes a list of advertisers, goods or services that are not acceptable in radio advertisements under any circumstances:

> a) Those who practise or advocate illegal or harmful, or potentially harmful, behaviour;
> b) Betting tipsters;
> c) Tobacco and tobacco products, including cigars and pipe tobacco;
> d) Firearms and other weaponry;
> e) Obscene and restricted material, prostitution and other sexual services;
> f) Bodies whose rites and other forms of collective observance are not generally accessible to the public;

g) Advertisements of a political nature;

h) Prescription only medicines.

Complaints about apparent breaches of the Code are considered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), through its broadcasting arm. The ASA had more than 40 years' experience of regulating non-broadcast advertising before being contracted to undertake the same role in broadcasting by Ofcom The ASA's adjudications give an insight into the practical application of the Code and are published online at www.asa.org.uk

Ofcom remains ultimately responsible for broadcast advertising under the Communications Act 2003, monitors the effectiveness of the new system and can step in with sanctions against broadcasters if required.

In addition to the stringent rules in the BCAP Code, all radio advertisements must comply with the laws and regulations governing advertising in any medium. A non- exhaustive list in the Code lists 237 separate statutes and regulations affecting advertising and promotions in England and Wales and some EC Regulations and Directives are relevant. For example, financial service advertising is surrounded by a large number of rules concerning the expression of interest rates, offers of written details, and financial health warnings. Unfortunately such regulations are generally established with visual advertising in mind. There can be no small print in a radio advertisement and conditions that might be met perfectly legally in a small box at the very bottom of a print advertisement can easily occupy half of a 30 second commercial.

The 237 laws listed in the Code run alphabetically from the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, through the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and the Consumer Credit (Advertisements) Regulations 2004 down to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In most cases advertisers should be well aware of restrictions on advertising in their field but the manager should always be cautious where a client primarily deals in money, whether for investment, gambling, or charitable purposes, as they are almost certainly covered by regulations about what they must and must not say in their advertising.

Managing intellectual property rights

A community radio station won its full-time licence after having conducted Restricted Service Licence broadcasts over a number of years. A short while after the full-time service commenced an engineer, who had given a great deal of his time on a voluntary basis to construct the studios and transmitters, had a

difference of opinion with the permanent station management and left the project. Before leaving he allegedly returned all the settings on the station's audio processor to a neutral position, making the transmissions sound relatively quiet and lifeless. He justified this on the grounds that the settings used to achieve the station's distinct on-air sound were his own intellectual property.

In another community radio station an unpaid volunteer presenter was allowed regular access to a studio to develop his skills and prepare material for broadcast. It later emerged that he had also been using this opportunity to produce recordings for another project in which he was involved. When challenged he argued that the resulting productions were his own property because he had supplied the mini discs on which they were recorded. These real examples illustrate some of the issues surrounding intellectual property rights in any radio service.

While many stations, particularly those operating on a tight budget or who primarily exist for a training purpose, might welcome, and even encourage, wider exploitation of work created using their facilities, it is essential that the station can maintain some degree of control over the work for which its limited resources are used. Where an individual is paid for their services the legal position is relatively clear, the employer would usually expect that any material created in return for payment would become the property of the employer, unless other arrangements had been agreed.

There is a much greater risk of misunderstanding where no payment or other valuable consideration changes hands. Not only in a voluntary or community radio situation but also where listeners are invited to contribute to a programme on a larger station. The increasing tendency of video broadcasters, websites and newspapers to invite their viewers to submit their own photographs and videos has recently heightened interest in such copyright issues.

Individual stations and companies should take expert legal advice on such matters, but commonly the terms and conditions of employment given to a member of staff will include a clause such as:

> *All records, documents, papers and other copyright protected works made or acquired by you in the course of your employment shall, together with all worldwide copyright and design rights in all such works, be and at all times remain the absolute property of the company. The company reserves the right to use, repeat, sell or simulcast the full copyright and works of the design or invention in any part of the world for no extra fee.*

In the absence of a conventional contract of employment many UK community radio stations require volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement stipulating their responsibilities and general duties. The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia suggests to its members a volunteer presenter's contract (CBAA 2007) which might be adapted to meet the needs of an agreement for use in a community or voluntary station in the UK (For full example of the contract see
http://www.cbaa.org.au/content.php/12.html?pubid=62).

It is useful to include in such contracts a clause which stipulates that any material created using the station's facilities and resources becomes the property of the radio service and permission must be sought before any other use of the material. It might be appropriate to add that such permission would not be unreasonably withheld.

Similarly standard competition rules, applying to all competitions on the station and published on the website, might stipulate that any material submitted as an entry to a competition (including the audio recording of the listener's participation) becomes and remains the property of the radio station.

Working with children and vulnerable people

Station managers should ensure that anyone who is likely to be doing radio training or activities with young people under the age of 18 should be appropriately selected and trained to work safely with young people. Many community stations now have a document or Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable People (see Community Media Association or Community Radio Toolkit for examples). Volunteers and paid staff should be prepared to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check when they join the station. Ofcom has also produced research and guidance on protecting under eighteens in programmes and making sure that they understand what it means to participate in a programme (see also Children and Radio Group in Section 4).

Programme content

British, European and International legislation gives those who create an artistic work a copyright, the right to control and profit from subsequent exploitation of their work. Copyright musical works in the UK normally enjoy protection until fifty years after the composer dies, and the copyright in music

recordings lasts for fifty years after the first publication, so however you look at it, effectively almost all popular music is covered by copyright.

Strictly speaking, whenever you wish to broadcast a copyright work you must first obtain the permission of the various rights holders and agree a fee for the use of their material. Fortunately for radio stations, many of whom may play something over three hundred separate pieces of music every day, there is an easy solution to this problem. In the UK three bodies have been established to represent the holders of the three main rights involved in the public performance and broadcasting of music. These companies and associations have reciprocal arrangements with equivalent organisations overseas and therefore also collect and distribute royalties for foreign recordings (see Section 4 for contact details of these organisations).

The Performing Rights Society (PRS)

PRS is an organisation representing the composers, authors and publishers of most of the musical works heard in this country. For a single 'royalty' payment each year they will grant a station permission to perform their member's work in public broadcasts. Currently, for a conventional analogue commercial radio station, the cost of a PRS licence is based on a sliding scale of 3 per cent to 5.25 per cent of the net advertising revenue of the service. At the time of writing the lower rate applies to stations earning less than £551,070 per annum and the higher rate to those drawing in more than £1,102,140. These figures are increased annually in line with inflation. There are reduced rates for the first year of a new station and where the total music use is less than 15% of the broadcasts, and a special daily rate applies for test transmissions and stations operating under Restricted Service Licences.
As PRS royalties are distributed to their members roughly in proportion to how often each member's works are performed the society requires radio stations to log copyright details for the music they broadcast and return the information to the Society. The extent of this logging depends on the size of the station and whether the information can be generated electronically. Note that the PRS licence fee is collected on behalf of the songwriters, not the record producers, and even if you only broadcast 'live' music, they are still entitled to their payment.

Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)

PPL looks after the broadcasting rights of the recording industry, collecting and distributing airplay and public performance royalties in the UK on behalf of over 3,500 record companies and 40,000 performers. The vast majority of the records played on UK radio can be covered by one blanket licence from PPL.
The annual licence fee ranges between 2 per cent and 5 per cent of net advertising revenue, using the same income bands as PRS (above). A fixed minimum fee of £550 per annum has been established for smaller stations earning less than £27,500 in annual qualifying advertising revenue. Again there are special arrangements for temporary Restricted Service Licence stations, and concessions for student and hospital radio services. PPL may also require full details of the tracks played.
Separate arrangements apply to the licensing of music on internet-only radio stations.

Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)

Like the Performing Right Society, MCPS represents the interests of composers and publishers, but is concerned not with the performance of their musical works but rather with the right to record their compositions. Owned by the Music Publishers Association, MCPS grant licences to radio stations covering this "mechanical right". A station might argue that it does not intend to make its own music recordings, but the MCPS licence is also required in order that they may dub records onto a playout system, or pre-record programmes containing music recordings. In addition to this programming licence, MCPS can also licence the station to make use of the extensive libraries of production music which are useful when making commercials.
In 1997 MCPS formed a joint body with the PRS to more efficiently collect royalties on behalf of their members, music writers, composers and publishers. All radio stations that are members of the Radio Centre (previously CRCA) are covered by a lump sum MCPS/Radio Centre agreement while other radio stations require clearance from MCPS directly. At the time of writing this clearance scheme is under review.

The same principles of rights protection apply to other written or recorded material broadcast by any station.

All presenters and production staff should be aware of the risks in reading verbatim from a web site, book, magazine or newspaper. A station may not broadcast any copyright written work, whether it is a poem, play, short story or newspaper article without the permission of the copyright owner. While the works of long-dead authors are out of copyright, it is best to advise staff to always check before using such material. The first contact would normally be with the publisher of the piece concerned. A non-music recording that has been sold as a CD in the shops is not covered by the PRS and PPL agreements and is not automatically available for broadcast without further agreement and payment. For example, CDs of old radio shows released by BBC Worldwide are not covered by these blanket licences.

There is a useful concession under copyright law for the use of short extracts for comment purposes. So, for example, while reviewing a new book a presenter may read a few sentences to illustrate a point, or, in a review of the day's papers, they could quote from the editorial in *The Times* or the headlines of *The Sun*.

Fortunately newspapers, web sites and other broadcast media cannot make any claim to copyright in the actual news. A radio station can lift topical facts in the public domain from another news service, but must not copy anything that the originating source added - like their own reporter's comments or some background reporting. To be on the safe side, it is generally seen as good practice to credit a source where appropriate, for example: 'According to CNN, there has been a second bombing raid this evening.' To some extent this also protects the repeating medium should the reported facts turn out to be wrong.

Health and Safety

Most of the management considerations here would apply to any similar business or undertaking and, while they are as important in radio broadcasting as in any other field, are outside the scope of this publication. While the levels of exposure to electromagnetic waves and electrical apparatus in a radio station are now not much different from those found in any modern business environment, there may be some risks specific to broadcasters of which the manager must be aware, taking all reasonable steps to minimise them.

Particularly on outside broadcasts cables laid in public places and outdoor electrical equipment present particular hazards and it is often forgotten that some decades ago two British local radio engineers were tragically killed when

the telescopic mast of a radio car touched overhead power lines. A well-managed radio station will issue specially prepared risk assessment forms for such activities and staff should be required to understand and complete them beforehand.

Even within a well-designed and maintained studio there are risks however. Taking one example, which is causing some current concern, the levels at which some people listen to audio are potentially damaging to hearing. Exposure to high levels of sound cumulatively over a long period of time will lead to some degree of hearing loss and this risk should perhaps be considered to be even more significant to someone earning their living from working in sound.

The greatest danger comes not from the control room monitor speakers but from headphones. Most headphones can produce a much higher sound level at the eardrum than typical studio monitoring loudspeakers, often well above accepted safety limits. Unfortunately, for psychological reasons, for a given sound pressure level headphones do not appear to sound as loud as loudspeakers and as a result presenters are often tempted to turn the monitor gain up far higher than the manager might wish.

As far as the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 are concerned loud music or speech is just another hazardous noise, and as in any industry the manager is responsible for the safety of workers, volunteers and studio guests. As with other Health and Safety legislation it is not enough to say that any damage is self-inflicted, that the presenters can choose the volume at which they listen – on a building site it is not enough to supply hard hats, the management has a duty to ensure they are worn!

Defining a safe level is far from straightforward. Not only is it difficult to measure sound level inside a pair of headphones but also the Regulations are based on exposure to steady noise for an eight-hour working day. Music and speech has a fairly wide dynamic range, so fortunately it is not necessary to limit the maximum loudness to the lower "action value" of 80 dB(A) (equivalent to the constant sound of a pneumatic drill at 50 feet). For those wearing headphones for only a limited number of hours each day, listening to typical programme material, a higher figure may well be acceptable and the figure of 93 dB (A) has often been used in the past (Woolf 2007).

Options for the manager include locking the maximum gain of studio loudspeakers and headphones to what seems a safe level (although this is seldom popular as occasional use a higher levels may be required) or the addition of specialist limiters to the headphone leads or earpieces. In either case the station must ban the use of other more sensitive headphones, which might produce higher sound levels. A presenter wishes to use their own headphones must purchase a set of the same type and specification.

Useful advice on the control of noise at work in music and entertainment can be found at http://soundadvice.info/.

Insurance

As with any organisation, today's radio station is expected to take out insurance to cover its potential legal liabilities. While this is available from many companies and brokers the manager should be aware that while many standard policies cover you for people tripping over cables and so on they will not help if you are sued for libel for something said on-air. Most radio stations take out two separate policies. The first is equivalent to that held by any responsible organisation or company, covering legal liability for damages, legal costs and expenses as a result of injury to the public, employees and volunteers or damage to their property. The second is a specialist Professional Indemnity insurance to cover libel claims up to a certain level.

As a rough guide the matters covered by radio station insurance should at least include the following:

- Public liability. Indemnity cover up to £5 million is quite common as permanent injury claims can be very expensive and would destroy most radio companies. The insurer will want to understand what type of public events you intend to organise or attend.
- Costs and expenses in defending proceedings under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Employers liability. Again a very high level of cover is needed, indemnity limits of £10 million are quite common. Covers legal liability for damages, legal costs and expenses as a result of injury to employees or voluntary workers.
- Personal accident. Covering injury to employees or volunteers arising from accidents while working in connection with the radio station.
- Legal costs and expenses for the station, employees and voluntary workers in connection with matters arising from the station's activities. This cover is very important as it protects against large legal bills which can be incurred even when the station is not at fault.
- Contents cover, including studio equipment, office contents, etc. The cost of replacement as new or, when specified by you, the replacement cost as second hand i.e. deducting for wear and tear.
- Cover for equipment used away from the studio, e.g. for outside broadcasts. The insurer may require a list of these items in advance.

- Buildings. The cost of rebuilding as new including an additional amount to cover debris removal, architects' and surveyors' fees. Damage to hired or rented property occupied by the station.
- Motor vehicles owned or operated by the station.
- Professional Indemnity. To meet legal costs and damages in the event of a claim of libel against the station or one of its presenters. The amount of a libel award could, in theory, be staggeringly large. Although it is unlikely a court would award huge damages against a small company or voluntary organisation the amount could easily be big enough to impact on the ability of the service to continue.

Optionally you might also wish to consider the following:

- Director or Trustee Indemnity. This insurance is specifically designed to cover the principal liabilities incurred by company directors or charities and their trustees. Bringss peace of mind to the directors, trustees and officers who can be secure in the knowledge that most personal losses will be met.
- Terrorism. It is a risk excluded from many standard policies.
- Interruption insurance cover. To cover losses you might incur due to a forced interruption to your service. And to meet additional costs you will incur in trying to minimise the loss (including the cost of removal to temporary premises, increased rent, rates, salaries, and the cost of clerical time in reproducing business books, computer records and documents.

Professional Indemnity insurers will only pay out if you follow their procedures in the event of a problem. We are all used to the idea of not admitting responsibility after a car accident - rather contacting our insurance companies to handle any claim. Similarly, the moment a complaint is made which could lead to a legal claim, a senior manager should inform the libel insurers and comply with their requests. For example they may require the early involvement of an approved solicitor.

While insurance for group owned stations is almost always centrally arranged, the manager of an independent service can search for a variety of specialist insurers on the Internet and would be well advised to gather the experience of other similar operators before choosing a policy or policies.

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Managing people

Introduction

In this section we will consider how people may be managed in a radio station. In particular we will focus on the selection and retention of personnel (both paid staff and volunteers) and outline practical means to recruit them and how a station manager is affected by legislation. Finally we look at several examples of radio training initiatives relating to radio management and developing skills within in the community radio sector.

Managing People

It is generally the case that the largest cost area that a radio station manager has control over is the human resources. Indeed, given the fact that transmission, distribution, premises, capital, copyright and licence costs are usually fixed or agreed in long-term contracts it may be the only significant area over which the manager can have any influence over the day-to-day costs of the service.

Technical broadcast specifications are now so standardised, and easily achievable using off-the-shelf equipment, that only the human input, rather than any inherent physical characteristics of the service, defines the difference between one station and another. For any service recruiting, motivating and retaining the right people is crucial to the character and effectiveness of the operation.

Block (2001: 175) points out: "Management is not just about the process of production; it is as much to do with managing people". This is particularly true in a business like radio, where there is no tangible raw material, stock or physical product, where the impression created by the staff is everything.

Recent years have seen a daunting increase in the UK employment legislation and regulation that impacts on broadcasting where traditionally part-time, freelance and even volunteer workers filled roles at the bottom of the employment hierarchy. Many senior figures in the sector tell of their beginnings answering the telephones or making coffee in a local radio station for little or no pay. Most radio presenters have experience of holding down a

regular programme slot while under no explicit contract. Before the trend towards automation and network programming in off-peak hours such day parts, for example the overnight shift, gave many presenters and other staff their first step on the ladder to a full-time position.

Like any other business a radio station is fully covered by regulations such as the Working Time Directive and The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 that guarantee minimum working conditions, maternity and paternity leave and pay. Similarly legislation including the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, outlaws discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age. Recent legislation effectively requiring that short-term contract and part-time workers are offered the same employment rights and privileges (pro-rata) as full time employees may considerably change the way the radio sector is structured.

None of this should be too daunting for the well-prepared manager, however, if a clear process is followed at each stage:

1. Identify the role to be filled and whether it really requires a staff position, could the work, for example, be contracted out to another company?

2. Prepare a person specification. What skills, experience and personal characteristics will be required?

3. Decide whether the role can most effectively be filled in as a full-time or part-time staff position, on a fixed-term contract or by casual freelance labour. Community stations may wish to fill a role on a voluntary basis.

4. Fairly advertise the position, internally and/or externally to the organisation as appropriate.

5. Operate a fair and thorough selection process.

6. Give the successful candidate a clear job description with simply understood requirements and objectives and a formal contract of employment.

7. Provide regular constructive feedback on how the individual is performing in relation to your expectations, supplying additional

motivation if required. This may be as part of an annual appraisal system.

8. In the event of any shortcomings offer training, support or correction as appropriate.

9. Offer opportunities for personal development and progress within the organisation.

10. Where necessary invoke the disciplinary procedure or identify poor performance in order to justify dismissal.

11. Maintain clear and consistent written records of the above.

The organisation must be able must be able to demonstrate at a later date that it followed a fair and objective selection process. A confidential record of each of the above requirements and procedures should be retained, for example simply by keeping the notes of any short-listing or interviews, in order to defend against any accusations of unfairness or discrimination from the individual or others who might feel damaged by the manager's decisions. The manager must keep themselves up to date with the relevant provisions of employment law, discrimination legislation and tax policies, here we will limit ourselves to identifying the key matters to be considered at each of the above stages.

1. Identify the role

In a rapidly changing industry planned and unplanned staff changes can offer the manager a valuable opportunity to look again at the structure of the organisation, the distribution of work within the team, and the grade of individual required.

Given the necessary, and quite appropriate, overheads of staff employment it is not surprising that a growing number of radio station functions are sub-contracted to outside companies. Where a typical small radio station of the 1970s might have employed some forty people, now it might directly employ ten or fewer; where a company employed its own overnight security guards it will now use an outside security firm or a centrally-monitored alarm system; commercials can be produced to order by an outside studio at standard rates and instantly fed to the station by email or ISDN lines; outstanding accounts can be chased by a credit agency; and engineers called

upon only when there is a technical problem or project instead of paying their salary every day?

There are two further advantages to farming-out work areas: first the station hives-off the cost of the associated overheads, perhaps not requiring a newsroom or fully- equipped engineering workshop; second it pays by the results delivered, not the hours worked. When launching a new service this means knowing in advance exactly how much support services or commercials will cost, and what can be expected for the money.

Nevertheless there will always be certain core functions over which the manager will wish to retain direct control, including, for instance, the editorial content of the programmes and the fund-raising strategy of the station.

2. The person specification

The easiest way to recruit is to know exactly what you are looking for. Before considering the job's remuneration and relative position in the department, the manager needs to decide what kind of person would be able to undertake the role. A candidate profile should be drawn up that includes a list of the skills, attributes, knowledge and experience required and any qualifications necessary to perform the job. It should also provide details of any personal qualities relevant to the post such as the ability to work as part of a team, to communicate effectively or to present confidently to clients

3. Employment status

Within the typical radio station tasks may be quite properly undertaken by full- or part-time staff, staff on fixed-term contracts, freelance labour or volunteers. The manager must understand which status is appropriate to which roles.

Many different companies have adopted a 'flexible firm' structure where they retain only a small dedicated core of key staff and many functions are then contracted-out or performed by freelance workers paid by the task rather than by the hour (Atkinson 1984 and 1988). In a rapidly changing sector whilst it is appropriate to minimise the number of individuals on the staff of an individual radio service a manager should show commitment towards their staff and in return receive their loyalty to the radio station. A full employment commitment with a new individual should thus only be given where there is a reasonable chance of it remaining a long-term relationship. Where tasks reflect peaks and troughs of demand, or a temporary need, they should be covered using short-term contracts.

There is a long-standing acceptance that performers such as radio presenters may be regarded as self-employed freelances. In some situations the same status may be applied to news or sports reporters, researchers, consultants, or engineers. To be accepted as self-employed the individual will usually have to be able to supply both the same or similar service to other companies, and also their own tools where appropriate. You may employ a sports journalist to phone-in a report at the end of a soccer match and send them a cheque for their fee. But if the same journalist came in to your newsroom to work a week of day shifts you would almost certainly become responsible for deducting tax. The Inland Revenue permit full-time presenters to remain self-employed in certain circumstances, but the wording of any contract should be considered very carefully. The manager must be careful to confirm the exact position in each case because the employer can be held responsible for any outstanding amount, even if the station believed the performer to be self-employed.

In many cases, such as the newsroom role described above, it may be safer to bring the individual in on a fixed term staff contract. The company will deduct tax and NI contributions from wages but a contract will clearly state that the employment is for a limited period with a fixed end-date.

The fixed-term contract is ideal for those situations where the manager cannot be certain whether there will be a need for a particular job function in a years time, for example a development worker or someone undertaking a specific project or programme. However there are snags: given a contract with a fixed end-date the individual may be harder to dismiss prior to that date if you change your mind than if they were in a probationary period as permanent staff; and recent UK legislation generally requires that part-time, short-term and agency workers are given the same employment rights and privileges as their full-time colleagues, pro-rata to the time worked.

Many tasks in a radio station lend themselves to part-time and casual work: a lot of administrative work has natural peaks and troughs; some programmes need more support than others; the station may only need roadshow staff on a few days each summer. For this reason, and to provide emergency sickness and holiday cover, it makes sense to establish a pool of readily available local people who can be relied upon for help in each department when needed. The manager should establish standard hourly rates for each area of part-time work in order to avoid lengthy and pointless negotiation with each individual. Fixing an hourly rate for each task also ensures that an administrative assistant in sales does not get a higher rate in sales than in programmes or vice versa.

It is good policy to maintain a reasonably large pool of casual labour and avoid giving too much work to any one person. Not only does this make it more

likely that someone will always be available when needed but it also avoids any one individual working for so many hours per week regularly over a long period that they will become entitled to full employment rights by default.

On whatever basis an individual is employed, unless on a fixed-term contract with a clear and final end-date, after the first 12 months of continuous employment they will gain full employment rights. Prior to 12 months employment staff are simply entitled to due notice, however after 12 months the manager will be expected to defend any action leading to the termination of their employment and any compensation and redundancy package conditions become relevant.

Many staff positions are offered subject to a 'probationary period' of perhaps three or six months. While this has little significance under employment law it is a useful device for ensuring that the individual's performance and progress is appropriately monitored and feedback and assistance provided and an early decision is made if the appointment is not successful. To an extent it can make any meeting at which employment is terminated less uncomfortable for both parties if the decision is seen as the culmination of a trial period.

Where a radio service is part of a larger group of companies consideration should be given as to whether it might be more appropriate for the new individual to work for the group rather than an individual radio station, their efforts being more readily directed towards different services as demand changes over time.

Whilst a community radio service may be largely run by volunteers with perhaps only one or two co-ordinating roles taken by paid staff a clear policy on the use of volunteers is still required. If the practice is to be widespread the manager should introduce a simple 'volunteer contract' and ask all voluntary workers to sign it. The contract will require volunteers to obey the station rules when on the premises, to attend when expected and give reasonable notice when they are not available, and draw their attention to station policies on matters such as programme content and heath and safety. The document should make clear the consequences of any breach of the rules and the grievance and disciplinary procedures to be followed. In return the station should offer appropriate training and personal development opportunities.

Experience has taught many radio managers to limit the authority to bring in voluntary help or within weeks every presenter may arrive complete with a posse of 'helpers' who will hang about after the show with no apparent purpose. Commercial operations also need to guard against undue reliance on volunteers, ensuring that all core functions are performed by paid employees whose performance, and attendance, may be more tightly controlled.

4. Advertising the position

There is no absolute requirement that every job be advertised. For example a vacant senior role might be immediately filled by promoting a long-serving deputy, or a programme manager might already have a replacement in mind for a key presentation role. (See also Michaels and Mitchell 2000 for discussion about recruitment of female music presenters). However where a post is to be filled by open recruitment it is essential that a transparently fair procedure is followed.

It is common to advertise radio industry vacancies in the appropriate trade press: The Radio Magazine, Broadcast, or the media section of the Guardian, and relevant web sites. In some cases, particularly with sales and administrative vacancies, it may be appropriate to advertise in the local press and on the station and its web pages. It is generally regarded as good policy to advertise all vacancies internally. Many radio stations have recruited valued staff through professional recruitment consultancies and agencies, but care should be taken as their fees can amount to a significant proportion of the candidate's initial salary.

The language used in any advertisement must be non-discriminatory and the role and qualifications required, together with any fixed terms of employment, should be simply defined. If the manager intends to make a point of exercising a specific equal opportunities policy the advertisement should say so, and also mention any allowable positive discrimination, for example towards women, specific ethnic groups or the disabled. The means of responding, whether simply by email or letter or by completion of an application form should be clearly defined and adequate time allowed before a stated closing date.

While, as with any advertisement, the purpose is to promote an opportunity to the reader with attractive prose extolling the benefits of the proposition, in the case of recruitment it can be useful to be upfront about any limitations or challenges implicit in the vacancy and should seek to limit response to only those with a realistic chance of being considered for the position. The success of the advertisement will be measured not by the numbers of respondents but by whether it produces the required response in the one person who goes on to perfectly fill the role. The decision whether to include details of salary and any benefits package should be taken against this background.

For some vacancies, particularly at a senior level, it can be helpful to allow candidates to phone for more information, and if so an individual who understands the rules of recruitment should be nominated to take the calls, their name or job title and number being given in the advertisement.

5. Selection process

Generally the most likely candidates will be invited for interview, or even audition, before a final decision can be made. As it can take a while to organise interviews, all applications received should be carefully collected together and, unless the process is going to be very rapidly concluded, acknowledged with a simple holding letter.

The relative importance of the vacant role might define how much senior managerial time can be spent on interviews which in turn will define how many candidates can be seen in person. Typically around 45 minutes is set aside for an interview, with additional time before or afterwards for any audition or aptitude tests. Accordingly, as a rule of thumb, only seven or eight candidates can be seen during a working day. While, in order to accommodate the availability of different external applicants, more than one day might be set aside for interviews it is usually difficult to give fair consideration to a much greater number than this, although a good manager will usually make a point of interviewing all the suitably qualified internal candidates even where they stand little chance of landing the job.

The short-listing required to produce a manageable number of suitably qualified candidates for interview may be undertaken by the manager themselves or, in a larger company, might be organised by a Human Resources department. Using the person specification already defined it should be possible to select candidates against clear objective criteria, their experience, qualifications and interests, and to keep a note of the relevant factors in each case. Such notes will prove invaluable should any applicant claim unfair discrimination at a later date. Short-listed candidates should be given sufficient notice of the interview date and time to make appropriate arrangements. The station should have a clear policy on whether any travelling expenses can be reimbursed and, if so, on what basis.

The optimum form of interview must depend upon the proposed role of the individual in the radio station. It is common to include the line manager for the vacant position, perhaps that manager's boss and the head of another department, on the interview panel and in some larger organisations it may be policy to also include a member of the Human Resources team. If these two or three people can't make up their minds they can always invite others to handle a second interview. One member of the panel should act as chairperson.

During the interview all the questions should help establish how well the individual matches the job. Due to anti-discrimination rules, many large organisations now require that all candidates are asked the same questions, often scoring their answers on a pre-defined scale, but this may not be appropriate for a small service in a diverse and creative business. Nevertheless

everyone on the panel must be aware that certain questions, for example on age, sexuality, or raising children, might be interpreted as discriminatory and must be avoided. As a rule of thumb, any matter which you would not feel able to identify as a significant issue in the job advertisement should not be a factor in the rejection of any applicant. Specifically, the decision over who to recruit should not be influenced by: sex (including gender reassignment); age; disability; race; ethnic or national origins; religion; sexuality; trade union membership; marriage; pregnancy or having children.

The panel should allow sufficient time to review all the applicants at the end of the day. In practice it is common to discuss each candidate's performance briefly after each interview and use the best as a sort of bench-mark against which to judge the others. As the day progresses it is easy to eliminate earlier applicants as better alternatives come along, or to decide that nobody has beaten the person seen first.

The panel may be able to announce their decision immediately, but if there are any nagging doubts should be allowed to defer a decision for twenty four hours, perhaps while the manager checks out some facts about the favoured candidate. Except where a second interview is required, the successful applicant should be informed as quickly as possible, usually by telephone by the chair of the interview panel or their new line manager. Once at least a verbal acceptance of the offer has been received the other candidates should be informed as quickly as possible that - on this occasion - they have not been successful.

6. The job description and contract of employment

An accurate job description is an essential starting point for any analysis or discussion of how well an individual is contributing to the team. All staff should be issued with a job description when they start work and it should be kept up-to-date as their role or the nature of the work evolves over time. It is equally useful to issue job descriptions to freelance workers or volunteers.

While the job description should cover all the essential functions of the position concerned it is better to keep it as brief as possible, ideally contained within one side of A4 paper, in order that the employee, the manager and their colleagues can easily recall all the key points without constant recourse to the document. To ensure everything is covered when setting up a new organisation the station manager might approach the task by ensuring that every important task to be undertaken on the station appears in at least one job description.

The job description should at least cover the following points:

- Job title.
- Functional objectives (three or four lines stating why the company needs someone in this role)
- Responsible to: (Job title of their immediate boss)
- Responsible for: (Job titles of anyone who reports to them)
- Functional relations: (List the people and organisations they must relate to on a regular basis: job titles of other department heads for example, and the outside bodies for whom they will be the point of contact)
- Main duties and responsibilities: (A list of key tasks for which they will be responsible in very general terms)

Opinion is divided as to whether the list of responsibilities should end with the item "Any other reasonable duties". Some people believe this lets a manager off the hook as the job description does not then need to be kept up-to-date, but in a small company this line performs the useful function of reminding all staff that they must be willing to turn their hands to other appropriate work when necessary.

In addition to the job description, which is essentially a management tool rather than a statutory obligation, all staff must by law, within two months of starting work, be given a Contract of Employment which lists essential facts about their conditions of service, but which does not usually specify detailed job functions. The statement must include:

- pay
- hours of work
- holiday entitlement
- sick pay arrangements
- notice periods
- information about disciplinary and grievance procedures

The Community Radio Toolkit website contains very useful examples of job descriptions and applications forms for paid and volunteer positions in community radio.

7. Regular appraisal

One of the most important functions of the manager is to maintain the motivation of the workforce. Effective communication is essential to

maintaining motivation and ongoing feedback may help to avoid the need to invoke far less pleasant (and far more time consuming) disciplinary procedures later. It is often better to inform someone of how well they are performing at the time then wait a year and then tell them during an annual appraisal. Nevertheless an alarming number of employees tell stories of never hearing from their boss unless and until something goes very wrong. Not only is this asking for trouble at any subsequent industrial tribunal hearing, at best it is an indefensible position for any manager to adopt at any time in a creative industry.

A new employee should be able to expect regular feedback on their progress in the early weeks and months of their employment, they should not be left anxiously waiting to hear, at the end of a probationary or contract period, whether they are deemed to have succeeded or failed. While in some parts of the radio business success may be more tangible, for example in advertising sales, in many others it may be defined only subjectively by individual taste or opinion, or objectively by long- term research. In such cases the manager must put their own head on the line and tell the individual if they are doing everything expected of them, or if, in the manager's opinion, they need to improve their performance or conduct.

Most people working in the radio industry will have some experience of formal annual performance appraisal schemes, more notable for the fact that most last no longer than the first year than for any startling outcomes. Nevertheless the principle that the employee should, at least annually, be entitled to sit down with his or he manager and openly discuss their own progress and aspirations can only be a good one. To ensure a full and frank exchange of views it is generally regarded as important to keep such performance appraisals separate from any annual salary review discussions.

8. Training and support

It costs far less to retrain an existing worker than to recruit a new employee, and yet many companies suffer constant employee turnover without addressing the root cause. It makes sound business sense for the manager to seek to develop the skills and talents of the existing team before looking to bring in replacements. The first time the attention of a staff member is drawn to shortcomings, whether in a general matter like timekeeping or a more specific professional area, criticism should be accompanied by a discussion of how the manager might help them to overcome the difficulty. Only in the case of repeated problems should there be a need to invoke any kind of disciplinary action.

Training in the radio sector could be divided under three broad headings: 'on-the-job' training, by far the largest category provided by in-house staff; outside training not specific to radio skills, for example team leadership, sales or accountancy training; and outside training specific to the radio industry, largely organised by trade bodies or the larger radio groups. The availability of formal radio training is often cited as an advantage of working for one of the larger radio companies.

9. Personal development

Some managers sometimes wish to discourage their more highly valued staff from moving elsewhere in the organisation. It is understandable that, having recruited, trained and motivated a person to become a key member of your team, you do not wish to see them poached by another department, or another station within the same group. However it is in the interest of the organisation that any individual wishing to better themselves, whether for increased remuneration, more responsibility, or just for a new experience, should be encouraged, where possible, to do so within the organisation. Otherwise the enthusiastic person may feel trapped and, inevitably, look for work outside the organisation.

It is customary to require the courtesy that anyone applying for a position elsewhere in the organisation should first inform their own line manager, but they should be able to do this without fear of recrimination or risk of discouragement.

10. Dismissal

While millions of would-be managers have watched Sir Alan Sugar jab his finger across the board room desk and shout 'You're fired' to a hapless apprentice the reality of dismissing staff in a modern business is, thankfully, rather more complex.

Employees with less than one year's service can usually be dismissed, with one week's notice, without any further explanation. Unless the individual could suggest that the dismissal was due to discrimination - for example because they were pregnant - they would have no claim against the organisation. However, after twelve months an employer must follow strict procedures and have strong reasons for acting. The minimum statutory requirements are that the employee should receive, in writing, a summary of the allegation and the basis for it, be invited to a meeting to consider and discuss the allegation, and have a right of appeal including an appeal meeting. The main justifications for disciplinary action are misconduct (for example poor timekeeping or not

following company rules), gross misconduct (for example theft or fighting in the office) or capability (poor performance).

Any organisation should establish a written disciplinary procedure and make sure it is seen by all employees, including volunteers in a community station. The purpose of the disciplinary procedure is to ensure that all personnel difficulties are dealt with fairly and consistently. Where possible it seeks to encourage an improvement in conduct or performance rather than automatically leading to dismissal. Most procures follow a similar pattern:

> 1. Informal discussions
> The manager will initially try to resolve an issue by simply discussing it verbally with the employee. In many cases there will be no need to invoke the formal disciplinary procedures, only if the desired improvement is not achieved in a reasonable time will the matter be escalated to the next stage.
>
> 2. First warning
> At a formal meeting, the employee is advised that their conduct or performance has been unacceptable. The required standard will be clearly identified and the employee warned that a final written warning will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement. The warning will be recorded in the employees personnel file but will be disregarded after 12 months of satisfactory service.
>
> 3. Final written warning
> If there is no improvement in standards, or if a further issue of a similar nature arises, a final written warning will be given which will include the reasons for the warning and any relevant background. It will warn that if there is no improvement within a specified, reasonable, time the contract of employment will be terminated. Such formal warnings remain on the personnel file for a longer period, typically 18 months.

In the case of relatively minor offences or shortcomings it is usual to start with the informal discussion and progress through the procedure only if it proves necessary over time. However more serious offences may be immediately handled as formal warnings or final written warnings. In the case

of gross misconduct the manager may move straight to dismissal without any prior warning. Gross misconduct is a clearly understood category of misbehaviour which can render employees liable to dismissal without notice, and which largely covers matters that could leave the organisation or individual open to prosecution or legal action, including: Misappropriation or wilful damage to property; theft or fraud; violent behaviour; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work; possessing any illegal substance or object; insulting or abusive behaviour; sexual harassment; reckless breach of safety or security procedures; serious and deliberate breaches of Ofcom broadcasting codes or licence conditions.

Because the employee must have a right to appeal against any formal disciplinary decision it is important that each stage in the disciplinary procedure is handled at an appropriate level in the organisation. In a typical radio station the initial discussions and warnings should normally be handled by the employee's line manager, perhaps the programme controller, news editor or sales manager as appropriate. Any appeal would be heard at the next highest level If the station manager becomes involved in a final decision to discipline or dismiss the individual the appeal would be heard in person by a senior manager from a group or, in the case of a small commercial or community station, a member or members of the board of directors.

At all stages the employee should be given adequate prior notice of any disciplinary hearing. To allow them to prepare they should be informed of the complaint against them and where possible provided with all relevant evidence before the hearing. They should be given the opportunity to state their case at all stages and are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee of their choice or by a union official.

Trade Unions

All radio station employees have the right to join or remain a member of a trade union if they so wish. The manager must not treat them unfairly because they belong to a trade union, for example, by refusing promotion or training opportunities, and the employer must not try to persuade staff to leave a union by offering, for example, better conditions of employment for giving up membership. Staff have the right not to be dismissed or be chosen for redundancy for being a union member or refusing to leave a union. Officers of a union have the right, at an appropriate time, to take part in legitimate trade union activities without being treated unfairly as a result.

While the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) is generally recognised, if not always by every employer, as an appropriate union for journalists working

anywhere in the radio sector, the representation of other workers has been patchy. The Association of Broadcasting Staff (ABS), founded in 1956 as the descendant of the BBC Staff Association, failed to gain a foothold in any of the new independent television companies but was recognised by the Independent Television Authority, later the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), as the sole representative body for its staff. The largest union in commercial television was the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians, which the BBC did not recognise. Radio broadcasting remained entirely in the hands of the BBC and by 1963 56 per cent of the total staff of the BBC belonged to the ABS. (Briggs 1995:382).

At the launch of UK commercial radio there was an initial rush by both the ABS and ACTT to represent the workers, other than the NUJ journalists, in the new sector. Many of the non-journalist employees and freelancers working at London's LBC and Capital, the first two stations to launch in 1973, were recruited to the ACTT while the ABS was dominant among staff in most of the stations outside London launched from 1974 onwards. The ABS, ACTT and NUJ quickly established joint recognition with the companies association, the Association of Independent Radio Contractors (AIRC), and national pay grades and terms of employment were established. However the rapid expansion of the commercial radio sector in the 1980s, with the addition of many very small employers, combined with a loss of focus on the sector by the ACTT and ABS, who were embroiled in a number of major television strikes and bitter inter-union rivalry, and the influence of the unions dwindled rapidly.

The present broadcasting union BECTU was formed following a series of mergers, of the ABS and the National Association of Theatrical Television and Kine Employees (NATTKE) in 1984 to form the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance (BETA) and finally of BETA with the ACTT in 1991. Political changes and technological and structural developments in the broadcasting industry have left BECTU with a paid-up membership (over 26,500 at December 2006) significantly smaller than the 60,000 or so members in total claimed by ABS, ACTT and NATTKE in the early 1980s (BECTU 2008).

BBC employees are now represented by three unions - BECTU, NUJ and Unite (Amicus Section) - who negotiate all terms and conditions of service on behalf of their members. While commercial radio is not heavily unionised, the NUJ negotiates an annual agreement with the commercial radio companies trade body RadioCentre defining minimum rates for freelance news shifts and contributions. The commercial radio companies and the BBC also recognise the Musicians Union and Equity and have agreements covering the

employment of their freelance members in programme production and advertisements.

A trade union is said to be 'recognised' when an employer consents to negotiate with it on pay and working conditions for a particular group of workers. In general individual commercial radio stations do not formally recognise the unions. Employers can be required by law to recognise a union where they employ 21 workers or more and if the union can show that 10 per cent of workers in the bargaining unit belong to the union with a majority likely to favour recognition. The issue is decided by a body known as the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) that can decide to hold a ballot of workers in the bargaining unit if necessary. Attempts to force union recognition have generally stalled as individual stations often employ too few relevant staff to qualify.

When the NUJ gained recognition at the Stoke radio station Signal Radio in 2006, giving the union the right to negotiate terms and conditions of the four journalists based at the UTV-owned station, it was the first time the union had been formally recognised at a commercial radio station in more than a decade (Press Gazette 2006).

The more recent introduction of co-located radio stations and news hubs, employing a larger number of staff in a single location, has been used to argue for an increase in union recognition. NUJ members at Minster FM in York, part of the Local Radio Company group of stations had their claim for recognition thrown out after the Central Arbitration Committee ruled that four nearby stations, which were to operate from a single news hub, were actually all separate legal entities. The ruling meant the NUJ could not apply for recognition for a single news room covering the four stations. And because recognition laws require there to be at least 21 employees in a company before you can claim recognition, the union was also barred from making a new application in the four separate companies - because individually none of them had the required number of workers. NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear told the NEC (NUJ 2007) the decision was "bizarre and unjust, effectively denying union members at Minster FM their fundamental human right to belong to and be represented by the union of their choice."

He said: "The decision though doesn't just have implications for this one group of NUJ members but for hundreds of thousands of members of many unions across many industries. There will be hundreds of unscrupulous employers celebrating this decision."

Grievance procedures

In parallel with the disciplinary procedure it is customary to publish a procedure to deal, in a simple and fair way, with employee grievances. In many ways such clear procedures can be even more valuable in a voluntary organisation such as a community radio station, where individual motivation can be very dependent upon the quality of relationships between sections of the organisation.

A typical grievance procedure will have a number of escalating stages, for example:

> 1. In the first instance the employee should discuss their concerns informally with their immediate manager.

> 2. Only if the above does not resolve the issue, the individual should put the grievance in writing to their immediate manager. The manager should hold a meeting within a week to resolve the grievance at which the individual has the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or union official. Any formal decision should be provided in writing.

> 3. If the matter remains unresolved the employee should refer the matter in writing to the senior manager at the radio station. The senior manager, supported by someone from the Human Resources department where applicable, will try to resolve the grievance at a meeting with the individual and their representative if any within a further two weeks. This final formal decision should be put in writing.

As with the disciplinary procedure natural justice requires that, should the grievance concern the conduct or capability of the senior manager, a member of group management or a director of the company should handle any final hearing. It makes sense to start all such procedures at the lowest managerial level, leaving plenty of room for later upward referral.

The importance of records

Throughout the preceding section it is clear that a manager should maintain fair and accurate records when dealing with staff. These records should start from and include the development of the job profile and recruitment process and also include notes on any informal as well as formal appraisal. Records must also be kept of any formal disciplinary or grievance meeting and the outcomes of these. In the event of any complaint unambiguous records will help to establish what occurred and when.

Managing Volunteers

As we have heard in other parts of this book, volunteers are the lifeblood of community stations and they need to be managed as much as any other human resource in radio.

> *There are many reasons why people become volunteers with a community radio station. For some it will be the sense of achievement gained from doing something different and acquiring new skills. Others are looking for a career in the media and want to gain direct broadcasting experience. At a more fundamental level the stations give people a focus, help alleviate loneliness and isolation and can enable them to regain confidence in themselves or other people following a personal crisis.*
> (Goatley 2006: 9)

Although many volunteers move onto paid work in radio or other areas of employment it is in the stations' interest to nurture their volunteers, so that their time is used efficiently and they are clear about their rights, responsibilities and any remuneration due to them.

Much of the knowledge and experience for this potentially complex area (given some of the motivations for volunteering cited above) comes from the lead voluntary sector (for instance the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) and from countries like Australia where the community radio sector has built up skills and resources. As stations can have anything between 10 and 200 volunteers the management needs to focus considerable time and effort on this area which is why most stations have a designated role of volunteer co-ordinator. Although some smaller stations can have an 'open door' attitude to volunteers it is best to develop an overall policy and strategy

about how volunteers can be involved in the station. This can then be monitored. This might include:

> A station policy on volunteers that has been agreed by station management and membership . This should include procedures for recruiting, training, managing and remunerating volunteers.

> A volunteer charter that outlines the respective rights and responsibilities for station volunteers and station management.

> An inventory of tasks that need to be undertaken by volunteers, preferably grouped, with an experienced person taking responsibility for volunteers in each task area.

> A 'duty' statement for each volunteer - this is similar to a job description for an employee.

> A volunteer contract or agreement that outlines station regulations and the responsibilities and rights of the volunteer. (see also section 2.7)

Managers at Wythenshaw FM, a community station in Manchester, have cleverly brought all this together for all their volunteers in a useful and accessible booklet called a 'Volunteer Passport'.

Examples of materials for volunteer management can be seen on the Community Radio Toolkit; Community Media Association; and Community Broadcasting Association of Australia websites.

Training for station staff and volunteers

There is a very wide range of courses and training opportunities now available for people wishing to enter radio and those already involved in the different sectors and jobs. The main areas for training have been identified as:

- Production & Presentation of music and speech radio
- Journalism & Sport
- Sales, Marketing, Commercials (Advertising) Production & Fundraising

- Engineering, technical operations, support and development
- Leadership and management
- Support roles: finance, HR, training & development and admin (Hadwin 2007: 8)

Training and educational courses take place within the BBC, in universities and colleges and in commercial and community radio stations. Increasingly there are opportunities for open and online learning and qualifications. Courses range from informal workshops in community stations funded through Mediabox, the government scheme for encouraging media production by young people and open learning modules in podcasting run by NCFE as well as foundation degrees in community radio run as collaborations between Universities and community stations. (NCFE is a national awards body for Further Education courses see http://www.ncfe.org.uk)

Skillset, the sector skills council for creative media has a radio section has carried out research to map the different sectors and job roles in the radio industry. It has identified priorities for training and improving skills shortages; priorities include maximising the potential for community radio and increasing opportunities in training for freelancers and independents (Skillset 2007). Courses for aspiring entrants to radio management include Open College Network (ONC) level 3 in Leadership and Management in Radio and Masters level courses in Media and Radio Management. Some stations in the community sector have been involved in pan European radio training funded through various European Commission funding programmes. Networks of trainers and producers from radio stations and academic institutions have developed new courses and training methodologies relating, for instance, to use of new technologies and the training of socially excluded groups through community radio. (See Lewis and Jones 2006)

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Managing resources and technology

Summary

Historically, many senior radio managers have feigned ignorance of, and abdicated responsibility for, the technical aspects of getting programmes to listeners. Although it is not necessary for the manager to have a component-level knowledge of the technology behind today's digital media, a basic understanding of the capabilities and potential of the new technologies provides a real advantage for maximising the performance of any mass medium. Here we will cover the broad issues that most often cause concern or confusion for the non-technical manager.

The Programme Chain

The path that programme material takes through the broadcasting system is often referred to as the programme chain since it is only as good as its weakest link. Any distortion or noise added at any point cannot be removed later. The simplest chain, for example in a Restricted Service Licence station, might look like as depicted below.

Audio from a microphone is combined with that from another microphone and recordings stored on a computer and a CD player at a mixing desk. The presenter/operator at the mixing desk can adjust which audio sources are present in the final mix and their relative levels. The output is fed to a transmitter which then sends a radio-frequency signal to the transmitting aerial. The connections between the separate elements may be in analogue or digital form but the principles remain the same.

Note that we provide for incoming circuits from outside sources, which might include a national news service from a satellite feed, network programming from other stations and outside broadcasts. Also a 'telephone balancing unit' enables the studio to include phone calls in its output.
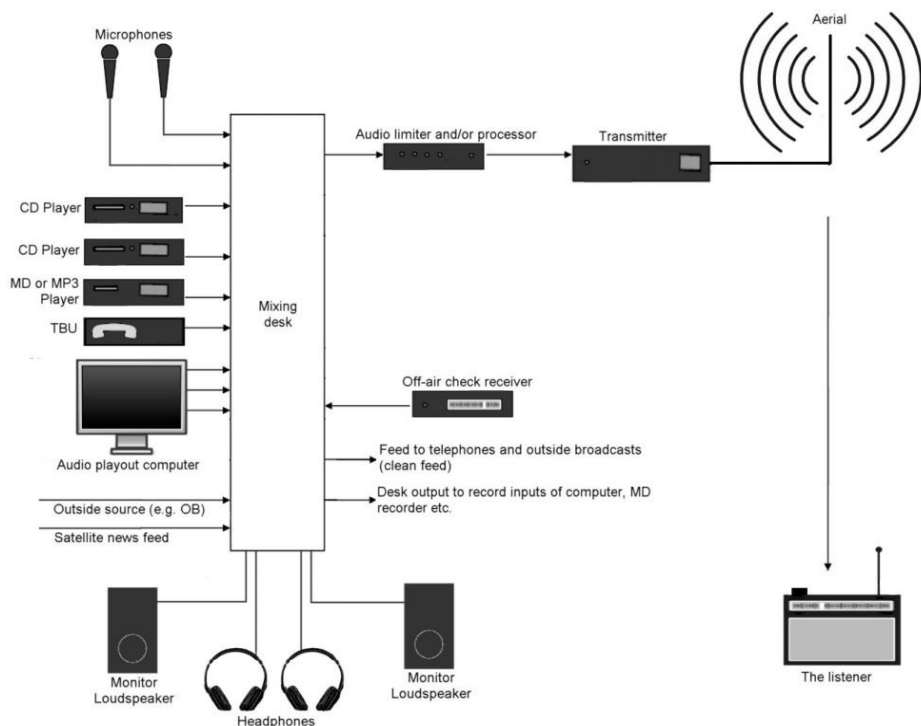
In practice the optimum location for a transmitter is frequently different to the most convenient home for a studio centre. Many radio stations have studios and offices located in a population centre in a river valley while their transmitter sits high on a deserted hill some miles away offering a better view of the desired coverage area. A connection of some sort, usually in the form of rented lines or a separate radio link, must be established to carry the programme audio to the transmitter site.

A key characteristic that distinguishes the serious full-time broadcaster from the more casual podcaster, audio producer or temporary RSL operator is a commitment to producing the service reliably in accordance with a schedule understood by the listener. In the event of any technical failure, civil disruption or public holiday the broadcaster will continue operating. There must always be a second, completely separate means of delivering all of the station's core activities; from having more than one member of staff capable of undertaking each duty through to having more than one way of producing the service. If, for example, the mixer to fail the studio would become unusable for most practical purposes until it could be repaired. It follows that, unless the promised service can be maintained using recorded or automated programming, the station

must have a second, standby, source of live programming. This might be a studio at another nearby station, a satellite studio of the main complex or, most commonly, a second studio adjacent to the first capable of presenting the normal programmes.

In a typical small station this second studio will normally be used as a production, pre-recording and training studio while remaining ready to take over transmission at the push of a button. As a result the programme chain in a typical small radio station looks like this:
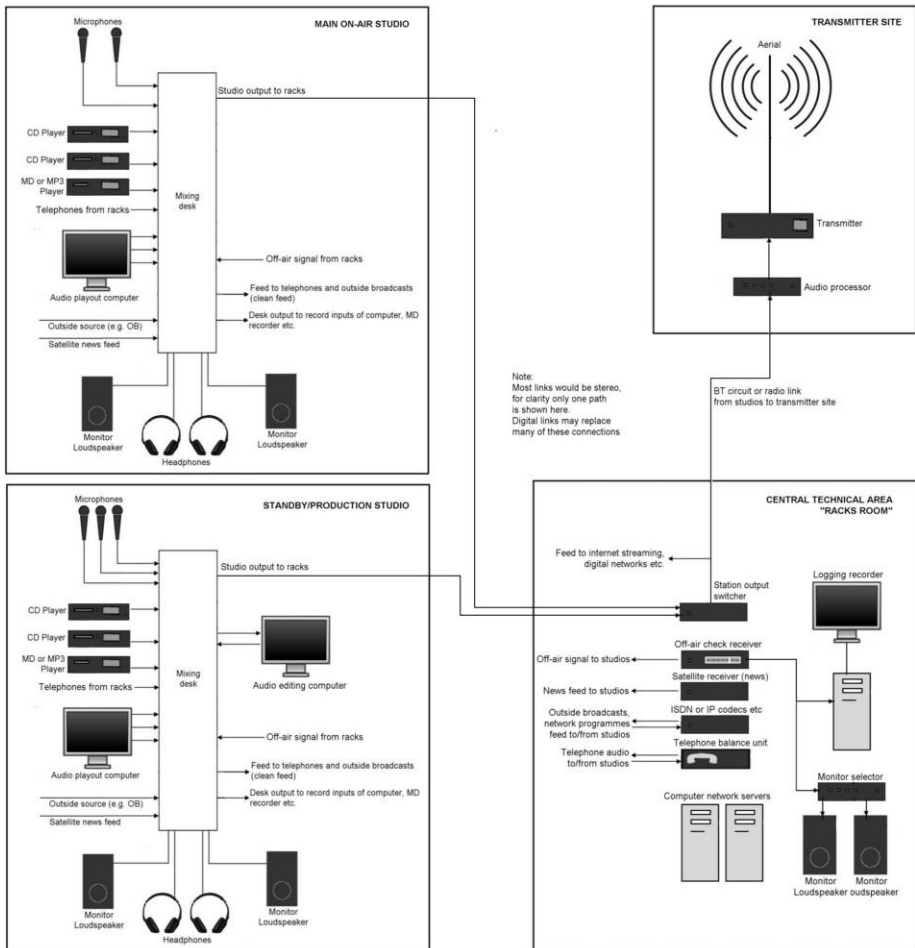
A national network service may wish to include programmes originated in studios elsewhere in the country, and may use a greater range of studios specially designed for different purposes, from live music and drama to discussion programmes, news magazines and disc-jockey style presentation. While it would be possible to simply switch between studios at each programme junction, for seamless presentation and quality control it is more common to route all the different programme sources through a further mixer in a 'continuity' studio. Typically manned by an announcer and a technical operator, it is this studio which feeds the complete network of transmitters, interjecting items such as promotional trails between the incoming programmes and playing all pre-recorded programming.
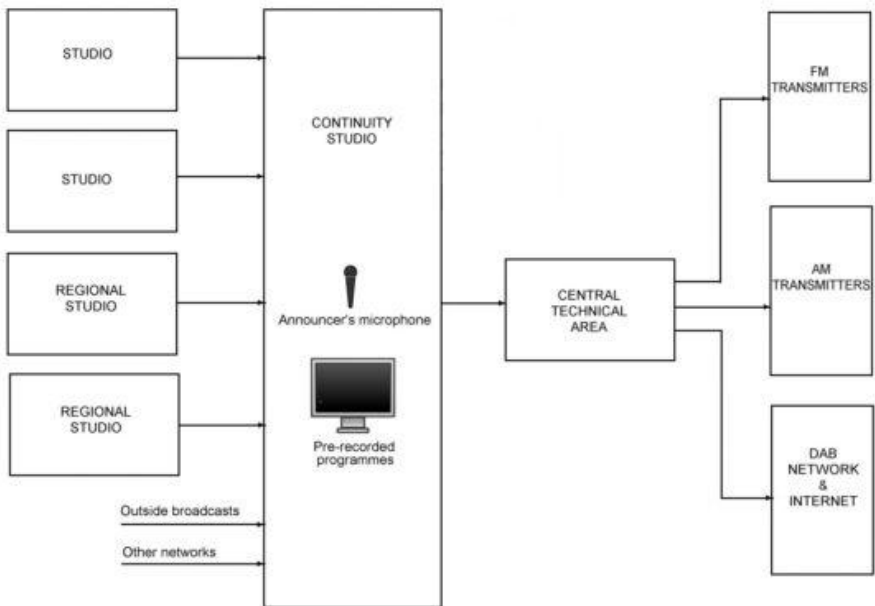
Studios

Photo: Studio Schemes Ltd.

In the early years of UK commercial radio programmes were often fed to the transmitter via a master control room where a technical operator controlled levels, added tapes and outside source material and played-in the commercials. By the mid 1970s the financial realities of local radio had become painfully obvious and station managers questioned the need to employ an engineer to keep an eye on the technical performance of a DJ. Nowadays most presenters of regular daily programmes are expected to operate the mixer and other studio equipment themselves, an arrangement commonly referred to as 'self-op'.

The once familiar model of a mixer in a control room facing a soundproofed studio area separated by a big glass panel is not really appropriate to self-op use. The presenter, seated at the control desk, needs to interact with any contributors or guests in the same room. A separate microphone area might be used for news bulletins and the like but does not need to be directly in front of the presenter. Conversely, in a production studio broadcasters often wish to create a particular sound that would be impossible to achieve in a noisy control room. With a separate studio the mixed sound can be monitored on loudspeakers in the control cubicle and the acoustic effect controlled to a greater degree. This is the way most music and drama is conventionally recorded.

Production-style studios are appropriate when originating live fast-moving speech-based shows, like news magazines or Saturday afternoon sports programmes, which involve lots of outside contributors, pre-recorded and live inserts. Separate studios and control cubicles enable presenters to continue with their scripts or interviews while studio operators and producers shout at a contributor down the telephone, or line up recorded inserts. Operators can talk privately to presenters in their headphones by using a talkback button.

While some small stations have a separate news studio many programme managers prefer the news presenter to be in the main on-air studio, better integrating the news into the programme. Nevertheless, if the news bulletin is to be shared by more than one station, or separately produced for broadcast on another service, then a separate booth will be required.
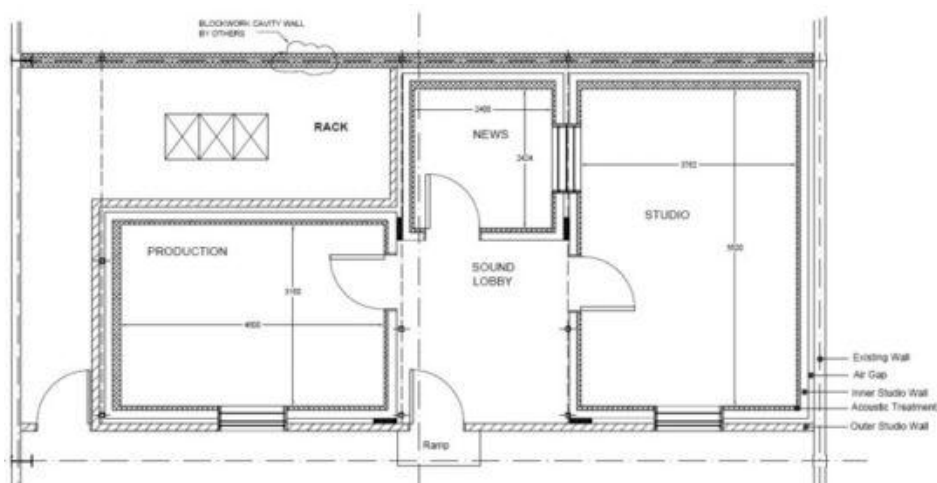
Drawing from a proposal by Studio Schemes Ltd.

This design for a typical modern local radio station is practical and economic for most purposes but would not permit the origination of more complex forms of programming. A station with a higher commitment to speech programming might add a small lobby between or in front of two studios, with a separate sound-proof door through which anyone entering the studios must pass, to reduce sound transmission through the door openings and prevent the full noise of the office ever reaching the studio. One studio is designated as the main on-air facility while the other is used for production work, training, pre-recording material and as an emergency stand-by for the on-air studio. A separate area is set aside for several standard-sized racks housing all the central equipment like receivers, link transmitters, logging recorders,

telephone systems, network hubs and servers shared by the whole station. In many modern installations the racks are sited in a corner of the open-plan area outside the studios, where they contribute heat to the office for most of the year and do not require forced cooling in summer. They also make the office feel more like a part of the radio station, which is apparently impressive to visitors!

A high quality studio build project by Studio Schemes Ltd.

Purpose built studios are usually designed with double thickness walls and ceilings, the inner and outer leaves separated by a air gap (with no ties between the two), forming a box within a box, to ensure better sound isolation. A timber frame and plasterboard construction can be adequate for live on-air work, but usually with double skins of plasterboard and with rock wool filling the gap inside each wall. Viewing panels are similarly double glazed, but with an acoustic separation of several inches rather than the small gap used for heat insulation in domestic units, and are often slightly angled to reduce direct sound reflections in the studio.

Photo: Studio Schemes Ltd.

A simpler self-build project for a very small commercial station.

For the best sound proofing doors can be doubled, often with one opening inwards to the studio and the other opening outwards. Walls are treated with materials designed to absorb some sound waves thus reducing reverberation to an acceptable level. This is commonly achieved using a wooden frame filled with rock wool over which a layer of special acoustic fabric is stretched. Being so well sealed with such a degree of insulation studios rarely require any form of additional heating but adequate forced ventilation and, usually, air-conditioning must be provided. Suitably quiet units must be specified.

A relatively simple and cheap, but very effective, studio construction. Photos: Brian Lister

For a typical small local station with two studios, 12 staff in an open plan area, a manager's office and an average sized meeting room the manager should look for suitable accommodation totalling at least 155 square metres. Of course, there are toilet and beverage preparation facilities required in addition to this plus storage cupboards and any separate reception area, frequently bringing the total to around 185 square metres (2,000 square feet). There is a general trend away from having a separate staffed reception area, the throughput of visitors is often insufficient to justify this and a desk or counter at the entrance to an open-plan office area is preferred. Community stations often need more space than an equivalent commercial operation to accommodate training facilities and a larger number of participants.
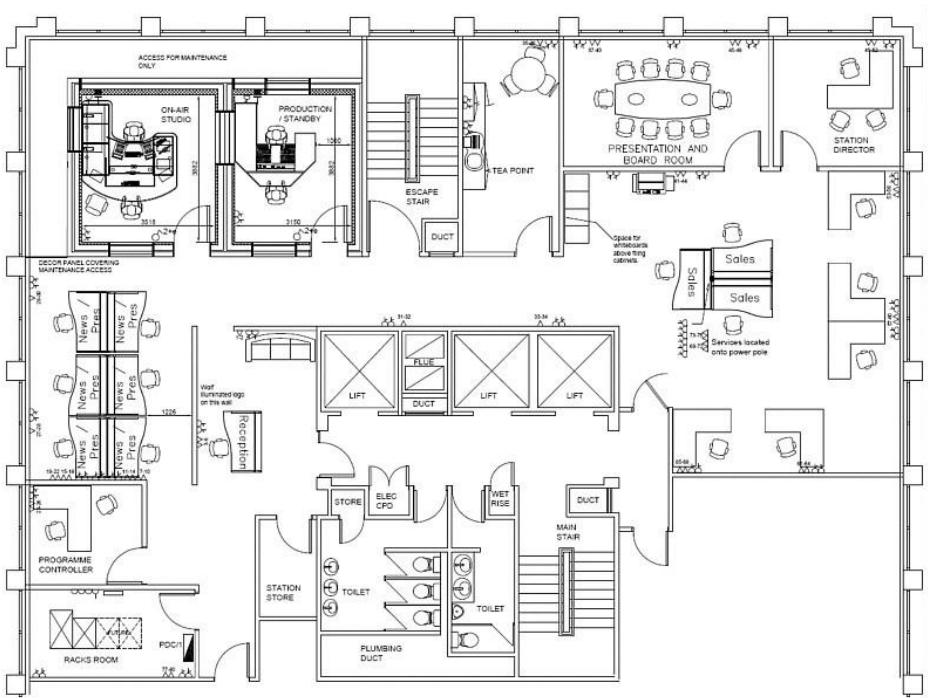
Drawing from a proposal by Studio Schemes Ltd

Studio equipment

The precise equipment specification varies to suit the breadth of programming and the available budget for the service, but usually includes certain essential elements which will be covered here.

The mixing desk is at the heart of the studio. On-air studio mixers should have separate input channels and faders for each source commonly used within a live programme. While most mixers permit each channel to be switched to take at least one other source, a programme may easily use three microphones, two CD players, four channels from a computer playout system, a satellite news service, an outside broadcast feed and telephone calls, requiring at least a 12-channel mixer. Mixer manufacturers usually permit a reasonable degree of customisation by using different modules that fit into their standard frame, the price being dependent on the sophistication of the options chosen. For example, each input channel can usually be supplied with or without equalisation (EQ), an engineering term for tone controls. In general a presenter should not tinker with the sound of a professionally recorded item already copied onto the computer system or the sound of their own voice coming back via headphones, so it is often advisable to omit EQ controls from some of the channels. Some EQ can however be useful on location recordings and outside broadcasts. Microphone channels may have a bass-cut filter which can be switched in to remove sub-audible thumps and rumbling from microphones.

Inputs are provided for mono sources (like microphones) and stereo sources (almost everything else). Most manufacturers also provide a special module for handling telephone calls. On a digital mixer it may be possible to assign these different functions to any channel.

As well as generating the programme output to feed the programme chain, the mixer must provide outputs to headphones and loudspeakers for the control room and for any contributors on the other side of a glass panel. It must also generate talkback to contributors' headphones and enable the operator to 'pre-fade' any one channel, in order to listen to it and check the audio level before putting it on-air, and to listen to an off-air check receiver. All of these switching and level controls for the different monitor speakers and headphones are customarily included in a panel to the right hand side of the mixer.

Output levels are monitored using meters mounted centrally, usually VU meters or Peak Programme Meters (PPM), which may be either as a physical meters or illuminated bar-graph displays. VU (Volume Unit) meters are AC voltmeters designed to register the rapidly changing average voltage of an audio signal. Widely used in recording systems and throughout American

radio, they are recognisable for their black scale on a white background, with a red section above the reference level of 0 dB. The PPM, designed by the BBC, more accurately indicates the exact level of brief peaks of audio and is easier to read. The PPM rises rapidly to show a peak, dropping afterwards at a more leisurely pace. As distortion occurs in broadcasting when peaks exceed a certain level this meter tells us what we really need to know. The PPM conventionally has a white needle and scale on a black background, with no red section, the scale is simply numbered between 1 and 7. The standard reference level is represented by the number 4 and peaks should not exceed 6. Stereo signals can be displayed either using two separate meters or a twin-needle meter in which the left and right signals deflect red and green needles across a single scale. A new form of meter designed to indicate the subjective loudness of programme material is being introduced in some areas. Developed particularly to address situations such as television commercials sounding louder than the surrounding programmes, the ITU-R BS.1770 standard defines the technical chatacteristics of such a meter.

Individual models of microphone are designed for different applications and to give a variety of different directional patterns. Some are fitted with a small switch to change their directional properties or to filter out excessive bass frequencies. Most broadcasters have their own preferences and the manager would be well advised to get opinions on the makes and models favoured by similar stations before making any purchase decisions.

The same advice applies to the choice of other audio equipment. Today many radio studios do not have any CD players, tape players or turntables, basic facilities being provided elsewhere to transfer audio from such formats onto a central digital audio server, but where they are purchased they are generally of more rugged construction than domestic models. A professional version of an audio player seldom offers higher audio quality than the domestic equivalent but usually offers professional balanced audio outputs and more substantial buttons and switches to withstand the demands of professional use.

Computer playout systems now offer so many advantages over traditional audio recording and playback equipment that it would be hard to imagine a new studio without one. A large number of non-compatible proprietary systems are available and the choice of supplier is frequently dictated by the system already in use elsewhere in a station or network. While a number of basic software solutions are easily found on the internet which might be suitable for use by small voluntary operations, the better known industry-standard systems such as Dalet, Enco, and Myriad offer an impressive range of facilities beyond the simple storage and reproduction of audio files. In particular they are designed to integrate with music scheduling, programme

preparation and sales traffic software and to output logs for use in music copyright and advertising reports. As a result the presenter can be provided with a complete on-screen running order, complete with all audio files and scripts, as soon as they walk into the studio. At other times the same system can be set to run without presenter intervention, the mixing desk often being designed to be switched out of circuit to be used for other purposes while the computer handles the on-air sequence.

Other items required in on-air studios include a telephone balance unit (TBU), which converts the two-way signals on a telephone line so that they can be separately fed from, and to, a studio mixer; monitoring loudspeakers; headphones (for all who need to monitor the output while the microphones are open) and at least one reliable clock (usually a radio code clock locked to a transmitted time signal).

Photo by Brian Lister

A production studio in a small station - one that doubles as a back-up on-air studio - must normally contain all the facilities listed above, plus a few more required specifically for production work. The mixer will often contain more input channels than are needed in the on-air studio, often by omitting a central script area, and more channels may be equipped with EQ and auxiliary outputs for echo and other effects. A production mixer may also have a master fader which can fade-out the entire output, a very useful facility to produce a tidy end to a complex mix but of dubious value in an on-air desk.

The need to reliably remain on air 24 hours a day leads the prudent radio manager to specify at least two of everything: two studios capable of going live; each with at least two microphones and two sources of audio for recordings and commercials. There is however another more routine reason to apply this 'rule of two' in radio studio design: in order to hand neatly from one voice to another, or segue from one piece of music into the next, or to cross-fade between items, the studio must have more than one channel for each type of audio.

It is harder to quantify the need for a second source of mains power for the studios and transmitters. While it is relatively straightforward for an engineer to estimate the costs involved in providing a standby supply, it is really a programme manager who must justify the expenditure. Any loss of income caused by the station being off the air for, perhaps, a twelve hour period once a year can often be recovered and will not be a significant argument in itself for additional capital outlay. Rather a value must be put on the degree to which the station's relationship with its listeners will be damaged, and in this case it is often the smallest stations, those closest to their listeners, who have the most to lose. At times of a major disaster, flood, storms and snow, or during political or social crises, listening to the radio increases. Further, in such circumstances authorities often advise the public to stay tuned to local radio and, without mains electricity, many listeners have few other options.

It is at such times a local radio station can cement its connection with the community it claims to serve. For a simple service it may be possible to get by on battery power if the options are worked out in advance. During the planned power-cuts resulting from a coal miners' strike in the early 1970's at least one BBC local radio service reputedly stayed on the air using a small battery-powered mixer intended for outside broadcast use with recorded items being inserted from a portable recorder. Today most stations would be lost without their computer system and, while its supply may be maintained for a short while using an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), any greater resilience requires investment in a stand-by generator (there is seldom an opportunity to hire a generator in such situations) and proper alternative mains wiring for the essential items to be supported by it.

Outside Broadcasts

Few things confirm a radio station's relationship with its target community as straightforwardly and immediately as a live outside broadcast (OB). Ranging from the hastily arranged live report from the scene of a news story, through the slightly more pre-planned coverage of a sports fixture or public event to the stage managed station promotional happening, the remote link-up demonstrates the often unique connection between the station and a geographic area or community of interest. If executed with care the broadcast will impress both the listener at home and those - particularly those not already regular listeners - present at the event.

Live outside broadcasts use mobile or portable studio equipment with radio links, telephone lines, ISDN circuits or mobile telephone technology to transfer signals back to the studio. Careful planning of the technical resources for each event, whether it's a live concert, news story or station promotion, is very important. For example consideration must be given to adequate communication between the studio and the presenters live on location.

Historically there was little choice but to hire an analogue BT line, often specially installed at considerable cost, to link the OB site to the studio. A separate - usually lower quality - "control circuit" would supply a return feed of programme audio and talkback from the studio. At regularly used locations, for example Premiership football grounds, it was often found cheaper to use permanently installed "local ends" - connecting the OB equipment to them when required.

From the late 1980s onwards ISDN replaced many of these permanent and temporary circuits. Small portable mixers with built-in ISDN codecs could be plugged into an ISDN port and provide two-way communication between the location and the studio. Good quality speech broadcasting was possible using a single ISDN port, BBC stations tending to use G722 codecs to digitally code the audio while commercial stations settled on the incompatible apt-x system. Using the full capacity of an ISDN connection even permitted broadcastable stereo music to be sent by ISDN, most commonly using MPEG coding.

Unfortunately it seems likely that ISDN will eventually be withdrawn in favour of the broadband connections which are becoming the norm for a growing number of businesses, households and potential OB venues. While theoretically capable of much higher quality and/or a greater number of channels of two-way communication than ISDN, the IP based solutions using broadband suffer from a design characteristic of the Internet which is of little importance to most other users. Data is distributed across the Internet in "packets" which are reassembled in order at the receiving end. Some packets

may take longer to arrive than others but, with a sufficient buffer delay at your computer, it all appears in order in the end. We can also accept the odd data drop out or occasional need to resubmit a request when browsing the web, but this generates awkward gaps or even unpleasant sounds when listening to streaming audio.

To reliably achieve the best quality at the moment requires quite a long delay - sometimes of the order of up to several seconds - which can make two-way conversations and interviews awkward or even impossible. Nevertheless, advances in broadband speeds and reliability may remove this concern in the coming years and, of course, if the complete programme is being sent from the remote location this may not be an issue.

A common alternative option has been to use a specially licensed VHF or UHF frequency to send location audio back to the studio. Usually another VHF frequency is used in the return direction to provide talkback and cue audio. The ubiquitous BBC radio car is the classic example of this approach, a small mixer and transmitter installed with a pump-up mast in a suitable, well liveried, vehicle. A fixed receiving aerial at base or on a high hilltop mast provides the other end of the link. Simpler systems, often based on UHF studio-to-transmitter link transmitters and receivers, can be made portable and temporarily installed for the duration of a broadcast. While limited in range such links are eminently suitable for use in the limited editorial area of a small local station. Major broadcasters, typically producing programming for a national network, may similarly use a mobile or portable satellite uplink which can give coverage from a large part of the globe.

Developments in audio compression algorithms have made it possible to squeeze acceptable speech audio into a much narrow bandwidth than previously thought possible. A number of units from manufactures such as Comrex offer the ability to return good sounding speech from a reporter at any site with access to a telephone connection. Using a standard GSM mobile phone card some units make it possible to send news reports and programme inserts from anywhere with a good mobile network coverage. While such digital units, usually containing a simple mixer and return feed to headphones, can seem quite expensive they considerably simplify the issues surrounding getting "out and about". The cost of the portable unit and the companion codec back at base may often be justified from additional sponsorship revenue, or in community radio might be funded by a separate grant to allow greater access for a particular purpose. If used regularly the cost may appear more moderate on a per-occasion basis.

As so often in radio, the manager may be tempted to over-complicate what is required of an OB. An early BBC local radio producer who became Metro Radio's first Programme Director once told the writer: "The main

reason to do an OB is to give credibility to our coverage and involvement. We do that in the first ten seconds, anything after that is a bonus."

While it may be impressive to broadcast whole programmes - including music and other inserts - live from the location, in practice the listener's experience will be the same if all recorded music, other audio items and advertisements are played-in on cue by a technical operator back at the studio. Frequently it may be more effective to maintain a studio-based presenter who can keep the show moving while the presenter on location lines up the next insert.

Indeed some events may be better covered with recordings rushed back to the studio - or sent back via an OB link or simply by email. It is often easier to capture the right moment, or intercept the ideal interviewee, at a time other than when the studio chooses to come across for a live insert. With a little thought and practice at both ends it is not even necessary for the listener to be aware that the piece is anything other than live. The presenter in the studio might cue into it with an agreed line like "So Jenny is it still sunny there?" or "What can you see happening now?" and the piece starts with an appropriate reply. Simply saying that Jenny is at the event and will be reporting throughout the afternoon is not misleading or inaccurate. The need to host the whole show from a public location is often dictated more by promotional and marketing considerations than any benefit for the listener at home. See Section 2.8 for a brief discussion of this point.

For a very useful guide to setting up outside broadcasts in community radio setting, including a step-by-step guide to the technical management of the outside broadcast see Jones, 2003.

Transmission

Photo: Brian Lister

Even in the most deregulated communications market some statutory control is required over the use of radio frequencies. Every radio transmission of any kind is based on a carrier signal - an electromagnetic wave varying a defined number of times per second, this number giving the frequency expressed in Hertz. An electronic circuit resonating at the required frequency can separate one transmission from another. However once a particular frequency has been used in a given area it cannot be used again by another analogue transmitter unless the second station is far enough away that the signal will not cause any noticeable interference in the first station's area.

At VHF, UHF and microwave frequencies the earth's curvature normally ensures that the most powerful transmitter will only cover a radius of about 50 miles before the signal flies off into space. Many local stations use lower radiated powers meaning that their effective range will typically be lower still. In this way a single frequency, for example in the FM band, may be reused repeatedly across the country. At lower frequencies a further complication, used to great advantage by short-wave broadcasters, is the refraction of radio waves as they travel through the layer of the earth's atmosphere known as the ionosphere. Greatly influenced by the sun's energy, even the presence of sun spots, the ability of the ionosphere to deflect radio waves back to earth is

dependent on the frequency in use and the relative position of the sun at different times of day. In the case of the medium and long wave bands this leads to a considerable increase in transmission range after dark. As a result frequencies in these bands must be allocated by international agreement, each nation being allocated only a certain number of spots on the dial for its services.

AM (amplitude modulation) is the original method devised for broadcasting speech and music by radio. Here the amplitude of the carrier signal is increased and decreased with the variations of the, much lower, audio frequencies. A common alternative is FM(frequency modulation) where the carrier frequency is varied around the nominal frequency in proportion to the audio voltage. Only during silence is the FM signal on exactly the published frequency.

FM has two key advantages: firstly, as the instantaneous strength of the received signal is irrelevant, it is less susceptible to fading and noise; secondly, as the amount that the signal swings up and down the band, known as the deviation, is increased the effects of interference become less pronounced. In order to benefit fully from these advantages an FM signal needs more bandwidth than the equivalent AM signal and therefore these stations could not be accommodated on the old long and medium wave bands. The VHF radio broadcast band stretches from 87.5 to 108 MHz, offering 19 times the bandwidth of the medium wave band. To avoid interference between nearby stations Ofcom and the BBC usually allocate frequencies so as to keep stations in the same area at least 400 kHz (0.4 MHz) apart.

With a variety of national networks, region-wide services and very local services to fit into a finite band it will be seen why frequency allocation can become a very complex issue. A major role of Ofcom, not only for broadcasters but for the many other users of the radio spectrum, is to manage frequencies so as to get the best use of them for as many users as possible without mutual interference. In practice, and in the eyes of many rather inefficiently, the FM broadcast band has been divided up to allow Ofcom to allocate frequencies in some segments while the BBC effectively manages its own allocations in others.

In addition to the single mono signal described above FM transmissions can carry additional signals to provide stereo audio and things like Radio Data System (RDS) information. At the FM transmitter site a stereo encoder is used to superimpose the stereo information onto the broadcast signal and an RDS generator produces the data signals, although these units may be included within the transmitter itself, particularly in systems designed for smaller operations.

The RDS data is designed to supply information to FM receivers and includes 'static data', such as a unique programme identification code, programme service name (in eight characters), alternative frequencies (to allow automatic retuning) and traffic programme identification (which tells a car radio that the station regularly broadcasts traffic information). Separately the RDS system can also carry 'dynamic data', fed to the transmitter site from the studio. It can include, among other things, a traffic announcement signal (which can switch a car receiver from other sources of audio during travel bulletins) and a scrolling text display of, for example, song titles or phone numbers.

The system of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) introduced in the UK, technically the Eureka 147 system, uses two digital technologies to produce a transmission system designed to overcome some of the limitations of FM broadcasting. Firstly the digital audio is compressed using an algorithm called MPEG Layer 2. A predecessor of the now ubiquitous MP3 format and the newer more efficient AAC+ standard, this reduces the amount of data required to broadcast each signal by ignoring sounds that will not be audible to the listener. Secondly the resulting digital signal is transmitted as a Coded Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplex (COFDM) splitting the signal across 1,536 different carrier frequencies and thus ensuring that it can be received reliably even in if some of the carrier frequencies are affected by interference or interrupted briefly. The COFDM technology is also immune to signals arriving at different times, such as those from other transmitters carrying the same programmes or from reflections of hills and buildings, meaning that the transmitters can be arranged in groups using the same frequencies to cover a larger area.
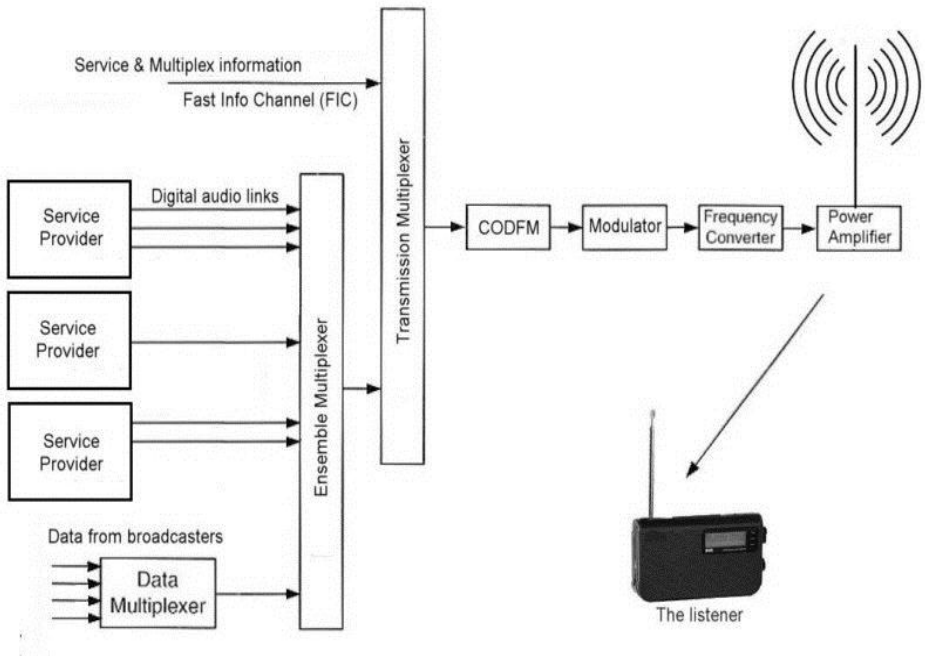
While, at least since the 1990 Broadcasting Act, the AM and FM broadcasting chains, from microphone to transmitter, can be under the control of the broadcasters themselves, the DAB system is structurally very different. In order to make efficient use of COFDM and the available frequencies a number of services must be carried, or multiplexed, onto a single broadcast frequency to form a DAB ensemble. Within the total bit-rate the ensemble can handle, individual stations can be allocated different bit rates and some capacity can be used for other data services. The number of stations carried by one DAB multiplex depends on the average bit rates used and therefore the quality of audio broadcast. Services are charged according to the amount of the total data bandwidth they wish to use, stereo services using twice the capacity of an equivalent mono service.

The radio station becomes a service provider and generates a stream of audio data complete with programme associated data and service information which is used to describe the service. This data is sent to a multiplex operator who combines these services with a number of others to form an ensemble. The complete ensemble of services can then be broadcast from a number of transmission sites, the listener being able to select an individual service from the received multiplex.
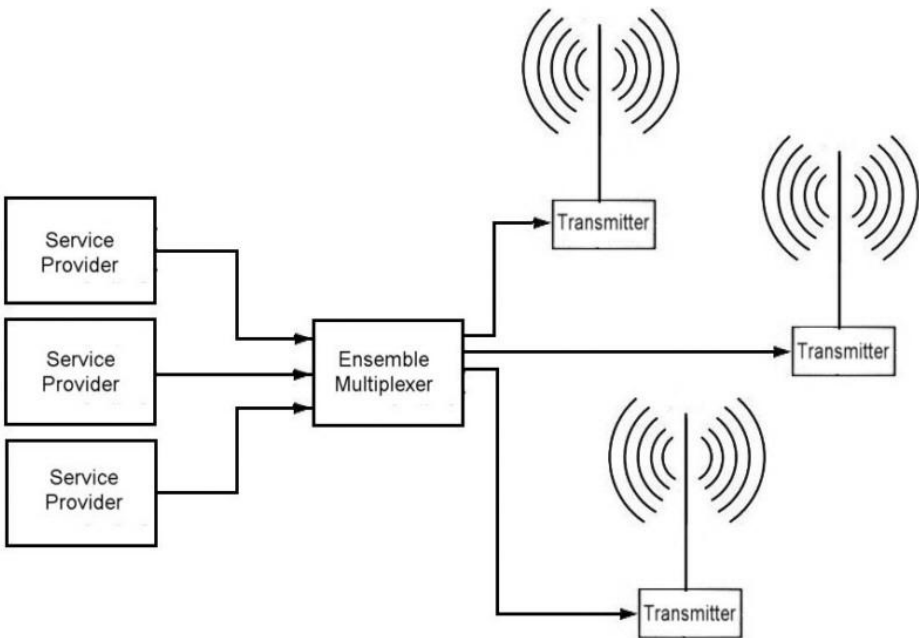
In the DAB system the multiplex operator holds the main broadcasting licence, the service provider having to negotiate carriage for their service (see Section 2.4 on licensing). The system assumes the country can be divided up into fairly large cells, each served by a handful of multiplexes, in which all the services wish to cover the same geographic area. As a result DAB is not popular among smaller local commercial stations in the UK, where there is little benefit in increasing costs to generate a signal beyond their area of editorial appeal, and the technology has not been adopted at all in the USA. An alternative approach, in-band on-channel (IBOC), is marketed in the USA as HD Radio. Here extra carriers transmit the digital signals alongside the relevant AM or FM station on its existing frequency. Existing analogue radios can still be used and listeners can switch to digital at a steady pace until eventually stations could remove the analogue signal and become all digital without changing frequency. However there remain issues with the relative range of the digital signals, receiver sensitivity and interference caused by the broader sidebands of the new transmissions.

An alternative digital transmission system for the old AM bands has been developed by Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM). Using various MPEG-4 codecs, DRM can deliver similar quality to existing FM stations while allowing more stations to co-exist in the bands and using many of the existing AM transmitter facilities. DRM is claimed to be robust against the fading and interference that

often plagues conventional broadcasting in these frequency ranges and can add RDS-like data to the transmissions. While, unlike the US HD radio, it is not designed to broadcast "piggy- back" with AM radio on an existing frequency, DRM would be much cheaper to implement than DAB and might offer a digital route for smaller broadcasters reusing unwanted AM frequencies. It has already been approved for medium wave and shortwave broadcasting throughout the world, with the exception of the Americas, by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and a comparable system, DRM+, for use in the existing VHF/FM band has also been developed.

The bands of frequencies currently used for conventional radio broadcasting in the UK (NFPG 2007) are shown, with their key characteristics, in the following table:

Frequencies	Mode	Notes
148.5 - 283.5 kHz	AM	Long Wave. Now only used in the UK by BBC Radio 4 at 198 kHz . Has advantage that signal can extend over the horizon giving national coverage from a single transmitter in daytime.
526.5 - 1,606.5 kHz	AM	Medium Wave. Local coverage in daylight, but after dark signals can be heard from across Europe and beyond.
Various between 3.95 and 26.1 MHz	AM	A number of separate Short Wave bands. Can give worldwide coverage, different frequency bands being needed as the earth rotates relative to the sun.
87.5 - 108.0 MHz	FM	FM broadcast band. Rarely any long range interference. Higher quality due to the greater bandwidth available.
217.5 - 230.0 MHz	DAB	Digital Audio Broadcasting via multiplexes which repeatedly reuse the available frequencies.

At the time of writing, conventional FM or AM reception remains the way most listeners receive the majority of radio programmes in the UK.

According to research data (Rajar 2009) for the first quarter of 2009, 67.5 per cent of all UK radio listening was identified as being via such analogue

channels, with 20 per cent via a named digital source (DAB, Freeview, satellite or the internet). One third of the population said they tuned in at least once a week to some form of digital audio broadcasting.

Inevitably digital reception will overtake analogue in the next few years, but it is expected to be a slower process than we have seen with CDs or digital TV as the average UK household has five radio sets (Ofcom 2006) and some analogue transmission will need to continue until the majority of these are capable of digital reception. We listen to radio in bed, the kitchen, the car, at work and on a range of portable devices as well as in a more controlled situation at home in our lounge or dining room. Arguably the optimum means of delivery in each of these situations could be via a different mechanism or network, so the debate goes much beyond the pros and cons of today's DAB system.

Managing the transmission system

While, in the past, station management became involved in initial decisions about the location and power of a transmitter, or network of transmitters, to optimally cover a desired geographic area and the appointment of a specialist company to maintain the service, in future the radio manager will have to ensure reliable distribution via a number of digital routes. However the aim remains to serve as many of the target population as possible for the minimum capital outlay and ongoing cost. It is possible to summarise distribution costs under two headings:

CAPITAL
Commissioning forecasts of coverage area.
Design of system, planning consents etc.
Installation of transmitters.
Installation of aerials.
Decisions on extent of stand-by or back-up facilities.

RECURRENT
Ongoing rental of transmitter sites, masts, etc.
DAB multiplex charges.
Fees to other digital distributors.
Fees to AM/FM transmission supplier.
Electricity costs at transmitter.
Regular maintenance checks.
Repairs and replacement.

Studio-to-transmitter line rental or radio link licence costs.
Standby studio-to-transmitter link costs.

    The threat of eventual analogue switch-off makes consideration of long-term transmission agreements more problematic, in the past many broadcasters have preferred to pass the whole task of transmitting their programmes to a specialist company. The largest, Arqiva, grew out of the old engineering department of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. When legal commercial radio started in the UK, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the radio stations and ITV companies were technically 'programme contractors', simply required to originate programming while the big hilltop transmission masts were staffed by IBA engineers. To this day many large stations enter into a 'Total Broadcast Contract' with Arqiva under which the specialist company provides a fully outsourced transmission service, including ownership and maintenance of the transmitter system and responsibility for the studio-to-transmitter links. Smaller operators, particularly those using more modest transmission sites, often choose to own and operate the transmitters themselves, usually with specialist transmitter engineering support from one of several well qualified UK companies.

Tim Foulsham of transmission supplier Radica instals a pre-wired rack including all the equipment needed for transmission and back-up studio links for a local FM service. Photo: Brian Lister

If choosing a site to locate its own transmitter mast, the station must consider a number of factors:

1. The height and location of the site in relation to the main population centres.
2. The location in relation to the studios (there will need to be some kind of radio or cable link between the two sites).
3. A reliable electricity supply must be available.
4. The transmitter equipment and the aerials must be inaccessible to the public for safety reasons, and to prevent pirate operators from stealing the kit. Secure fencing and solid locked doors must therefore be provided if not already present.
5. The building housing the equipment must be free from damp and well ventilated. Any other equipment should be safely and tidily installed and there should be no fire risk.
6. The mast or other structure must be capable of taking the weight and wind- loading of the proposed aerial system.
7. Engineers must be able to gain access 24 hours a day, ideally holding a key for the site at the studios.
8. Planning approval will almost certainly be required.

Back-up transmission systems

As with the studios, station management must decide on the extent, if any, of emergency standby equipment. Modern transmitters are very reliable and now are often solid-state. So there is little to go wrong with the transmitter itself, transmission breaks being more commonly caused by a mains power failure, an interruption of the studio to transmitter feed or even an aerial problem. Nevertheless, most transmitter installations include some form of automatic switch that will power-up a standby transmitter or take an alternative programme feed if the main system fails. Often the operation of the switch will be signalled to the studio centre or another operations centre where the status of the transmitter can be monitored.

This is another situation where the manager must weigh up the relevant risks, costs and benefits. If the transmitter is 99.9 per cent reliable we might expect it to fail for about 9 hours in the average year (that is assuming you could get it fixed straight-away) and yet completely duplicating a transmission system will virtually double the cost of the installation. How much would it really cost the station, in lost audience, public image and sales revenue, if it

were off the air for part of one day once in a year? Is the standby transmitter really worth the extra cost?

As with the studio example, decisions must be made on whether to require stand-by generators at the transmission site to keep the station going indefinitely in the event of mains failure, or the provision of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), usually the type now used widely to protect computer systems, which can maintain a lower power transmitter for an hour or more.

Power and coverage

The effect of higher transmitter power on the population coverage of a station is often overestimated. The effective range, in a perfect environment with no hills, forests or man-made structures, is governed by the 'inverse square law'.

Power sent down a cable is lost linearly, the signal travels only in one direction, therefore when the length of cable is doubled so is the loss of power. In contrast a broadcast signal expands in all directions. So as the distance between our transmitter and receiver doubles the received power drops by a factor of four, or if the transmitter is ten times further away we need 100 times the effective radiated power to receive the same signal. Add to this the limiting effect of hills and even the earth's curvature and you can see why managers are often disappointed at how little difference a power upgrade appears to make. Put simply, doubling our transmitter power does not double our range in miles.

Additionally radio signals are transmitted with a particular polarisation, usually horizontal or vertical. As with polarised light it is possible to separate these components at the receiving end. This is simply achieved using a horizontal or vertical rod aerial. In the early days of BBC VHF FM radio it was thought that most people would be using a fixed rooftop aerial and it was decided to mainly use horizontal polarisation for practical antenna design reasons, this is why the rods of an outdoor fm aerial were normally horizontal. However, around the time that UK commercial radio was launched in the early seventies, the FM car radio and portable radio became the norm, both being most conveniently equipped with a vertical aerial.

A special aerial array is needed to transmit a mixed polarisation signal and it must be fed with a proportion of the total transmitter power going into each of the vertical and horizontal planes. As a result broadcasters on a tight budget (not just community services but smaller commercial operators as well as small relay stations for larger networks) tend nowadays to use only vertical polarisation. While giving savings on transmitter power and antenna costs, using only the vertical component gives perfectly adequate coverage on the

mobile and portable receivers used by most listeners. DAB is always broadcast using vertical polarisation only.

By far the most important factor in getting the maximum coverage for a given radiated power is the height of the transmitting aerial. The best results can be obtained by renting space on an existing tall mast used for television transmission or mobile phones, but the old TV towers are often miles outside the most heavily populated areas and can prove very expensive, not only in the rental charges but also in having the antenna system professionally rigged at height. Smaller stations often use the roof of a tall structure in the heart of their target area, although there may be limitations if there are homes very nearby. Nevertheless a solution that puts the maximum signal strength into the core of the target area, with the signal diminishing with the population to the outer fringes, is often very attractive.

Stations on a tight budget or with limited licensed power should bear in mind that on FM a mono service will have an appreciably larger coverage area than a stereo station using the same radiated power. This is partly because stereo FM signals are more susceptible to noise and multipath distortion than mono signals but also because transmitting the stereo information and a continuous 'pilot tone' uses up some of the available frequency deviation - reducing the maximum audio level that can be broadcast. The reader can demonstrate this using a receiver that can be switched between mono and stereo reception. Tuning to a stereo FM station with borderline reception there will be a fair amount of noise on the signal, mainly in the form of high frequency hiss. Switching the receiver to mono most of the noise will disappear. Although the improvement is not noticeable in a strong signal area it can make a big difference at the fringe.

Audio compression and processing

Although despised by audio purists a signal processor can increase a station's apparent loudness, encouraging listeners to select it from a crowded band, while giving the service a distinctive signature "sound" which may encourage them to stay.

The human ear is capable of hearing a wide range of sounds from the very quietest to those so loud as to cause physical damage. In most cases what makes a sound too quiet to hear properly is not the ability of the ear but the amount of background noise getting in the way. Radio engineers have devised a number of systems to ensure that quiet passages in programming are not lost in the noise, and to understand these it helps if the radio manager has some grasp of the main unit used to measure sound levels, the decibel.

The bel is a unit of loudness named after the inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell. Unfortunately the unit is a little too large to be useful in everyday work, and the standard unit is now ten times smaller - the decibel (dB). The decibel is a ratio on a logarithmic scale, not an absolute measurement like the volt. For example, while an increase in loudness of 10 dB means the signal will be ten times more powerful, a decrease to one-hundredth of the power is equivalent to a change of minus 20 dB and a power increase of a thousand times is expressed as plus 30 dB.

The human ear can cope with a massive range of around 120 dB from the quietest to the loudest sounds, known as the dynamic range of the ear. A good FM radio can provide a dynamic range of only around 70 dB, that is to say the difference between the background noise level and a high audio level which would cause distortion is 70 dB, and a typical AM radio might offer as little as 10 dB. It is clear that the dynamic range of sounds we hear in the natural world must be reduced in order to be heard satisfactorily on the radio, even before we factor in the masking effect of background noise in the home or the car where the receiver may be located.

At its simplest the dynamic range of programme material can be electronically reduced by limiting the loudness of the highest peaks or by increasing the volume during the quiet periods. These processes are known as limiting and compression (which must not be confused with digital compression, a totally unrelated process in which the amount of data used to define an analogue signal is reduced). Most limiters and compressors will reduce a high signal very rapidly, to prevent distortion, but increase a quiet signal more slowly.

As it is a breach of licence conditions for a transmitter to be over-modulated there will certainly be a limiter at the transmission site to catch any loud passages sent from the studios. By setting the limiter so that it increases the level of quiet signals by, say, 10dB and therefore reduces the loudest normal peaks by 10 dB, a noticeable increase in average modulation and therefore perceived loudness can be achieved. However there is a limit to how far you can increase perceived loudness using this simple compression. If employed beyond a certain degree the compressor will be heard to be increasing the level of background noise to fill the gaps between words, and irritatingly adding a strange pumping effect to the loudness of individual instruments in music.

In order to increase the amount of automatic control without such extreme effects, modern audio processing equipment works on the principle of splitting the audio signal into several different frequency bands before constantly adjusting the level of each band separately. The degree of compression and the relative level of each frequency band can be adjusted

separately and it is here that the manager will frequently become involved, attempting to set up a distinctive, powerful yet pleasant 'signature sound' for the station. Setting up a system of this kind takes time and patience, there are so many variables that the manager or engineer may never be confident that they have got it perfectly right. It is usually best to start with one of the factory-defined array of settings, varying it to suit the service's particular programme mix, transmission system, and competitive marketplace.

Web streaming

Unlike conventional broadcasting, Internet radio is usually fed over the net to each listener on an individual basis, feeding each computer with its own effectively continuous stream of data.

While the average PC with a broadband connection can send a handful of streams simultaneously a much bigger array of servers with a vastly more substantial connection to the Internet is required if you wish to broadcast to hundreds or thousands of listeners. As a result most stations generate only the basic data stream at the studios, passing it on via the Internet or a dedicated digital line to a third party specialist streaming company whose data centre has the capacity to cope with peaks of demand.

Webcasting is distinct from "listen again" and "podcasting" which involve downloading specific audio files on demand, and the three concepts now happily co-exist in the minds of most listeners. The BBC offers a "listen again" service in parallel with the ability to hear its main services in real time, while podcasting tends to refer to the downloading of single programmes made specifically for the purpose.

While an advantage of Internet radio services is that even the most local station is theoretically accessible from anywhere in the world there are copyright complications. For example many UK stations are required under their Phonographic Performance Ltd. music copyright licences to "geo-lock" their streams – making them available only to users with UK IP addresses. Some other content, for example sports commentaries or live performances may be licensed for use only within one country.

In order to squeeze as much audio bandwidth as possible through a domestic Internet connection most webcasting uses a "lossy" digital coding scheme which discards some of the less noticeable audio content. Popular streaming audio formats include MP3, Ogg Vorbis, Windows Media Audio, RealAudio and HE-AAC (AAC+). Because the coded data is sent over the network in distinct "packets", which may be routed differently over the Internet, they have to be reassembled in order at the receiving computer

creating a short delay before they can be played. In the event of any disruption to the connection this delay manifests itself as a pause while the receiver is "buffering" a store of packets.

The quality of streamed audio depends on the chosen bit-rate, measured in kilobits per second (kbps). Some advanced systems will automatically drop back to a lower bit-rate in the event of a problem with transmission to an individual listener. Common bit rates are:

16-22 kbps: Originally used for early dial-up computer modems. While adequate for speech radio it is comparable to AM radio and seldom used today.

32-44 kbps: These speeds are best for non-broadband listeners who still use a 56.6 telephone modem connection. Some unpleasant effects on music but fine for speech.

128-192 kbps: For listeners with broadband connections these speeds are capable of near-CD quality.

The BBC currently uses AAC coding at 128 kbps for the majority of its streamed services via the iPlayer, increasing to 192 kbps to give even higher quality on BBC Radio Three. At the lower speeds it is worth considering broadcasting in mono rather than stereo as this effectively doubles the bit-rate available for a single audio channel.

In common with many broadcasters the BBC uses separate audio processing on the input to its streaming servers, different to that used for FM or AM, at far less vigorous settings than those used for conventional broadcasting. The BBC services on Freeview (digital satellite) and the Internet are the least processed of all, with no processing at all on the Radio Three signal.

In future streaming audio to portable devices should become even more attractive with the eventual roll-out of so-called 4G networks. WiMax can be seen as an extension of our current very localised Wi-Fi networks while LTE is more an extension of mobile telephone technology, but both are basically IP networks offering high speed Internet access on the move. Nevertheless many believe such one-to-one streaming will never be as technically efficient or economical as conventional broadcasting's one-to-many model.

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Section 2.12

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Summary

In this section we will consider how the performance of a radio station may be managed. We will look at how financial and operational performance may be monitored, reviewed and evaluated and, with respect to operational performance consider particularly how staff may be managed in an appropriate manner. The section will close by considering how a successful station may maintain its performance, how we might turn around the performance of an ailing one and how community radio can contribute to new forms of impact assessment and measurement.

Financial performance

As described in section 2.3, the manager will have set out, and agreed, budgets for their area of responsibility. Normally these budgets will be broken down into individual months with figures often varying from month to month to reflect varying activity levels, expected market conditions, or steady growth. A programme manager might have a list of cost centres under their control and will be expected to keep within the agreed overall cost while a sales manager will, in addition to making sure costs remain under control, also have a set of targets for revenue generation. In the case of a community station the manager should know what income is expected from grants and fundraising each month.

Budgeting, which normally takes place a month or two before the start of the twelve month period, is not an exact science. It is difficult to forecast exact costs a year ahead, let alone predict other people's spending on advertising. Most senior managers will be tolerant of a small overspend or shortfall in one area under a manager's responsibility if it is compensated by under-spending or exceptional income in another. Similarly a poor result in one month may be compensated by exceptional performance in the next. Nevertheless the aim is to stay as close as possible to the budget overall and to end of the year on target.

Senior managers need to review financial performance at least once every month as any longer interval can lead to a temporary difficulty becoming a problem that cannot be corrected before the end of the financial year. Larger groups will have central accounts departments which constantly gather data from the station and in return supply monthly management accounts and detailed analysis. Independent stations will need to generate their own regular management accounts. Fortunately this need not be as difficult as it sounds. A single radio station is really a very straightforward business and off-the-shelf accounts packages can readily be adapted for radio station use. Most sales traffic software packages will interface with the accounts software, producing monthly invoices for advertisers and automatically adding the transactions to the sales ledger. It is important to be disciplined in entering the data if the accounts are going to provide useful management information: all sales orders should bear a code indicating the sales executive responsible for the sale; all payments to suppliers must be recorded on the system with a code indicating to which cost-centre they should be charged.

In order to produce a clear picture of how well a commercial station is trading, it is customary for income to be shown in the month during which the airtime or service is provided, not when it is sold or when the income is received. Similarly expenditure is shown in the month in which it is incurred, even if payment is received at a later date. It is therefore essential that, at the same time as considering the monthly profit-and- loss management accounts, the manager must review the company's cash position. Paying all bills on time while being lax about collecting income from advertisers and sponsors can lead an apparently profitable station into serious financial difficulty.

The manager must be aware that the average member of staff will not initially understand how to read a set of accounts. The monthly profit and loss report may be clear enough, but the importance of the cash flow, of chasing debtors to collect their cash within a reasonable time and, particularly, of the balance sheet may be lost on many. Comparisons - particularly in both percentage terms and historically - can be very useful and informative. A 10% overspend in one area identified early enough in the financial year can be corrected. An increase year-on-year in line with inflation might normally be expected, anything larger must be justified by a budget for greater or more lavish activity.

All radio station staff should be encouraged by regular monitoring and reporting to keep expenditure below budget. So often, particularly in commercial radio, we see an individual's sales performance being celebrated, usually with the help of a bonus or additional commission, because they have produced income above their target. The manager must remember, and constantly remind staff, that a saving of £1,000 in costs is just good - often

even better - than raising another £1,000 in income. But too often production departments will go to great lengths to avoid an under-spend, fearing that their future budget will be cut as a result, or that they might be criticised for not 'pulling out all the stops' if their performance turns out to be inadequate somewhere down the line. Some stations attempt to offset this attitude with staff bonuses, often available only to those not already in a sales bonus scheme, triggered by the profitability of the group, company or, their own unit.

In a commercial setting, local income generation will usually be the responsibility of a sales manager. The manager will have an overall annual target that they will be expected to break down into individual months. Then, within each month, the target total may be split between separate figures for airtime, sponsorship, promotions and commercial production. The division between these headings will be based on local experience, the format of the service and its relationship with its listeners. Finally, within each heading every month, a number of individuals may be responsible for bringing in the revenue. An individual sales executive might therefore have a specific target each month for airtime, sponsorship, promotions and commercial production.

As we described earlier (Section 2.3) it is customary for individuals to be motivated to achieve a certain level of personal sales each month with commission equivalent to a few percent of their total invoiced revenue in that month upon reaching or exceeding that target. In order to encourage teamwork, there is often a further incentive if the whole sales team achieves its total monthly target. In a small station a sales executive might take home an additional, say, 3 per cent of their own sales if they meet their own monthly target and a further 3 per cent of their own sales if the team also achieves its overall target. With typical individual monthly targets in local radio of £10,000 to £15,000 such commission can amount to a significant additional income, although of course it is still subject to tax. The sales manager is often targeted entirely on their overall team achievement, whether or not they may have their own list of key clients.

From time to time there may also be fixed bonuses or incentives for achieving other specific objectives. In some cases, following a temporary period of poor trading, companies permit a quarterly "claw-back" scheme in which the monthly bonuses are payable if a surplus in a later month compensates for the shortfall in an earlier month.

Operational performance

Monitoring and evaluating financial performance is relatively straightforward but the manager will find evaluating the performance of creative individuals far more challenging. Not only is their worth to the station far more subjectively measured but the demands and expectations of the station may vary from individual to individual.

For the purposes of this book it may be most informative to consider the techniques commonly used to monitor, evaluate and review the performance of radio presenters, and look at how these differ from those used in the sales arena.

While sales managers, almost without exception, hold meetings with their entire team at least weekly, today most experienced programme managers avoid holding group meetings of presenters except to announce matters of company-wide importance, or where all staff are invited. They prefer to schedule regular one-to-one meetings with individual presenters, or perhaps with the team responsible for a co-presented show. This radically different approach reflects not only the more personal, individual, role of the presenter but also their very different personal motivation. A group of presenters often have little in common, in terms of the challenges of their individual work, other than the state of the studio, the headphones and the coffee machine. So it should be no surprise if discussion at any such team meetings generally descends to this level.

The programme manager may privately sit down with the presenter of a daily programme every week (perhaps once each month with the presenter of a weekly programme) for a 'coaching session' based around the playback of a recent programme. The programmer can play a sequence, or perhaps a single link, and then initiate a discussion on how well it was presented and how it could be improved in future. To save time it is common to use a recording with any music tracks edited out. To this end some studios have a dedicated recording system set up to run only when the 'microphone-on' light is illuminated. This conveniently provides a ready- made recording without any music, advertisements or other external or pre-recorded items.

Coaching sessions should always be helpful and supportive, rather than negative and controlling. There is no point in encouraging the presenter to repeatedly brood over an error or misjudgement, far better to highlight and fix in their mind those elements which worked well, or at least those which make their boss happy. For this reason it is often helpful to chose a programme segment at random rather than use this meeting as a post-mortem on the worst of the week's output. Indeed it can be constructive to invite the presenter themselves to choose the segment for review. They may pick a section they are

particularly proud of or they may seek input on a particularly challenging part of a previous programme.

Inevitably, despite concerns over the reliability of Rajar data, outlined in Section 2.1, programme managers are regularly called upon to review the performance of individual programmes using the results of audience research. This can be undertaken more fairly and with greater confidence by using comparisons with other known data. Given a set of numbers in isolation, even with the most robust sample, it is not possible to say whether they represent "good" or "bad" programming performance. As we said earlier, any research result should be interpreted in relation to at least one other piece of data, preferably several if the sample sizes are small. In analysing the results for a single programme suitable benchmarks might be:

- Previous performance of this service at the same time and day.
- Performance of competitors' services at the same time and day.
- Performance of comparable programmes, perhaps on similar group-owned stations, at the same time and day elsewhere.
- Overall size of the total radio audience at this time on this day.
- The average audience delivery of this service at all other times.

Realistically the manager can only say that a programme is doing well or badly if it is moving in the same direction in relation to at least two or three of these benchmarks. Even then, of course, the change may be due to unavoidable external factors over which the manager, and the programme staff, has no control.

It is worth repeating the points made in Section 2.1. Many managers believe that trends over three or more surveys are more important than any quarter's individual results. They argue that it takes time for listeners to adapt to any change and that the most recent results probably reflect the audience getting used to changes made a year previously. Experienced programmers know that it can take as short a time as fifteen to twenty seconds for an existing listener to switch off if you offer them something they do not like, conversely it could take fifteen to twenty months before a non-listener becomes a regular listener because of that same programme change!

As in all aspects of a manager's dealings with employees it is important, in discussing research findings, not to dwell on the negatives. In a creative field like programming it is better to seek out the most successful aspects of the schedule, analyse these, praise the people who did well and apply the lessons learned to the weaker points in the day. The manager must avoid spending all their time worrying about the things that apparently did not have the desired result but rather should investigate the items that worked well in as much

detail as those that did not. Better to focus the minds of the team on what success sounds like than to endlessly recount their failures.

It is useful to bear in mind the natural patterns of radio listenership that have been established over many years. This graph, drawn from a typical mid-range local commercial radio station shows the proportion of the total adult audience in that station's area listening to any radio station at all at different times across the average weekday:

Typical weekday listening pattern:
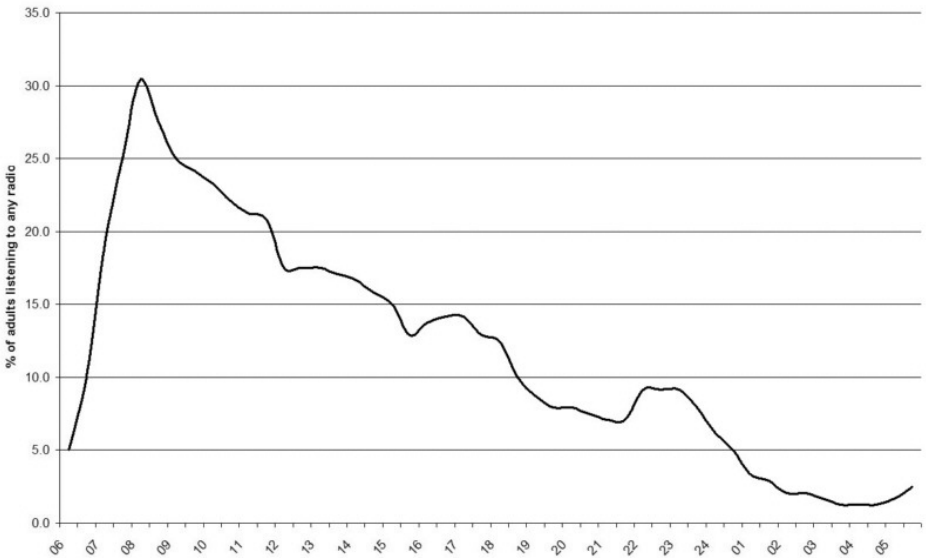
This is an instantly familiar pattern to any experienced programme manager. The audience rises rapidly to a peak around breakfast time and then declines, almost linearly across the day until reaching an overnight low around 1 am. There are commonly small bumps in the decline around lunchtime, afternoon 'drivetime' and bedtime, perhaps after the TV is switched off. Given this typical shape to a Rajar curve, the manager should be equally pleased with an afternoon show and a breakfast sequence even where the former achieves half the number of listeners as the latter.

There may be commonsense reasons why a particular format, or station in a specific market, might happily achieve a profile across the day different to this norm, for example where the target listeners can be expected to be unable to listen while at work or school or where the manager has decided not to attempt to compete with strong programming on a rival service at a particular

time of day. In this respect it is helpful to look at the corresponding radio listening patterns achieved in this same area at weekends:

Saturday listening pattern:
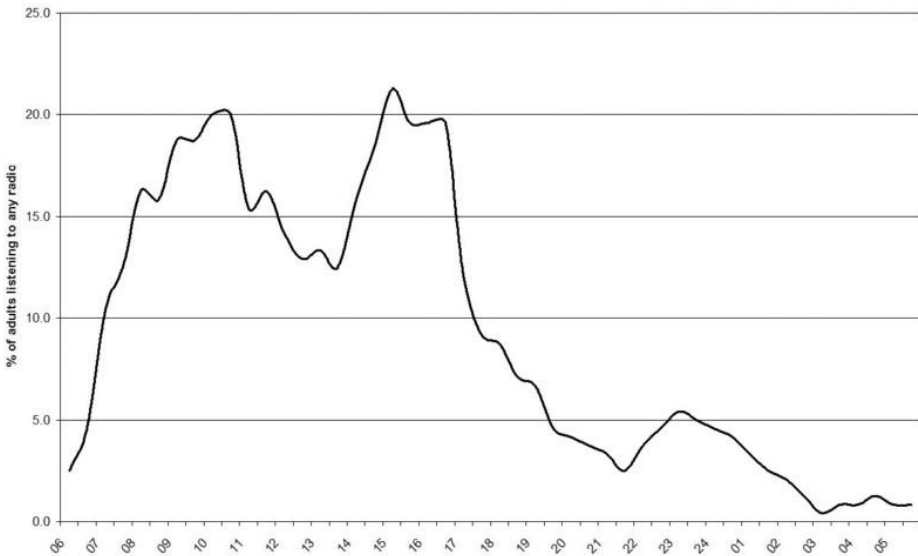
In this case on the average Saturday it is possible to discern the same underlying pattern, a breakfast peak, although later than on a weekday, followed by a linear decline across the day. But on to this is superimposed an effect specific to this market, with considerable interest between 3 pm and 5 pm in coverage of the local soccer team. In these circumstances a station carrying a major soccer programme would not worry about a substantial loss of audience after 5 pm, which would not be the fault of the following show.

Looking at Sundays over the same twelve month period in the same area we see the breakfast peak has moved a further hour later, reflecting real life in the typical household. In this case the decline across the day is disrupted by a late afternoon peak for the long established chart shows and again by the local popularity of a late- night phone-in.

Sunday listening pattern:
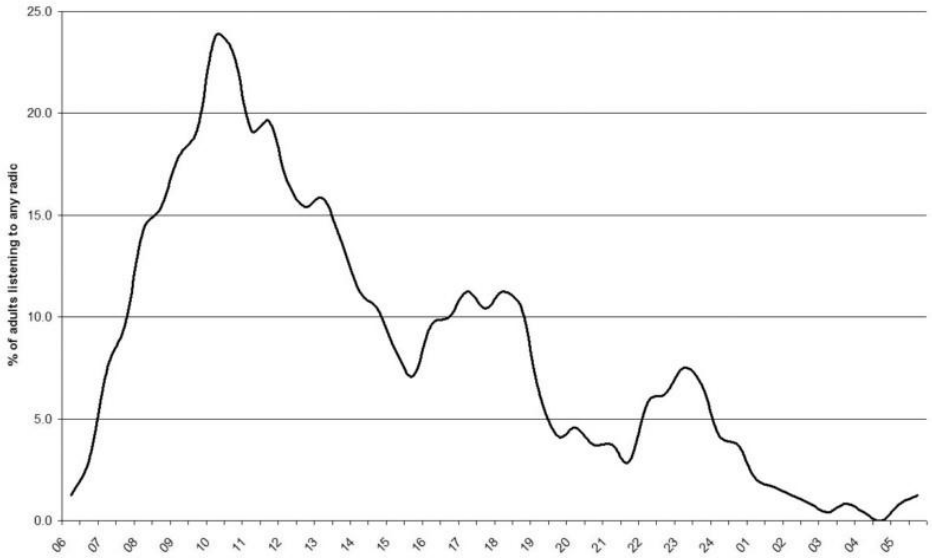
Before attempting to interpret their own audience figures managers should always try to understand such local patterns of overall listening. It is one thing to ask a presenter to take a greater share of the available audience in their area at a given time, it is quite another to ask them to create new radio listening.

While quantitative audience research is too blunt a tool for analysing the performance of individual programme elements many of the above principles may be applied to the effective evaluation of staff in other creative areas, in news, production etc. Of greatest importance is an understanding and agreement between the employee and their manager of what level of performance is currently being achieved, what is expected in the future and what has to change in order for them to get there.

In the absence of formal audience research care should be taken in the choice of other indicators of success. It is tempting to judge the popularity or success of a programme or feature by the quantity of audience response it stimulates. But is a 'phone-in which generates a lot of calls necessarily a better programme than one that only has sufficient to get by? Often, as has been demonstrated by the recent wave of premium-rate telephone scandals, the need to encourage the maximum amount of audience response can be detrimental to the long-term interests of the programme. It is quite possible to design a format which will generate the maximum number of texts, emails or

telephone calls but which does not present the ordinary radio listener with a satisfying listening experience.

The reader might ask themselves how often they have personally responded to a radio programme or feature and compare this to the number of separate programmes they have actually listened to in their lifetime. Many in BBC local radio have in the past applied a principle that only a certain proportion of listeners will actually take the trouble to respond to any one general programme item. Journalist Max Easterman recalled in a training session from BBC Audience Research he was told that for every letter written, 200 other would have done so if they could have been bothered. (Source: Radio Studies discussion list, November 2008). We have an example of one community radio station which suggested that this sort of 'rule of thumb' can work, Janey Gordon showed how this rule could be applied during research carried out for a student RSL: 'Our audience research indicated an 11 per cent reach of the population (180,000) and we logged 200 calls over 28 days giving a ratio of 1 call to 99 listeners.' (Gordon 2000: 87) however it is difficult to pin down wider research to substantiate this model, which in any event would surely vary from format to format, with different target audiences and at different times of the week. Nevertheless applying it can produce an uncannily accurate estimate of likely response. The point here is that, even if we apply the more optimistic factor of one in a hundred radio listeners being likely to respond, a programme item should always be aimed at the casual, passive, listener rather than the smaller number of actively participating listeners.

In a desperate attempt to find quantitative indicators of programming, marketing or engineering success to match the figures available in the sales and financial arenas, the manager can distort the priorities of their staff. If, for example a journalist finds themselves judged on the number and duration of local stories included in a week's news bulletins are they not more likely, on a quiet news day, to produce items of little interest and relevance to the target audience simply to meet their quota?

We remember being asked to evaluate a daytime programme on one of the first wave of community radio stations, or incremental licence stations, Wear FM. Although well established and creating a great deal of interest the station appeared to suffer from a poor level of regular listening. Monitoring the programme one possible explanation soon became clear. A simple competition to win a CD was promoted to the exclusion of almost all other content over more than two hours of the programme, the straightforward question and studio telephone number being given after virtually every song, news bulletin or feature item. A harmless little bit of fun was extended until it became tedious and boring. After all, there were only four positions the listener was likely to adopt: they knew the answer and rang in straight away; they knew the

answer and couldn't or wouldn't ring in; they did not know the answer and were intrigued to find out what it was; or they did not know the answer and did not care. In any of the four cases the listener had a right to expect the solution and identity of the winner to be announced within a reasonably short period of time, or at a stated time in the future. They were not likely to hang on for two hours just to discover the answer to a single general knowledge question. Why was the programme being based around such a flimsy premise, of no relevance to the purpose and objectives of the community radio station?

The explanation was to be found off-air. This was many years ago before the widespread adoption of email and texting and most audience response was via the telephone. With a ready supply of voluntary help the station arranged for a volunteer worker to always be stationed in the office fielding every call to the studio, all calls being logged in a big ledger. In the absence of any other form of research the manager had encouraged a culture in which the relative success of each programme was judged by the number of ledger entries it generated. Although not the manager's intention, presenters were effectively encouraged to ruin their programmes for, perhaps, 99 percent of the potential audience in order to maximise the number of calls from the other one percent.

Destroying the ledger and introducing a system of coaching based on the true programming objectives of the station had an immediate effect on the station output, although we will never know how it impacted on audience levels.

Maintaining success

Success brings its own problems for the manager. Not only may the bar be set higher for their performance in the future but complacency can set in. It is a brave act but undoubtedly a great programme manager will not hesitate to evolve and improve an already successful programme schedule in order to preserve that position in the future. Perhaps the most celebrated example in British radio must be the painful reinvention of BBC Radio One in 1993. As Wilby and Conroy point out (1994: 44) after some 26 years the very successful station, launched as a youthful replacement for the pop pirates of the sixties, Radio One had an audience age profile spread across three decades with presenters who had aged with their audience:

> *While the station's branding was relatively unproblematic*
> *when it came on air in 1967, its long history as an*
> *'institution' in British radio broadcasting provides an*
> *illustration of how a radio station constantly has to*

*rethink brand identity, to respond not only to changes in
British culture, listening habits and audiences' self-image,
but also to developments in economic thinking and
management style within the BBC itself.*

Following the sudden departure of presenters Simon Bates, Alan
Freeman, Dave Lee Travers and others, the station went from a weekly reach of
19.2 million listeners in June 1993 to 14.8 million seven months later. The
decline continued in subsequent years, eventually settling at about 10 million,
around the level it remains at today.

In an article to mark the fortieth birthday of the station, Colin Garfield
writing in the Observer (2004) quoted the current Radio One controller Andy
Parfitt defending the need for change:

*It was terribly important that it happened, and the Radio
1 that survives and prospers today is a result of setting the
foundations then. Nobody talks of privatising Radio 1
now, but back then it was a regular idea, because people
couldn't see how we were different from the commercial
competition. So the rebranding of Radio 1 - what we stood
for - was done in a remarkably potent way, but at a great
cost of listeners.*

Anyone can be brave enough to initiate change in an ailing radio service,
the only way is up, but it takes real courage and leadership skills to manage
change in a successful operation. But the biggest challenge in managing a
successful radio service is in simply defending that position. Suddenly you are
the one everyone wants to beat. Not only will your programming and sales
tactics be studied and copied by others but your staff will be of greater interest
to your competitors. Unless the manager is running the top station and has a
limitless budget they must accept that their star performers, in any
department, are likely to want to move on from time to time. If for no other
reason, standing still is not an option for a successful station. The manager
must always be developing new staff and new ideas, ready for the day when
they are needed.

For the programme manager the introduction of so much automation and
networked programming, while offering great advantages in cost-efficiency,
has closed the door to many programme and presenter development
opportunities. At one time it was usual for the first rung on the ladder for a
new presenter to be an overnight shift – perhaps between 1 am and 6 am,
where they could hone their presenting skills without any great risk to the

station image. At the same time bold and adventurous new programming ideas could be tested in the late evenings or at off-peak times of the weekend. Today, quite correctly, the emphasis is on putting out the best possible sound at all times, and if the budget requires that this be done using an unattended computer, so be it. Increasingly, therefore, managers are looking outside their station, or even industry for the stars and big ideas of tomorrow. The BBC has never had any reluctance to recruit from commercial stations and commercial stations are now learning to recruit from the new wave of community and internet stations.

All radio stations, all companies and organisations, must evolve to survive. This is particularly true where the technology and competition is changing and expanding as rapidly as in the world of digital audio. A radio station, no matter how successful, is like a leaky bucket, the manager who stops pouring fresh water in the top will very quickly be left with nothing.

Managing an ailing station

In many ways, while not always a pleasant experience, dealing with an ailing station is far easier than defending a successful one. In many cases there is little the new manager can do to make things worse and there is frequently more scope for experimentation and fresh ideas.

The key question for a new manager coming into such a situation is whether the staff realise that the station is broken and needs to be fixed. It is far easier to introduce rapid changes in an environment where staff understand that change is not only inevitable but desirable than in one where the manager is constantly told 'we don't do it that way here'. The first task of the incoming manager must therefore be to ensure everyone understands, through group and individual meetings and presentations, the nature and scale of the problem. Having clarified the present position the manager can outline where the station should aim to be in the future and invite ideas to get it there. In this environment the manager's new idea and requirements will be more willingly adopted unless someone thinks they have a better idea, a process that should be encouraged. We have experienced too often however managers who arrive with a complete and non-negotiable set of plans for the future and set about implementing them without any consultation or explanation.

Looking for 'buy-in' from their staff has another advantage for the manager. It is likely that those existing staff members who do not share the manager's vision will start to look for alternative employment without any further prompting. In our experience it is surprising how quickly it is possible

to separate the staff who are part of the solution from those, usually far fewer, who were part of the problem.

One matter needs to be addressed with the station owners at an early stage. Does the station name need to be changed? Essentially the manager must ask whether the station branding has become so tarnished by poor performance that it would be better to start again with a new name. Or sometimes a proposed change of format or target audience may be sufficiently great that a new name becomes more appropriate, as is the case where local stations become part of a national group carrying similar programming, for example the newer Heart FM stations.

However re-branding is not always the best answer. One of the authors once nearly made a terrible mistake when suggesting a change of name to a local radio station. The commercial radio station for Harrogate in North Yorkshire had grown out of a community radio initiative and had been broadcasting under a commercial radio licence for around a year when it became clear a change of direction and management was needed. Coming new to the station it seemed that this would be an ideal time to change the name of the struggling station from Stray FM. Pointing out to the board of directors that the dictionary definition of stray, including such terms as 'go aimlessly', 'isolated' and 'homeless friendless person', seemed to accurately describe the situation in which the station found itself, a new name was proposed. The locally based directors and owners of the station robustly and correctly pointed out that "The Stray" was 200 acres of land wrapped around the old town of Harrogate fiercely and passionately defended by the people of the town for whom it is a popular traditional spot for outdoor activities. The name Stray FM perfectly reflected a pride and interest in the station's target area and was not changed despite a complete overhaul of all other aspects of the operation. Stray FM became and continues to be a very popular and profitable local radio station. The station name, as in many cases, represents a great deal of heritage and brand vales and should not be lightly discarded.

It is tempting, when confronted by an under performing station, to immediately reach for a marketing solution. However the funds and resources available for marketing any radio service are not limitless and the manager is well advised to deal with other problems first. Indeed it may make sense to cease all marketing and promotion until such time as the product is functioning properly. For example the programme manager turning round a poor schedule should be allowed to bring in their new line- up and regular programme features, and given time to get them sounding great, before non-listeners are invited to sample the new sound through extensive off-air promotion. Particularly where the brand identity has not changed, previously disaffected listeners, customers or funders are only likely to give the station

one more chance, so it is best to delay any big promotion of the new product until the manager can declare themselves satisfied with the station.

Motivating individual staff can be tricky during the regeneration of a damaged radio service, targets and expectations must be very carefully managed. It is unrealistic to expect sales income or Rajar figures to undergo a sudden spectacular step-change following a revamp of the station, but this is exactly what many individuals hope for. The manager should make it clear that continuing incremental improvement, month- on-month, year-on-year, is all that is expected or required.

Staff motivation, particularly in a struggling station, does not simply depend upon cash incentives and creative feedback. Improvements to working conditions and facilities can send a very positive signal that the company, group or organisation is investing in the future and supporting the efforts of its workers. Gradually deteriorating facilities send the opposite message. Given a budget for capital expenditure on studios and offices the manager can to advantage stagger the spending across the year, rather than attempting to improve every aspect of the building in one go. Not only is it easier to manage one building, re-decorating or re- equipping project at a time but the sense that some aspect of the operation is being improved every week can create a positive atmosphere throughout the organisation. Managing the timing of a simple lick of paint or a new door mat in reception can be a valuable tool in improving morale and motivation in a formerly ailing station at a fraction of the cost of widespread salary incentives.

Community radio impact assessments

The growing community radio sector has brought with it new approaches and tools for evaluating station performance and its longer term effects on the wider community - this is known as impact assessment. Clearly for community stations audience figures are not the only indicator of success. Research here focuses on short and long term impact of the station on stakeholders whether they are listeners, members, programme makers, partner groups in the target community or funders.

Much of this research been developed by researchers and community media producers to evidence and evaluate the impact of 'media for development' projects in areas where issues like health education, poverty alleviation and regeneration are paramount. The methods tend to put the users of the projects or stations at the heart of the research so that they are empowered by the process itself. An example of this is a methodology called 'ethnographic action research' (Tacchi, Slater and Hearn 2003) which uses

methods such as field notes, in-depth interviews, group interviews, participant observation diaries and questionnaires (see also Slater, Tacchi and Lewis 2002). Birgitte Jallov (2005) developed a 'bare foot' impact assessment methodology with members of community stations in Mozambique. She developed a wide range of monitoring tools and techniques so that they could evaluate three levels of impact: whether the station itself was operating effectively and for the good of all those who were participating in it; whether the programmes were considered to be effective; and how of both of these affected development and change the community. (See also the comprehensive bibliography of this area compiled by Alfonso Gumucio Dagron 2006.)

In many cases the stations themselves are encouraged to develop a 'research culture' and focus on the kind of questions they need to explore and the kind of evidence that will be most useful to them. At Radio Regen volunteers have been used to help the station conduct research through collecting evidence for case studies of the impact on station members and groups they work with. Some stations are using blogs and user generated content to do this. (Radio Regen 2007) In a web chat about demonstrating audience impact, Phil Korbel summed up how and why community stations should value this kind of research:

> *It's clear that we should be doing research as a vital component of our sustainability, and that it should be built into the fabric of the everyday activity at a station rather than being an add on. It works to build our case as a sector and for stations to get money. Listener figures are important - but we should look at impacts and qualitative approaches too - to back the idea that our different relationship with our audience pays dividends to funders.* (Radio Regen 2007: 7)

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Section 3.1

Local radio in Sunderland

A case study by Brian Lister

Introduction

In this case study we will look at how a local radio service has developed and changed and relate these to various concepts within this book. This detailed case study of the development of local radio in Sunderland demonstrates how these concepts influenced and affected the development of a radio station across nearly twenty years and provides thought provoking insights in to the issues surrounding managing radio.

Sunderland's local radio service has undergone a great number of significant transformations since its launch in 1990, changing its name twice under six owners of radically different backgrounds and motivation from a community organisation to major commercial radio groups. The management styles and structures of the station have been as varied, responding to a range of commercial, managerial and regulatory challenges which might be seen as a reflection of the issues facing British local radio as a whole.

Sunderland Community Radio Association

Sunderland is the biggest city in the north east of England with a total population in excess of 280,000 (greater than the regional capital, Newcastle). Today the City of Sunderland is served by first-generation commercial radio services Metro Radio and Magic 1152, by three regional commercial stations and, in addition to all the BBC and commercial national services, by BBC Radio Newcastle. However all of these cover a considerably larger area of the North-East, serving listeners in Newcastle and the whole of Tyneside, in addition to the fiercely proud and independent population of Sunderland. It was this strong local identity that identified Sunderland as potentially fertile ground for truly local radio, particularly given the unfortunately divisive title of BBC Radio Newcastle (see section 2.8 for a discussion on station identification and names).

Today's commercial station, Sun FM, grew from roots in the Sunderland Community Radio Association (SCRA), formed by local radio enthusiasts and community groups in 1985 to apply for a proposed experimental community radio licence. The experiment was abandoned by the Home Office but the group continued to operate a low powered AM station under a Special Event Licence during the period of the annual Sunderland seafront illuminations.

The early development of the project was driven forwards by community workers Mick Catmull and Alan Fry and the Sunderland Common Ownership Enterprise Resource Centre (SCOERS), who all saw community radio as a useful tool in the regeneration of some of the more run-down areas of the town. One notable success, long before a broadcasting licence was held, was a documentary made under the guidance of the group by the Sunderland Change of Life Support Group. A group of women, concerned at the apparent lack of awareness and sympathetic treatment of the menopause among their largely male doctors set about making a radio programme on the subject, along the way recording searching and revealing interviews with health professionals. Although none of the women had had any previous broadcast experience, the resulting half-hour programme was subsequently broadcast on local commercial station Metro Radio as a precursor to a late night phone-in discussion.

By the late 1980s the Independent Broadcasting Authority was coming under considerable pressure from would-be new broadcasters to allow additional stations within existing ILR areas. Legislation did not permit the Authority to differentiate between commercial and community broadcasters, so in response, in 1989, the IBA proposed a scheme for 'incremental' licences, allowing a limited number of new stations to set up in areas already covered by established Independent Local Radio stations, provided they would widen listener choice with programming markedly different from that already available. Sunderland was identified as one of the experimental areas and the SCRA formed a company limited by guarantee, Sunderland Community Radio Association (1989) Limited, to bid for the licence. A feasibility study was commissioned from the national Community Radio Association and detailed plans were prepared. (See also Section 2.4 for details on applying for a licence)

Metro Radio, then the only local commercial radio operator accepted that it would face future competition in the Sunderland area and decided to be supportive of a truly community-based and not for profit application for the licence and lent support to the SCRA application, taking a seat on the board and paying for and installing the FM transmitter.

The board, which included representatives of major local bodies as well as directors elected by the membership, advertised for a station manager and duly appointed a dynamic, flamboyant and unconventional Australian Pieta

O'Shaughessey. Drawing on 15 years of experience in campus-based community stations in Australia, Pieta introduced fresh ideas and systems and even installed Australian-made studio equipment. With the studio and office accommodation being provided by the University of Sunderland (estimated by Price Waterhouse (1992) to be saving the station £15,000 per annum), the equipment having being paid for by local development agencies and the transmission costs being met by Metro Radio, the station was able to direct all its other income towards running costs.

Wear FM

Launching as Wear FM on 5 November 1990 the station was one of the first truly community-based full-time legal stations in the UK, proudly boasting the involvement of more than 100 volunteers every week. (Section 2.4 discusses how community radio differs from the BBC and commercial radio in more depth) The stereo FM signal on 103.4 MHz covered the city and could be heard as far away as Teesside. Programming varied widely from the original and inspired to pathetic and misguided attempts to emulate existing stations.

The station gained widespread acclaim for its community programming and social inclusion and its finest hour came when it was named 1992 Local Radio Station of the Year in the prestigious national Sony Awards. With magazine programming throughout the day, aimed at a broad audience the evenings became home to an eclectic range of vibrant and original programming.

In a front page story the journal of the Community Radio Association (now Community Media Association) celebrated Wear FM's first birthday:

> *From the outset the station identified itself with the people hardest hit by the recession, and made them its prime target audience. On-air 24 hours a day, the station evolved programmes to fill gaps in existing broadcasters schedules, with others specifically aimed at gaining a substantial audience. Wear FM supports disabled trainees; a visually handicapped presenter has three regular shifts a week, which are very popular, assisted by his blind wife as producer. A daily one-hour access programme is used by community groups. Four hours of local sport are broadcast; Sikh and Chinese students present ethnic music as part of a three-hour weekly student programme.* (Airflash 1991)

Despite being named 1992 Local Radio Station of the Year financial difficulties continued to mount. The station was unable to attract the required levels of advertising and became increasingly dependent on support from the University of Sunderland who paid the station for its assistance in training media students.

In April 1992 Accountants Price Waterhouse, who had been commissioned to prepare a business plan for the station for a five-year period, concluded that Wear FM needed a new more business-oriented decision-making body, improved administrative systems and accreditation for its training programmes. They made it plain that continued investment in Wear FM was required, particularly for capital equipment (for a discussion on capital costs see Section 2.3). They asked: Will sponsors provide funding of up to £287,000 of capital expenditure? Will sponsors provide annual revenue of up to £90,000? Will the bank provide an overdraft facility of up to £130,000 in 1993? (Price Waterhouse 1992)

A survey conducted by the Corporate Planning Services of the University of Sunderland (1993) led the station to claim a weekly reach of 17 per cent, heavily skewed towards young adults (see Section 2.1 for further information concerning audience statistics and research and how these may be interepreted). But without truly independent research it was difficult to sell packages of airtime costing up to £560 per week (35 spot daytime package) to more than a few customers (Wear FM Ratecard 1994). During early 1994 monthly advertising revenue varied between £4,000 and £11,000, a level inadequate to meet even the basic salary costs of the station.

When Pieta O'Shaugnessy left to return to a broadcasting position in her native Australia in February 1993 the downside of such strong and charismatic leadership of a radio station became painfully apparent. Her departure left a considerable managerial and creative vacuum. With a need to re-apply for its licence in early 1994 and financial pressures building for over a year the station was run by a small executive committee of the board of directors, chaired by Professor Flavia Swann, head of the School of Arts and Communications of Sunderland University, assisted by an acting station manager. The executive committee had power delegated to it by the full board for executive decisions within policies agreed by the board. Understandably, the more business-minded members of the board wanted to keep much tighter control over the day-to-day operation of the company. (See section 2.2 for a discussion concerning station structure and the roles of key board members and staff and the different structures and needs of a community and a commercial station)

Wear FM launched with just five paid staff and stayed with that arrangement for some time, but managing the efforts of so many individuals

new to radio, together a commitment to training new recruits and students required the employment of additional staff. By 1994 the payroll included a total of 15 posts, increasing at one point to 19, generating an annual salary bill (including National Insurance) of over £155,000. The management structure was headed by an executive committee including Chief Executive (Professor Flavia Swann from Sunderland University). Reporting directly to the Chief Executive the acting Station Manager was responsible for a full-time Head of News and Training, Deputy News Editor, Head of Sales, Sales Executive, Programme Controller, three presenters, Head of Engineering and Production, Education Producer, Commercial Producer, Station Administrator, Administration Assistant/Receptionist and a part-time Book Keeper. In addition the station provided training for 13 local long-term unemployed people placed through Wearside Training and Enterprise Council (Price Waterhouse 1992)

In the 'Promise of Performance' included in the licence application Wear FM committed to a breath-taking range of programming (see also Section 2.4 Applying for a licence, and Section 2.5 for information regarding programme content):

> *A weekday peak-time half-hour news and current affairs programme; a regular 'community news' feature; regular employment features; local arts and entertainment information; features on local issues such as health and information matters; educative and distance learning features; experimental dramas; listener requests and dedications; competitions; interviews and/or phone-ins with celebrities and local personalities; sports reports, previews, interviews and results; traffic/travel and weather reports relevant to, and likely to be appreciated by, listeners in the area served; programmes produced and presented by local people including a weekday evening, speech and music, one-hour community access programme.*

In addition to these substantial speech promises, the station committed to a considerable range of music programming including country, blues, dance, folk, indie, jazz, live music with local musicians, religious music and soul (see Section 2.5b for details of managing music programming).

It is one of the ironies of the UK radio licensing system that, still today, impecunious community broadcasters saddle themselves with programming commitments that commercial operators would never accept. Compare Wear

FM's detailed programming promises with the straightforward 'Format' requirements for the same station now: Sun FM is simply required to provide "A locally oriented broad music and information station for the Sunderland area, with a strong commitment to local news". The service must be provided 24 hours a day with locally made programming for at least 10 hours a day during daytime weekdays (which must include breakfast) and at least four hours daytime Saturdays and Sundays. Local news bulletins must be included at least hourly at peaktime weekdays and weekends (Ofcom 2008).

Despite the financial concerns at board level much of the programming remained exciting and exuberant. Remembering the station on an unofficial fan-site dedicated to the Wear FM, Boogie Bass and Soul Fish show more than 14 years later (Anon 2008), one fan writes:

> *Wear FM was a radio station but with a huge difference!!*
> *After 7pm each night between 7 and midnight (and then*
> *some) there was a slot called Boogie Bass and Soulfish.*
> *Within this slot were different weekly shows playing*
> *different genres of underground dance music, never*
> *before heard in the north east by the masses. For the rave*
> *science you really were spoilt for choice.*
> *For a station to covering such drug related genres such as*
> *techno and hardcore on your radio with DJ's who just*
> *didn't care was a far step away from the very stiff and*
> *super professional, shirt and collar style of Metro radio*
> *and Radio One at the time. If Boogie Bass and Soulfish*
> *came about now in 2008 it would still cause a stir but in*
> *the early 1990's it was nothing short of revolutionary. It*
> *was more like a pirate radio station and it was often*
> *confused as such.*

Another big success, arguably well ahead of its time, was the Wednesday evening Gay to Gay programme presented by Michael Lumsden, better known as DJ Megasal or Sally. The programme, playing high energy disco music and reading out letters from regular listeners, was very popular among the gay community across a wide area of the north-east but also became cult listening for a broader audience, including reputedly Sunderland cab drivers. (See Sections 2.1 and 2.6 - success here was, in our opinion due to a combination of good audience research that targeted a specialist music program at a particular listener base)

Sadly none of this inventive programming brought in substantial commercial revenue, nor did it attract support from public funds, and by 1994

Wear FM's financial position had plainly become unsustainable. Not only was revenue not meeting the station's running costs but, after four years of constant use by literally hundreds of volunteers and students and despite the efforts of a full-time engineer, the two studios and news facilities were becoming dilapidated and unreliable. While similar stations embraced digital playout systems, with accompanying benefits in efficiency and simplicity, Wear FM was still in the era of vinyl records, CDs and tape cartridges (see Sections 2.10, which describes the broadcast technology, including digital playout systems, used in radio broadcast and Section 2.3 which considers the costs associated with running a radio station in more depth). Without the support of Sunderland University the station would have closed in early 1994.

In this respect Wear FM's experience highlights an issue that should be of concern to all community broadcasters. It is frequently possible to find funding from public or other grant-giving bodies for the capital expenditure to set up a new radio station with social objectives and, through training and similar initiatives, to earn from other bodies some contribution towards the ongoing overheads of a community service. It is however very rare to find a ready source of funding for the routine repair, replacement or upgrading of equipment and facilities. The organisation can become fixated on breaking even financially, it being seen, not unreasonably, as a great achievement to be able to cover all the ongoing costs from grants and commercial income. To ensure long-term survival even a not-for-profit organisation must however aim to generate a trading surplus, to build up reserves to meet future needs. (See Section 2.3)

While broadcasting legislation did not permit a public body to take more than a 5% share in a radio company the level of support from the University became substantial. From the start the four rooms occupied by Wear FM in the University's Forster Building were fully integrated with the media teaching areas, with all overheads met by the University but now the University injected further cash by buying facilities such as the record library from the station and loaning them back. SCRA Limited remained solvent purely as a result of an outstanding bank loan being guaranteed by the University.

Without a full-time manager the station was effectively run as a number of separate fiefdoms. As a result the station had become very like an impenetrable private club with no opportunities for new talent or new ideas. There was little overall leadership and tension between management, staff, students and volunteers at the station increased with station staff voicing concern over what they regarded as a takeover of the station by the university. Staff and volunteers held a one-day strike at the beginning of March 1994 to protest over how the station was being run. (For a consideration of managing staff, see Section 2.10)

Against this background Wear FM had been required to reapply for the Sunderland local radio licence, the initial incremental licences were issued only for a trial period. A rival bid came from a group of disgruntled local broadcasters who formed the Wearside Broadcasting Company and considerable Wear FM management time was devoted to preparing the licence application, with the help of Mike Gaston, by then MD of community station BCR in Belfast and a former deputy manager of Wear FM. Attempting to strengthen both the station's business acumen and its relationship with key pillars of the local community representatives of both Sunderland Football Club and the local brewers Vaux were invited onto the board, together with the Programme Director of Tyne Tees Television, and management oversight by the executive committee increased. Despite being re-awarded the licence, with a new, eight year term to start in January 1995, Wear FM did not however become any easier to manage.

The executive committee gradually discovered that the financial position of the station was far worse than had been suspected. A number of debts were unrecorded in the accounts and expenditure was still running way ahead of income. After temporary and freelance contracts were not renewed, notably among the clique which had taken control of all the evening dance programmes, and some staff were made redundant, a wave of adverse publicity followed, particularly in the local evening paper the Sunderland Echo (1994a):

> *Members of Wear FM's parent body are threatening to pull the plug on the station's management. They say Sunderland Community Radio Association (SCRA), which owns Wear FM's broadcasting licence, could break away from Sunderland University, which owns the studio and equipment. The licence would then be attached to a new station. Some SCRA members are unhappy with the way Wear FM has been run since the university bought the station's assets.*

Disgruntled individuals rang and wrote to the Radio Authority who were reported in the local press as holding an enquiry into show the station was being run (see Section 2.9 for information concerning the legal requirements of Ofcom's Broadcast Code). Having only recently re-awarded the licence to Wear FM the Radio Authority moved quickly to quash any such suggestion (Sunderland Echo 1994b). Separately, following the discovery of what were termed "financial irregularities" in the station, the executive committee called in the police to investigate. Four former or current members of staff were

arrested, papers were taken away from the station but despite a long investigation no charges ensued (Radio Magazine 1994: 9)

At an extraordinary general meeting on 30 June 1994 attended by some 50 members, the board were required to defend the changes introduced since the licence was renewed. Although the Board overwhelmingly won a vote of confidence some individuals affected by the changes took the opportunity to voice their disquiet and the meeting did nothing to stop the flow of bad publicity. This reached national proportions when the Sunday Mirror (1994) carried accusations against the News Editor, suggesting sexual impropriety away from the station. Although cleared after a police investigation he was suspended from his role in the radio station (Journal 1994) and subsequently resigned.

Further accusations of dishonesty led to the dismissal of other senior staff during the summer and the station administrator and acting manager resigned in September 1994 after protracted period of sick leave, claiming constructive dismissal. Executive Committee meetings were increasingly dominated by employment tribunals and staff legal issues.

The post of Station Manager was finally filled in August 1994, some 17 months after the departure of Pieta O'Shangnessy, by Roy Leonard, a former presenter and programme manager in the Metro Radio Group, BBC local radio and elsewhere. Roy set about re-establishing sensible structures and systems in the station, including proper contracts of employment and an employment handbook. An attractive innovation for the start of the 1994 soccer season was Roker Radio. Broadcast live from the home of Sunderland Football Club before and during every Saturday home game the programme was jointly produced and funded by the club. The new manager reduced costs where possible but by the end of 1994, with no further overdraft available and a desperate need for new facilities, it was plain that the station needed a considerable injection of cash to survive.

A number of plans were considered but there was no way to attract a sufficient cash injection from the public sector, the only way forward being to open the company to commercial investment. The station held an Independent Local Radio licence that was in every respect, other than the programme promises, identical to that held by every other commercial radio company. There was no limitation on commercial revenue or ownership. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the rules governing ownership of commercial broadcasters actually prohibited the control of any licence by a publicly-funded body - effectively forcing such companies into private hands if they were to raise substantial capital.

In early 1995, with the University unwilling or unable to offer further financial support, the directors of Wear FM were faced with three take-over

offers for the company. these came from: The Minster Sound Radio Limited, who operated commercial stations in Yorkshire; Sunderland businessman Peter Vardy, head of the Sunderland- based national motor group Reg Vardy which backed his bid; Prospect Media, headed by Bob Price one of the former Wear FM members who previously challenged Wear FM for the licence; and a management buy-out headed by station manager Roy Leonard and the author, backed by three separate commercial radio companies including the local Metro Radio Group.

The regional daily newspaper The Northern Echo focussed on the Reg Vardy bid:

> It is understood Vardy is planning a radical re-
> launch for the station, which has struggled financially
> despite critical acclaim. The name is likely to change,
> while Vardy will invest in new studios, probably at city
> centre premises the group already owns.
> Under Radio Authority rules any new owner will have to
> cover all of Wear's debt before it is allowed to take over.
> The debts, plus the cost of re-equipping and re-launching
> the station, would be likely to set the new owner back at
> least £300,000
> (Northern Echo 1995a)

Meanwhile the Sunderland Echo highlighted the reduced role of the University in any future station:

> Mike Brunning, who has been involved with Wear
> FM since it went on air in November 1990, said he thought
> the moves would improve the station's role in the
> community. "I feel it would be a good thing for the station
> to move from the university. It was originally set up as a
> radio station for Sunderland, run by the people of
> Sunderland, and I would like to see a return to that."
> (Sunderland Echo 1995)

Faced with mounting debts to suppliers and the University, and a large bank overdraft, the directors had to look for a figure in excess of £100,000 in order to wind up the Sunderland Community Radio Association in a solvent condition. Beyond this essential pre-condition the board felt obliged to select the proposal that seemed to offer the best hope of retaining the initial promise of Wear FM. The Minster Radio team, despite offering an unashamedly

commercial future, added undertakings to make a £50,000 scholarship grant to the University (Northern Echo 1995) and, the University by this stage chairing and having considerable effective control over the board, the Minster offer was accepted.

Minster formed a new company, Sunderland City Radio Limited, to take over the licence and appointed their own directors, with two from the University of Sunderland including the then Vice-Chancellor. Hugh Morgan Williams, a director of Minster and of broadcast equipment supplier Canford Audio, was installed as Chairman. He told the local press: 'We went for it because we think we can make money out of it. That's the top and bottom of it.' (Northern Echo 1995b)

Sun City FM

The station was rapidly re-branded as Sun City 103.4. The title, which raised many eyebrows among previous supporters of the station in view of the then reputation of South Africa's Sun City in relation to apartheid, was intended to reflect Sunderland's recently gained city status (see Section 2.6 concerning a station's image). Minster put new management and staff into the station, largely seconded from Minster FM in York, and lost no time in moving the station out of the University into a small converted shop unit in the city centre, previously home to the Sunderland studio and offices of BBC Radio Newcastle (Radio Newcastle had retreated to a small anonymous room in a new office development outside the city centre).

With the change of location most of the former employees were dismissed and all connection with the University severed. The station now operated as a small commercial station based on the model of the successful and profitable Yorkshire Coast Radio in Scarborough, also owned and overseen by Minster. All pretence of community involvement was lost and the station was operated by a small professional team with automated output outside peak hours, for a time under the management of Bruce Davidson, today Group Technical Director for Global Radio. Reporting to Bruce were a Sales Director and four sales executives, a Head of Presentation, two full time and several part-time presenters, three journalists, a receptionist and a sales administrator.

A digital audio system was installed and enabled the station to automate overnight and off-peak programming and, in an innovative move, the news operation was moved to the offices of the daily evening newspaper the Sunderland Echo. Live news bulletins were supplied by the newspaper under contract via an ISDN link to the Sun City studio some miles away across the city, the arrangement costing the station almost £60,000 a year.

Sun City entered into commercial promotional deals with major companies ranging from local brewery Vaux and do-it-yourself superstore Dickens, to local outlets of MacDonalds. With better cash flow the station was able to take advertising on bus shelters, taxis, bus sides and in the local press and, needing to justify its share of national and regional advertising, Sun City joined the industry standard Rajar survey at a cost of some £8,000 per year, something which Wear FM could never justify. By the end of 1995 monthly sales figures were averaging between £40,000 and £50,000, three or four times the level of income obtained a year earlier by Wear FM.

Not everything ran smoothly for the new slimmed-down operation. The station was disciplined by the Radio Authority for not producing speech content required by the promise of performance and, later, breakfast presenter Phil Holmes appeared in most of the UK's daily newspapers and was fired after allegedly falling asleep during his show, after being out the night before gigging for the station in a nightclub. The news arrangement with the Sunderland Echo, although often giving the station access to a far wider range of material, was not universally regarded as a great success. In particular the different timescales and deadlines for daily press and hourly radio bulletins created tensions and misunderstandings between the two teams, not least if it was felt the radio might break a story ahead of the evening papers first edition. (See Section 3 Marketing Case Study 'Creating Publicity' for more detail on why tensions may develop between daily press and radio news and Section 2.7 for details on news programming)

In the financial year ending September 1996 Sunderland City Radio Limited reported total turnover of over £623,443, but with annual costs amounting to £730,000 the station was still running at a loss. However the decision to invest in Rajar research was vindicated by figures for the second quarter of 1996 showing Sun City as reaching 27 per cent of the 241,000 adult population, each listening for a creditable 10.5 hours.

In another innovative initiative, from October 1996 management responsibility for the station was outsourced. GWR was at the time the largest radio group in the UK (measured by number of stations) and included a great deal of managerial expertise. A minority shareholder in the Minster group, GWR agreed to take on the management of their stations for a fixed fee. Effectively another change of control for the Sunderland station, this left the local staff reporting to senior programming and sales managers at GWR. Within a short period the sales manager and head of news left Sun City. Morale within the station was said to be very low, with staff receiving different instructions and guidance from GWR, Minster FM in York, and Sun City's local board of directors.

Following the change of control to GWR it became clear that the revenue figures for the next year were likely to be considerably reduced, partly as a result of pre-selling. This involves selling contracts for future advertising - often for as much as 12 months ahead - but including the entire value of the sale in the current month's accounts. Although there is nothing improper about this, it is frowned upon by broadcasting industry auditors as distorting the monthly trading position of the station. It is more usual to include advertising or sponsorship revenue in the management accounts for the month in which the airtime is broadcast, regardless of when a contract was signed. (See also Section 2.3 'Income Projections'.)

Against the backdrop of a worsening financial position an offer to purchase Sun City arrived in December 1996. Border Radio Holdings, a subsidiary of Border Television, already owned the successful north-east regional station Century Radio and were shortly to launch the Century brand in the north-west. They felt that the Sunderland station was under-performing and their offer of £1.2 million in cash, in addition to repayment of loans of around £500,000 (Broadcast 1996), represented a significant increase in valuation when compared to the £100,000 price tag of Wear FM.

The sale to Border was subject to a Radio Authority public interest test as it involved the company owning two FM licences in the same area. Permission came in February 1997 on the condition that Border observed undertakings to keep separate the management and news gathering arrangements of Sun FM and Century Radio.

Sun FM

Given the statutory requirement to operate the stations separately and with their experience of running larger regional stations, Border was determined to turn the Sunderland service into a viable commercial proposition in its own right. Under group Managing Director John Myers a new local Managing Director Jon Hewson re- launched the station as Sun FM and moved it again to a new business innovation centre on the edge of the city. New studios were built using top-of-the-range RCS computer systems, new presenters were recruited, the news room brought back in- house and the sales operation was extensively overhauled.

Border took a different view to Minster of the ideal corporate structure for their local and regional stations, seeing no need for independent local boards. At Century they had simply appointed a local Chairman who was independent of the group and well known in the transmission area. All other places on the local board were occupied by directors of the parent group. Border replicated

this structure in Sunderland, inviting prominent local businessman John Anderson to become Chairman of the licence- holding company. Active in a number of other bodies, including the Sunderland Business and Innovation Centre and Sunderland Training and Enterprise Council, the new chairman set about rebuilding the relationship of the station with leaders of the local community.

Although trading profitably by 2000 Sun FM's future remained uncertain. It was consolidation in the commercial television industry that instigated the next change of control of the Sunderland service. The large Century stations were very attractive to both Scottish Radio Holdings and the Capital Radio Group. In April, after a bidding war with SRH, Capital gained control of Border Television group for £146 million and promptly sold the television business to Granada for £50 million. Capital had won control of the Century stations - with the incidental purchase of Sun FM seen as a minor and almost irrelevant addition to their group.

Under Programme Controller Ricky Durkin, and more recently Simon Grundy, the station steadily increased its share of listening, finally overtaking Metro Radio to become the most listened-to station in the Sunderland area. Weekly reach peaked at 92,000 adults (38 per cent) in 2000 and again in 2002. Market share (the proportion of all radio listening hours in the area going to Sun FM) reaching a peak of 20.2 per cent in 2004. As is generally the case since 2004 the increase in media competition has seen a reduction in share for individual local services, the most recent Rajar at the time of writing (Period ending March 2009) gave Sun FM a 23 per cent weekly reach with average weekly listening hours of 9.7, giving a share of listening of 12.3 per cent.

Sun FM did not really fit in the Capital Radio portfolio of big city and regional stations and within months Sun FM was sold, together with a another smaller station Mix 96 in Aylesbury, to a growing group of smaller stations, Radio Investments Limited (RIL), a company ironically itself now partly owned by former Sun FM proprietors Border Television and the GWR Group. In a further twist of fate, having earlier purchased the York-based outfit, RIL now also included Sun's former owner Minster FM.

Reporting that Capital's sale of three smaller stations, which also included the sale of a station in Wolverhampton to another group, had netted Capital £9.5 million, the Sunderland Echo quoted Capital as saying the deal was "part of the group's strategy to focus on large stations operating in major metropolitan areas." (Sunderland Echo 2001)

With the end of the station's eight year licence (previously granted to Wear FM in 1995) on the horizon, the Radio Authority were required to re-

advertise the opportunity. This time there were no other takers, the only application received was from the existing licence-holder Sun FM.

It appeared that the commercial and programming success of the service deterred others from attempting to take the licence from Sun FM. The station's re-application document was studded with glowing statements of support from pillars of the local community, including council leaders, prominent business people, voluntary and arts bodies, the football club and the university. (Sun 2001)

A further change of ownership came when the Local Radio Company plc (TLRC) was formed to purchase the entire share capital of Radio Investments Ltd in May 2004. In common with all its other stations, the TLRC group introduced nationally networked evening and weekend programming to Sun FM, together with a daily networked late- night phone-in called "North South Divided" which was presented jointly from Sun FM's studios and those of TLRC operated Isle of Wight Radio.

Sun FM grew to become one of the top-performing stations in the TLRC group of 22 radio services. According to TLRC statement on joining the London Stock Exchange in May 2004: 'Revenue grew in FY 2002 for 20 of the 22 stations and for all 22 stations in FY 2003, including Minster FM in York, Stray FM in Harrogate and Sun FM in Sunderland, which each had revenues of over £1 million.' (TLRC 2004). By 2007, in preliminary results for the year ended 30 September, TLRC were able to report: 'One of our larger stations, Sun FM, achieved its best ever performance with £1.2 million in revenue' (TLRC 2007). (Section 2.12 considers how the performance of a radio station may be evaluated by financial and other indicators. Section 2.1 also details how performance may be evaluated with respect to audience figures)

With the 2005 addition of new station Durham FM, covering an area adjoining the Sun FM area and bridging the gap between it and Alpha Radio in Darlington, the TLRC group was able to introduce a greater degree of regional management. Matters ranging from sales management to music scheduling could be handled across the three stations, or even extended to include the group's Yorkshire stations in York, Scarborough and Harrogate. While the group did not go ahead with 2009 plans to co-locate the north-east stations a number of staff operate across more than one service, notably in sales, news and management roles. During 2009 Sun FM shared its station manager and Programme Controller with neighbouring Durham FM. Such economies have gone some way to ensuring continuing viability of the services in a tougher economic climate with greater media competition.

Conclusion

In retrospect it was inevitable that the 'incremental' stations like Wear FM were going to either fail or become wholly commercial. Not only was there little knowledge or experience of managing voluntary effort in full-time community radio services in the UK but the regulatory regime, insisting that 95 percent of the funding should come from sources other than publicly-funded bodies, was a wholly impractical framework for socially purposive broadcasting. It is likely that Wear FM, had it been set up today under the more realistic provisions of the Community Radio Order (HMSO 2004), could have provided a lasting viable model for successful local community radio.

In a final twist, Sunderland University is now home to another full-time radio service. In September 2007 the University won a community radio licence for the Sunderland area. Based in the University's Media Centre, Spark FM, which came on-air in 2009, is operated by and for students at the University of Sunderland and young people in the wider city of Sunderland. The licence application promised that programming will focus on 'new music' with support for local and regional artists and also include material on local culture, education, training and social inclusion. (Ofcom 2007)

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Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB 106.6FM)

A case study by Caroline Mitchell

Introduction

Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) is an example of good practice in UK community radio. Bradford is a large, culturally diverse city of around 280,000 residents that made its former wealth through the textiles industry. BCB broadcasts to a five kilometre radius from Bradford city centre and although it was finally awarded a community licence to broadcast from January 2006 it has broadcast full-time since 2002 under the Access Radio pilot scheme and between 1992 and 2002 using around 30 different RSL licences on both AM and FM. The station received the Radio Academy Nations and Regions Award for the North East and Yorkshire region in December 2003. Since 1992 the station has grown from a RSL run on volunteer effort to a thriving station with nine paid staff and at least 200 volunteers. It has state of the art studios and offices in the centre of Bradford and these city centre premises are linked with ISDN lines to outreach studios in the suburbs of Whetley Hill and Shipley. This "hub and spoke' policy brings broadcasting facilities as close to local communities as possible' (Everitt 2003: 39). The station can be received on FM and podcasts and puts programmes and features on its website for download. It can also be received through mobile phones (via 3g iPhone or smartphone)!

The core of BCB's philosophy of community radio is to enable all parts of the community to make programmes and to get involved in every aspect of running a radio station: in effect the community become managers. How this has taken place successfully is for the most part down to the inspirational leadership and inclusive management style of Mary Dowson, Chief Executive (CEO) and general manager of BCB. Coming from a community education and development background herself she has worked to instil the essence of participatory philosophy, managing volunteers and staff - most of the staff have already been volunteers on the station.

Developing the audience

> *BCB aims 'to serve the diverse inner city communities of the Bradford District, including a wide range of black and minority ethnic communities, diverse age groups, geographic communities and specialist interest groups.'*
> (Ofcom 2004: 18)

As discussed in <u>Section 2.1</u>, audience research for community radio is as much to do with what listeners want to hear as with the interests of the community broadcasters who make each programme. Like most community stations the station does not take part in Rajar surveys but estimates that it has around 30,000 listeners (Edmonds and Buckley 2005: 13). The assumption is that audience research relating to programme content is done by programme makers themselves as the programme content comes from, and relates directly, to the interests and needs of myriad of communities in the Bradford area. Mary Dowson has noted that:

> *If we just went by numbers then many of our programmes for minority groups would be wiped out. Our Ukrainian programmes are aimed at the 2000 Ukrainian people living in the area and we would get perhaps 10 per cent of them listening. A tiny audience in real terms but an important service.*
> (Goatley 2006: 15)

Developing participatory structures

Like most community stations BCB is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and has a management committee, elected annually, to oversee operations. There are currently nine to carry our specific roles and over 200 volunteers involved in programme making and every other aspect of the station.

BCB mangement and staff structure:

```
                 ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                 │   BCB Management Committee    │
                 └──────────────┬───────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐
          │ (BCB Community Radio Steering group)        │
          └─────────────────────┬──────────────────────┘
                     ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                     │    BCB Director     │
                     └──────────┬──────────┘
  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  │ C. R. Devpt. Workers–Broadcast Manager-Admin/Fin. worker   │
  │                – ICT Supp. Worker                          │
  └───────────────────────────┬───────────────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Broadcast Technician - Receptionist/B.A.-      │
        │            Volunteers                          │
        └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
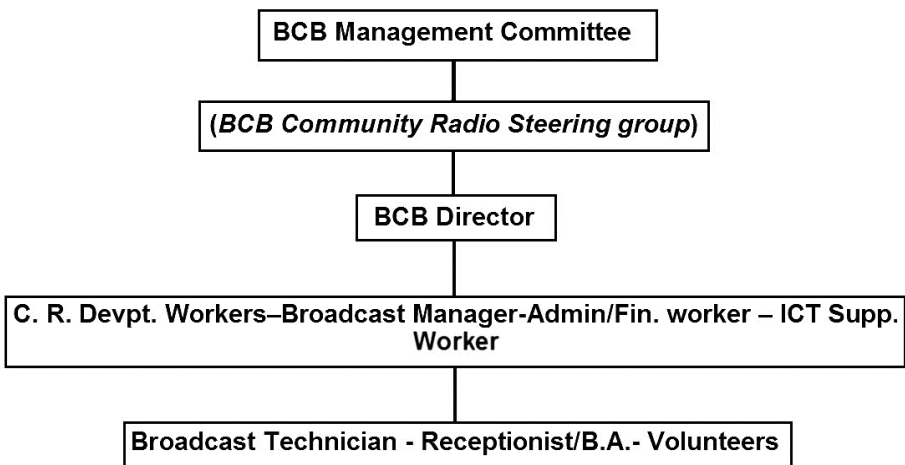
(Source: Ofcom 2004: 16)

   The activities of volunteers are central to BCB's ethos: 'the organisation is built around the contribution of volunteers, recognising the opportunity for personal development that volunteering offers' (Ofcom 2004: 27-28). The station communicates with volunteers via notices of meetings put up at the station premises and sent out by email.

   BCB has a voluntary management committee that also forms the board of directors for the company. It is democratically elected from the BCB membership at an annual general meeting and is ultimately legally responsible for the organisation. The maximum number of Management Committee members is 12 and there is a rolling programme for re-election so new members can stand. The current committee consists of people who combine experience of producing, presenting and training at BCB with extensive experience of working in hospital radio, statutory, community and voluntary sector organisations and projects and running small businesses: 'they are all members of the diverse communities in the Bradford area, bringing their own community connections, cultural experiences, expertise and commitment to overseeing the running of the organisation and provide strategic direction and overall organisational policy' (Ofcom 2004: 15).

Financial management and fundraising

Fundraising and financial management takes up the majority of Mary Dowson's time and she has been extremely successful over the last ten years in securing grants from European, regional government funding and charitable sources. Most fundraising is directly linked to training and programme making projects with a proportion going towards central running costs for the station. For instance, a recent grant from European Social Fund for the training and development of ten community reporters and the 'Connecting Communities' project funded through the Home Office to develop a programme of development work and specific programming strands to encourage diversity in station programme making. The station has received £40,000 a year from Bradford City Council for the past seven years; other substantial grants have come from the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, the National Lottery, Ofcom's Community Radio Fund (for the station manager's salary), the Home Office, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Youth Offending Team and HALE - Healthy Living Project.

Since it started BCB has not taken any on-air advertising or programme sponsorship. Instead of selling airtime and making adverts the organisation put valuable staff and volunteer effort in to fundraising for programme making and community development projects (see also discussion of this in Section 2.3). However it is aware that it may need to change this policy if it is to attract income to develop and survive and this might compromise its role as a community advocate. Mary Dowson gave an example of this:

> *Recently the station started up a campaign to save the local Morrison's Supermarket from closure. The store is small with a limited range of goods, but is very important to the local population, many of whom are on low incomes, in poor health and without access to private transport. The station raised the store's future on air, got in touch with the management of the supermarket chain to discuss it and set up a petition against closure for local people to sign. Had BCB had any commercial interests in the locality, they would have prevented the station from acting in the way it did.*
> (Goatley 2006: 27)

From RSL to full-time licence

BCB were in a strong position to apply for a permanent licence from Ofcom in the first round of permanent licences announced in 2004. We would argue that their application was successful on a number of counts - their ability to raise funds, their track record of being a strong community communications 'umbrella' in Bradford and the overwhelming evidence of 'social gain' represented by years of community radio programme development with a wide range of groups in Bradford. The way that the station is constituted shows that it is well structured and accountable to its target audience and community programme makers and is well thought of amongst funders and the community at large.

Programmes by and for the community

BCB's programming is a diverse mix of speech and music: a direct reflection of its community licence and requirement and commitment to enabling different communities to produce socially oriented programming. As well a specific programmes made by particular Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups (see schedule below) 'cross cultural' programmes teams are encouraged, the idea being that there is a 'safe space' for dialogue to take place' (Ofcom 2004: 25-26). Programmes that have been developed include Africa on Air - where French speaking African refugees present music and news from Africa, Echoes of Ireland a weekly Irish community cultural and information programme, Al Arqam - a weekly Arabic language magazine programme and Bradford Spice - daily Asian Language programming reflecting Asian Culture. A significant number of programme hours are broadcast in languages other than English: Urdu, Panjabi, Bangla, Farsi, Arabic, Irish, Belarusian, French (African), Spanish and Italian (Ofcom 2004: 31).

BCB Typical weekday programme (source www.bcbradio.co.uk)

> *6:00 - Breakfast A.M.*
> *Presented by various presenters.*
> *Non-stop music 6-8am*
>
> *8:00 - Democracy Now!*
> *Presented by various presenters.*
> *Topical discussion & debate. Tuesday - Saturday at 8am.*

9:00 - Carl Gresham & Friends
The "Gresh" is back!
Mondays at 1pm & Tuesdays at 9am.

10:00 - About Bradford - Tuesday
Slices of Bradford life at 10am.

12:00 - Our Top Ten
Local Groups` music. Tuesdays at 12 noon.

13:00 - The Guide
What `s hot & what `s not in Bradford & beyond.
Weekdays at 1pm & 6pm.

13:30 - Shipley Corner
Magazine. Alternate Mondays at 6.30pm.

14:00 - Afternoon Stretch - Tuesday
Music, chat & guests at 2pm.

16:00 - Arab News
Arabic Programme targeting all the Arabic community in
Bradford UK.
Tuesdays at 4pm.

16:30 - Cabada Radio
Presented by various presenters.
News, views & interviews. Alternate Tuesdays at 4.30pm

17:00 - Your Shout!
Presented by various presenters.
The voice of young people in Bradford.
Mondays - Thursdays at 5pm.

17:30 - BCB Live!
Presented by various presenters.
Live outside broadcasts from special events from across
the city and beyond.

18:00 - Helping with Enquiries
Discussion & debate with invited guests. Tuesdays at 6pm.

18:30 - ACT Now
Mix of music and chat to local actors, playwrights,
theatres, directors, film makers, artists, poets and writers
in Bradford, West Yorkshire and just about anywhere that
can pick up his show on the radio or Internet. Joe Ogden`s
radio play is now on Podcasts.

19:00 - Bradford Spice - Tuesday
The Asian Magazine at 7pm.

20:00 - Swing Easy
Relaxed `n` swingin` jazz. Every fourth Tuesday at 8pm.

21:00 - World Waves
Music from around the globe. Tuesdays at 9pm.

22:00 - From Hear?
An eclectic mix of wonderment. Tuesdays at 10pm.

23:00 - Old Ronnie
New music, Oldies, musical oddities & jingles - almost as
old as he is!
Tuesdays at 11pm.

The schedule has been planned so that there is mainly speech led magazine programming about Bradford news, information and events in the day time (70 percent speech, 30 percent music) and 'Community language programming' from 4 - 6 pm and 7- 8pm. There is special interest programming 6 -7pm and specialist music from 8pm each evening when the ratio alters to 20% speech, 80% music. The station carries a great deal of sports coverage and the weekend schedules include local sports coverage, of professional and non-league teams.

A scheduling group looks at programming each quarter. They operate a 3 monthly programme cycle: 'it is made clear to all involved that at the end of each quarter the slate is wiped clean and volunteer presenters and producers' 'franchises' come to an end and may or may not be renewed (Everitt 2003: 112). As there is competition for some slots presenters are encouraged not to take on too much 'to under-commit, for instance to work on just one programme a week, or one a month, so they stay keen and enthusiastic' (Edmonds and Buckley 2005: 14).

News service

It is beyond most community stations' finances to resource and staff a regular news service. BCB have always seen it as a compromise to take IRN news 6-8 times per day and some national sports feeds and reports from the same service to supplement its local sports broadcasting. Trinity and All Saints Bi-media broadcast post-graduate students provide a local news service for four to five weeks each summer. In 2005 when a local policewoman Sharon Beshenivsky died after being shot in Bradford station volunteers attended all news conferences. Subsequently the station realised the need to set up a 'rapid response unit' for news concerning Bradford citizens so that volunteers were ready to report. BCB is developing an interesting model for its community news service through having 10 community reporters, representing 10 different areas of the City, on a European training programme. Reporters who live in and have personal experience of those communities contribute reports to morning magazine show and weekend round up. One reporter, talked about the role of a community reporter in one area:

> *Manningham and Girlington is a large area with so much*
> *going on. From council workers, charities and local*
> *groups to the individuals that make a community, there*
> *are many great things happening in the area. There are*
> *also issues affecting us individually and as groups. As*
> *Community reporter am here to put your voice to*
> *Bradford.*
> (BCB website community reporter page, accessed
> November 2005)

Special Projects

The 119 Project is a training project to assist disabled adults, staff and users in day centres in Bradford to make regular programmes and reports for BCB. The project has its own office and specially designed studio within the radio station and project workers to help them produce broadcasts. Students can also use it when they want thus not competing for space alongside other programme makers. This is a really good example of social inclusion, enabling a group of people to have a real and sustained radio voice.

In their licence application BCB stated that they would develop access for young people in Bradford. This happened through the three year appointment of a youth radio development worker and resulted in Your Shout! a programme that airs four days a week, produced by young people in Bradford..One youth oriented project that has developed from this is in conjunction with 'Volunteering Bradford' and a local school and this has also encouraged young people to take on accredited training (Open College Network Radio level one). One participant stated:

> *Before this I hadn't done volunteering, I didn't really know what it was. I've come to BCB and I'm pretty impressed with what I'm doing. I'm making a difference. I've learnt loads of radio skills that have boosted my confidence. My biggest challenges have been time keeping in learning to meet deadlines and talking on the radio, but preparing and learning to improvise and 'blend it' have really helped.*
> (http://www.volunteeringbradford.org/v_involved_team_frame.htm)

A long-term project within BCB is Radio Venus, set up in 1995 to encourage women's broadcasting within the station. It broadcast several RSLs on International Woman's Day each year and BCB was involved in two European women's radio training projects (see Mitchell,1998 and Mitchell and Baxter, 2006). Radio Venus continues to broadcast a monthly programme on BCB and evidence from viewing the current BCB schedule suggests that there is a good representation of female presents across the schedule. Another programme of note is 'The Equity Show' which bills itself as 'the UK`s only monthly lesbian, gay and bisexual radio show with a current affairs podcast' (BCB website www.bcbradio.co.uk, schedule section). This is another example of the way that diversity on air is encouraged at BCB.

Marketing and Station Imaging

The station has been successful in establishing a community radio format that is well known in its transmission area and is a role model for other community broadcasters across the UK. It has a distinct presence in the area alongside other stations such as (which covers the Bradford area) and commercial stations. It has a unique radio relationship with its target audience through community projects. In the past it has run RSLs for local events, festivals and

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football matches which has meant that it has a presence in the community built on a partnership with a specific event or group. The BCB station website is regularly updated and used to inform user groups and listeners about the station. It also promotes an online newsletter, podcasts and information about shows, presenters, training and community reporters. In 2006 the station management had the challenge of Ofcom requiring them to transfer frequencies. They had an awareness campaign all set up when Ofcom delayed the transfer date. (Goatley 2006: 20). However well things are planned there are sometimes things that are out of station management control.

Conclusion

BCB is a changing organisation and has developed different systems to manage this. An Employment Review in 2005 enabled the project to look at what strengths and gaps they had in their staffing. They concluded that there were certain station tasks that everyone needed to be able to take on. They also realised that the CEO had an enormous amount of staffing experience and fundraising skills but were she to leave the project would be left high and dry in this area.

Despite BCB's success in securing a range of capital and revenue funding sources for training and radio programme development projects, determining whether the station is sustainable longer term long term is more difficult. It has demonstrated innovative and sustained achievements in raising funds and responding quickly to change and opportunities.

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Section 3.3

'The Joy of Six' - BBC Radio 6 Music

A case study by Jo Tyler

> *BBC 6 Music has discovered that there is indeed a fertile*
> *gap between Radio 1 and Radio 2. A station which cares*
> *about its music - whether recorded, live or archive, and*
> *one that takes the time and resources to offer well-*
> *produced features.*
> (Sony Radio Academy Awards 2003, Judges' citation for
> Digital Terrestrial Station of the Year)

Introduction

In 2002, following a period of development that had covered the latter part of the nineties, the BBC launched a suite of DAB stations that were developed to appeal to new audiences and broaden BBC output.

This case study focuses on the launch of BBC 6 Music, one of a 'suite' of radio stations created by the BBC to substantiate the corporation's move into digital radio. These stations evolved alongside significant developments in multi- platform and interactive media, including websites and facilities for interaction with an audience who was becoming more familiar with use of media technologies. The launch of 6 Music was significant in many ways: it was the BBC's first new music station since the re-organisation of BBC Radio 3 in 1970 and; it was the first to utilise the extensive BBC music session archive, derived primarily from recorded sessions.

As a station that also had to cater for a broader and more diverse audience, 6 Music provided challenges for managers in terms of management of the cross platform content. (Multi-platform is often used as a description for radio content in other media, however cross platform better describes the way that we access, receive and consume radio programming today and reflects the convergence of audio and visual media online)

Focusing on the lead up period to the launch of 6 Music in 2002, this case study provides a brief historical background to the planning of 6 Music,

outlining issues raised from the convergence of the BBC media environment. It explores the production techniques and formats adopted when launching a new station whose audience interact on many platforms.

Background

The BBC had broadcast test transmissions via DAB since 1995, so these had been projects long in development. The Director General of the BBC at the time, Greg Dyke was keen to move forward with the key programming in this area. The launch of BBCi and the opportunity to expand existing radio output were underlined in his speech to the Radio and Television Society in Edinburgh in 2000:

> *We've started our digital journey. We've changed the*
> *structure inside the BBC, we're making considerably more*
> *money available for programming and we've got a*
> *coherent plan for our channels.*
> (Dyke 2000)

Up to then digital media had been in the realm of commercial media and in terms of investment were in control of many of the multiplexes transmitting digital media (see Section 1.2). Sky was overall the most important cable, or EPG (Electronic Programme Guide), platform and commercial television and radio networks had subscribed to channels in advance of placing content. It is of note that up to this point it could be argued that there had not been a robust financial model for digital radio in the commercial sector and commercial stations were able to retain their FM licences for a longer period if they subscribed to DAB.

Licensing at the time was also in transition. The DCMS Communication White Paper of November 2001 cited the changes that linked to the new regulatory body Ofcom and the way that it was to be managed. Ofcom were keen to develop digital media but also had to manage licences for stations in terms of content and audience reach. A licence and review structure was put in place and this process was closely monitored for developing stations, including those at the BBC. The then Culture Secretary Chris Smith stated in February 2000 that:

> *...the BBC had a key role to play in driving the take-up of*
> *digital services with the provision of (what he described*
> *as) "a strong and distinctive schedule of benchmark*

quality programmes."
(BBC 2004: 1)

The licence fee settlement in 2000 was made up in part conditional upon the BBC creating a suite of digital services. BBC digital radio projects were part of an operation that was an independent part of the Radio Division, alongside the Radio New Media team. Prospective projects 'The Works' and Network Y's 'Audio Harvesting Project' formed the foundation of research used to develop the new station. This became 6 Music eventually via other name experiments – Oxygen was one mooted at the time, these were managed under this division. Digital Radio then joined New Media in 2000 to become BBC interactive (BBCi) who have subsequently developed features such as the BBC 'Listen Again' and BBC iPlayer applications linked to broadcast. Editorial responsibilities for digital radio at this time went to 'host' networks and the Net Y project was initiated.

Antony Bellekom, already working for the department, was invited by the Head of Digital Radio to head research and development for this new project. Bellekom's experience as a BBC producer and BBC Regional Manager was complimented by his subsequent post as Managing Editor of Talk Radio, which he took, in his own words, through the 'rebranding, rescheduling and relocation' process to become the template for the highly successful talkSport (Bellekom, 2008). Armed with the brief to create a new archive based music station, he utilised his experience to position the new network in line with the commercial competitors:

> *You could see that you were part of a radical change to the*
> *industry as a whole. I remember doing presentations*
> *where I had cross referenced multiplex ownership with*
> *digital licences and identified how local brands were*
> *about to become national offerings, Magic, for example.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

Net Y - 6 Music: A Unique Proposition

Three of the current five dedicated digital radio stations - 1Xtra, BBC 6 Music and BBC7 - were developed in tandem to a parent or 'sister' station. In development, these DAB radio projects at the BBC were named Networks X, Y and Z.

Network X was developed in house at Radio 1 with a remit to research the urban music community and develop an on air style that represented an underserved audience on its parent station. A crossover of styles and presentation occurred throughout development and 1Xtra had a 'soft launch' as part of Radio 1 output in 2002.

Network Z was developed initially as a Radio 4 archive project to be the home of drama, comedy and children's programming - the latter being another underserved area of BBC radio scheduling. Archive comedies (for example The Goons, The Clitheroe Kid, and other existing BBC published work) were scheduled alongside new children's output.

Network Y was set up as a development project in 2000 and from the outset was unique in its aim to launch the first new BBC music station in 32 years. Net Y was linked to Radio 2 by management: it was overseen by the then controller Jim Moir and assisted by Lesley Douglas, Head of Programmes, who was to become the Controller of Radio 2 in 2004 following Jim's retirement.

Net Y was managed by Antony Bellekom whose remit was to create a new station that would for the first time have significant BBC music archive output. This would include output like the Peel Sessions (see Garner 2007) and live music recorded at Glastonbury. With an audience profile age of 25-44 the DCMS were keen for the BBC to prove that it could have a unique proposition in Net Y (BBC 2004). The case was built on substantial research - focus groups, surveys and existing data. Antony Bellekom described the application process:

> *This was a very slow process where every line of our*
> *application was considered - fought over - at length. There*
> *were days when it felt like the Somme: all your energy*
> *would be expended and you had re-negotiated two words,*
> *pretty confident that they would be altered back*
> *tomorrow.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

Copyright was an issue faced by all new platform stations, especially that of live music recordings. Initial research through the Radio 1 digital archiving process, The Works and subsequently Network Y was crucial in establishing the copyright guidelines and agreements for 6 Music, working closely with BBC copyright and legal departments at the BBC, plus advisory members of the major record labels and rights holders who were interested parties in the potential re use of session and older material. This was new territory for the new digital platforms and BBC copyright managers were supportive of the database tool Networks X and Z were managed in house and developed within

existing 'host' networks although Network Z also experienced copyright and contractual issues when planning to rebroadcast drama.

Net Y was initiated as a project overseen by Radio 2 management but was also developed as the home for research into the use on air of the BBC Music archive. Based in Henry Wood House, close to Western House in central London, this was the initial move to amalgamating the work towards a new digital music station. Geographically, 6 Music was to endure no less than three major moves in five years up until being located in its current home with Radio 2, in the purpose built studios planned from its inception. Thus 'The Works' made the transition into Network Y with the proposal to provide an editorial framework for archive speech radio content context with the view that its was 'as important to the station sound as the music' (BBC: 2000)

The archiving project had to be extended because some of the technical challenges facing a new station were to consider the practical issues in retrieving information from a cache of material still in hard format and editorial issues relating to future use of material for broadcast. The first task was how to manage a project editorially which trawled through significant events in rock music and a catalogue of significant rock and pop music artists of the last 40 years. The result was a database, RACHAEL (Raid of Archive and Electronic Log), of speech based digitised material for use in production and as a reference for research.

It soon became clear that although there was a great deal of archive material to investigate, much of it was either poor quality or didn't fit the remit. In addition, as in the experience of Network Z, copyright was a very real issue and much of the material was without the necessary re-broadcast rights for archive sessions, concerts and documentaries. Bellekom states that 'in the case of much of the content we wished to re-use, the contracts were out of date, written under superseded law or just plain missing.' (op cit) Thus a series of negotiations and contractual investigations also had to begin.

Timeline for BBC 6 Music:

1995

BBC begins digital transmission

1999

First commercial multiplex licences awarded

2000

February: Culture Secretary Chris Smith awards licence

Increase to licence fee to support BBC Digital Services

July: BBC Digital Radio and Radio New Media develops 'The Works' project to investigate use of archive audio on new music services

BBC converges departments including Digital Radio and New Media to become BBCi (interactive)

2001

January: BBC launches Network X, Y and Z projects

Net Y project managed by Antony Bellekom

September: John Sugar becomes Programme Director for Network Y

October: BBC Digital stations approved by Ofcom

BBC announces 5 new digital radio stations to launch in 2002

November: The Communications White Paper published by Govt. Includes agreement to investigate switch off of analogue radio, a framework for Ofcom and approval of new BBC digital services.

2002

11 March at 7am: Launch of 6 Music Breakfast Show presented by Phill Jupitus

2003

Antony Bellekom instated as Managing Editor BBC Radio 2 and 6 Music

2004

January: Lesley Douglas becomes Controller, Radio 2 and 6 Music

April Tessa Jowell as Culture Secretary, DCMS commissions Review of BBC Digital Services

Rik Blaxhill becomes Head of Programmes, BBC 6 Music, moving from his position as Group Creative Director, Capital Radio

October: Independent Review of the BBC's Digital Radio Services published

Tim Gardam produces report for Secretary of State

2007

April: Phill Jupitus leaves 6 Music after 5 years as Breakfast Show presenter

September: Rik Blaxhill resigns from 6 Music following Liz Kershaw show competition investigation

Paul Rodgers appointed Editor, 6 Music

Management and Staffing

From its initiation as Network Y, 6 Music and Radio 2 shared a controller, a managing editor and music manager. This dual, 'sister station' approach to managing the content, talent and music policy of both stations led industry critics to claim that the two also shared an audience that was intentionally cross pollinated from the newer 6 Music to the increasingly contemporary Radio 2. This reflected the industry concern that Radio 2' s market dominance was in fact impeding the development of commercial stations due to the breadth of their demographic. Still managed editorially by Radio 2, Lesley Douglas was key in procuring and managing new talent for 6 Music at inception:

> *The real requirements then (for 6 Music) were for attracting*
> *presentation talent and the support of the music industry, both areas*
> *where Lesley excelled.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

Staffing for the Network Y project was managed on a short-term contract basis, since during 2000-01 it was still unclear how committed the BBC and the DCMS were towards a digital future and licensing new networks. Up to seven people worked on the project in differing roles at this time including investigation into imaging, piloting presenters, naming conventions, focus groups with potential audiences and the harvesting project. Validation of future services was continuous and it was not until October 2001 that the go ahead for the new BBC services was given and a staff structure could be implemented to put a new station on air in only 4 months. Experienced programme producer John Sugar became Programme Manager and joined 6 Music in September 2001 to put together a schedule for air.

BBC 6 Music programme schedule (source: BBC 6 Music Press Pack, 2002):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Midnight-07.00 *The Night Train –* **Gary Burton**	Midnight-07.00 *The Night Train –* **Chris Hawkins**	Midnight-07.00 *The Night Train –* **Chris Hawkins**	Midnight-07.00 *The Night Train –* **Chris Hawkins**	Midnight-07.00 *The Night Train –* **Chris Hawkins**	Midnight-06.00 *The Night Train –* **Gary Burton** 06.00-08.00 Rpt	Midnight-06.00 *The Night Train –* **Gary Burton** 06.00-08.00 Rpt
07.00-10.00 **Phill Jupitus** *Breakfast Show*	07.00-10.00 **Phill Jupitus** *Breakfast Show*	07.00-10.00 **Phill Jupitus** *Breakfast Show*	07.00-10.00 **Phill Jupitus** *Breakfast Show*	07.00-10.00 **Phill Jupitus** *Breakfast Show*	*Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long** 08.00-11.00 **Stuart Maconie**	*Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long** 08.00-11.00 **Tracey MacLeod**
10.00-13.00 *Mid-Morning Show With* **Gideon Coe**	10.00-13.00 *Mid-Morning Show With* **Gideon Coe**	10.00-13.00 *Mid-Morning Show With* **Gideon Coe**	10.00-13.00 *Mid-Morning Show With* **Gideon Coe**	10.00-13.00 *Mid-Morning Show With* **Gideon Coe**	11.00-12.00 *Lively Up Yourself With* **Brinsley Forde** 12.00-15.00	11.00-14.00 *The Sunday Lie-In With* **Sean Hughes**
13.00-16.00 *Lunch With* **Liz Kershaw**	13.00-16.00 *Lunch With* **Liz Kershaw**	13.00-16.00 *Lunch With* **Liz Kershaw**	13.00-16.00 *Lunch With* **Liz Kershaw**	13.00-16.00 *Lunch With* **Liz Kershaw**	*Lunch With Suggs* 15.00-18.00	14.00-17.00 **Chris Hawkins**
16.00-19.00 *Teatime With* **Andrew Collins**	16.00-19.00 *Teatime With* **Andrew Collins**	16.00-19.00 *Teatime With* **Andrew Collins**	16.00-19.00 *Teatime With* **Andrew Collins**	16.00-19.00 *Teatime With* **Andrew Collins**	**Clare McDonnell** *Saturday Show* 18.00-21.00 Rpt	17.00-18.00 Rpt *Lively Up Yourself With* **Brinsley Forde** 18.00-21.00
19.00-22.00 **Tom Robinson's** *Evening Sequence*	19.00-22.00 **Tom Robinson's** *Evening Sequence*	19.00-22.00 **Tom Robinson's** *Evening Sequence*	19.00-22.00 **Tom Robinson's** *Evening Sequence* *including* **Round Table**	19.00-22.00 **Craig Charles** *Funk Show*	**Craig Charles** *Funk Show* 21.00-midnight	**Bob Harris** 21.00-midnight
22.00-midnight *Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long**	22.00-midnight *Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long**	22.00-midnight *Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long**	22.00-midnight *Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long**	22.00-midnight *Dream Ticket –* **Janice Long**	**The Bruce Dickinson** *Rock Show*	**Bruce Dickinson** *Freak Zone*

Imaging was also in development for 6 and alongside the focus groups and research an identity was being forged sonically. Early idents and sweepers contained elements of the archive bands signposting the station: Bowie, the Rolling Stones married with Blur and Oasis.

For presenters who had for one reason or another become disenfranchised with network broadcast, suffered the slings and outrageous fortunes of Radio 1's managerial sweep of presenters in 1996-7 (see Garfield 1999), or who fancied the step up to the mikes from niche commercial stations or student output, 6 Music was an attractive project to be involved with. Those piloted in the early days of Network Y included Nicky Horne, now at the digital station Planet Rock in a format not that different to that of the original 6 Music proposition. Another pilot programme was a progressive rock show fronted by Rick Wakeman.

Shows that made it on air but were soon dropped included those presented by comedian Sean Hughes and Suggs, lead singer from the band Madness. Arguably, Lesley Douglas' management style of choosing personality presenters didn't work for 6 Music in the longer term. However, this approach created good publicity for a network whose budget was only a fraction of its

established FM sister. Commercial radio managers complained that this was in fact the BBC taking advantage of existing formats for music stations. XFM, Kerrang! and Planet Rock were cited as rivals for 6 Music. (Gardam: 2004)

Programming and platforms

In the knowledge that 6 Music's budget was to cover not only on air production but also online, staff were encouraged to multi task. The development of an in house web production system enabled programme staff to take on the content management of show pages and interactive content such as message boards and chat rooms. In practice, 6 Music joined with the other new multi platform concerns meant the re- alignment of the role of Broadcast Assistant, Producer and Studio Manager/Engineer, the internet as a platform introduced the Web Producer to the staff structure. Production roles were expanded to include web, digital and radio skills, this in turn encouraged new methods of production:

> *We were using a digital playout system and making voice-tracked programmes, both firsts for the BBC. We offered live text on DAB. We automatically recorded and rescheduled live broadcasts as repeats. We had hybrid news/music news bulletins. Self operation, rather than programmes driven by others, dominated. Presenters "hot-seated"; there was no second on-air studio.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

The first 6 Music on air studio was fashioned from a corner office where the Studio Managers had been storing equipment for some years on the 5th floor of Broadcasting House. The play out system was second hand, gifted until the BBC decided what digital play out system it would back network wide. So it was that 6 Music became a laboratory of digital radio practice. Bellekom is convinced that this was 'influential in the way that other stations have evolved.' (op.cit.)

The procedures and outcomes for the new station were very different to those facing the new Radio 1 in 1967. In addition to the planning of linear station output, BBC 6 Music's unique proposition in 2001 was to provide multi platform content and interaction with a new demographic. A very new audience demographic in music radio was to be catered for: 25-44, music tastes covering the past 40 years. As Antony Bellekom stated on the launch day

in 2002 the station 'filled a tangible gap between Radios 1 and 2' (Gordon 2002).

Key areas in management were licensing, programme content, online (website) development, in addition to the integration of 6 Music in to the BBC infrastructure of marketing, publicity, copyright and compliance. This supported the BBC's commitment to multi-platform approach, the use of online, DAB text and cable platforms. The Works project, later to be known as the 'audio harvesting project', at Net Y was managed concurrently to develop new methods in archive use and editorial alongside new technology in broadcast.

> *The staffing structure of 6 Music was largely evolved as my best guess of how to use an allocation that we had been given. The structure felt much more like that of a local radio station that anything currently operating amongst the BBC networks. We made some important decisions that have stood the test of time: having a Systems Manager who had both a technical and an editorial role; employing our own Music News journalists; and not using SMs (studio managers) in the studio but building the technical strength of production staff and presenters.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

The launch

As part of Antony Bellekom's thorough strategic management of the lead up to the network launch the production staff were involved in a 'white network' exercise whilst new studios were being built and test transmissions made. The whole team ran to a real time schedule, producing content and interviews, even running mock obits to test the flexibility of the audio archive and systems such as digital playout and web tools.

On March 11th 2002, echoing Radio 1's much anticipated launch in 1967, a new audience of music lovers tuned in to BBC 6 Music. Listening at computers or auto tuning newly acquired DAB Radios, reaction to the first show on air was just as anticipated on the other side of the dial. Greg Dyke and Jenny Abramsky (Head of Radio) were joined by an invited audience of radio commentators to publicise the launch and introduce the press to the BBC digital future. The number of emails (600 in the first hour and a half) broke

the website in half an hour. The world was ready, BBC technology wasn't. As Bellekom comments:

> *Of course, at that time, whilst the use of interactivity and the full range of digital distribution was something we actively considered, the growth that we have seen could not have been predicted.*
> (Bellekom 2008)

Conclusion and update

6 Music initiated a new generation of audio content for the BBC. The launch of the suite of BBC DAB stations was the foundation of the BBC's embrace of new media and subsequently the basis on which radio content is presented in a streaming media context.

In the five years following launch, the station has enjoyed a steady increase in audience figures, a reputation for good music and unique presentation of specialist music. The management of 6 Music has conformed to the brief that it should contain informative and challenging content related to contemporary music; that of the past 40 years and the re-transmission of the BBC music archive. Within three years of launch, the reach of the network had increased by a record 49%, year on year (RAJAR, 2005). However, there was criticism from the 2004 DCMS review that the archive content was significantly lower than intended and 'did not reflect the original conditions set out by the Secretary of State' in 2002:

> *It has a more contemporary focus than the predominantly archive service originally envisaged. 6 Music should not change its focus but its remit should be rewritten to reflect its identity.*
> (Gardam 2004: 5)

The imaginative programming and understanding of the audience by staff and management have been translated on air and online; since its launch the station has collected Sony Awards,Best Digital Radio Station of the year 2005 by the BT Digital Music Awards (DMA). 6 Music has embraced from the outset a global audience and has continued to encourage this communication in music event coverage (for instance the South by South West Festival, Texas) and home grown events such as Summer Sundae festival in Leicester. Formats

for shows have been challenged and a special relationship has been forged between listener and artist. You can now hear a listener present their own choices on 6 Mix, and bands like Radiohead and Oasis have curated and presented archive sessions for the annual *Selector*. It is this continual use of the growing database of archive tracks performed at BBC Radio events like The Electric Proms and those recorded live daily on site in The Hub (presenter: George Lamb, TX BBC 6 Music Mon-Fri 10-1) that remain the unique in the proposition of the station.

On 10th March 2006, 6 Music opened its doors to independent production companies to tender to produce a selection of shows. The schedule on 6 has changed greatly since launch, presenters Marc Riley, Nemone, DJs Queens of Noize and Don Letts have joined the network. Management has also changed. After the launch, Antony Bellekom was appointed Managing Editor of Radio 2 and 6 Music. Rik Blaxhill took over from John Sugar as Programme Director in 2004 and resigned following the Liz Kershaw programme investigation by Ofcom in 2007.

6 Music presenters Phill Jupitus (2002-2007), Bruce Dickinson and Steve Lamacq have found themselves presenting strands or deputising for Radio 2 output. Stuart Maconie currently presents programmes on both networks. Russell Brand spent a short time on 6 Music before he was offered a Radio 2 show in November 2007.

The events relating to a Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross's broadcast at Radio 2 in October 2008 led to the resignation of Lesley Douglas Controller of Radio 2 and 6 Music are well documented as a key media event, putting both the management and structure of editorial compliance systems under scrutiny (see Section 1.1). These events followed Ofcom's decision in the previous year to fine 6 Music for fabricating contributors to pre-recorded programmes. At the time of writing BBC Radio 2 and 6 Music have a new controller Bob Shennan, former BBC Radio 5 Live controller; both services are under review by the BBC Trust. The possible implications for the management and editorial structure at the stations will prove interesting in early 2010, the planned publishing date. These should underpin the next step in the evolution of BBC 6 Music and also the aspirations of the government's Digital Britain report where by 2015 a switchover to a 'dedicated digital platform for radio' (DCMS 2009:92) is to be supported by investigation of the 'next stage of DAB' and regulatory changes. Plans for a Radio Council to be comprised of commercial and BBC managers were revealed in April this year to try and cement a relationship tentatively explored at the beginning of the digital rollout.

This provides an opportunity for 6 Music to develop existing platforms online and take on the challenges of managing radio output that now sits less

exclusively on the airwaves, in consideration of the key characteristics of it's service licence:

> *...to entertain lovers of popular music with a service offering music from the 1960s to the present day.*
> (BBC 2008)

The author worked as producer on the development and launch of BBC 6 music.

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Section 4.1

Useful contacts and links

AMARC World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

AMARC brings together a network of more than 4,000 community radios, federations and community media stakeholders in more than 115 countries. AMARC advocates for the right to communicate at the international, national, local and neighbourhood levels and defends and promotes the interests of the community radio movement through solidarity, networking and cooperation. www.amarc.org

Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC)

The BJTC accredits courses in radio and television journalism to ensure they give journalists the skills required by the industry.
www.bjtc.org.uk
BJTC, 18 Millers Close, Rippingale, near Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 0TH
Tel: 01178 440025
Email: sec@bjtc.org.uk

BECTU

BECTU is the trade union for technical, creative and administrative workers throughout the audiovisual and live entertainment sectors specifically including BBC and commercial radio. BECTU is the independent union for those working in broadcasting, film, theatre, entertainment, leisure, interactive media and allied areas. It includes a division for those working in independent broadcasting.
www.bectu.org.uk
373-377 Clapham Road London SW9 9BT
Tel: 020 7346 0900

Fax: 020 7346 0901
Email: info@bectu.org.uk

Children and Radio

Children and Radio aims to educate people about radio broadcasting for and by children and young people and advance the education and training of children and young people in sound recording and radio programme production. www.childrenandradio.org.uk

Community Media Association

The UK representative body for the community media sector, it promotes community radio and access to the media for people and communities. Provides training and holds conferences and events.
www.commedia.org.uk
15 Paternoster Row, Sheffield S1 2BX
Tel: 0114 279 5219
Email: cma@commedia.org.uk

Community Radio Toolkit

Accessible and informative website and discussion forum about a wide range community radio station management, funding, programme making and training. Written and run by Radio Regen. Also free download of Community Radio Toolkit handbook.
www.communityradiotoolkit.net

Department of Media Culture and Sport (DCMS)

Government department responsible for policy on broadcasting.
www.culture.gov.uk
2-4 Cockspur Street London SW1Y 5DH
Tel: 020 7211 6200
Email: enquiries@culture.gov.uk

Digital Radio Development Bureau (DRDB)

The Digital Radio Development Bureau is a trade body funded and supported by the BBC and commercial radio multiplex operators. It aims to ensure digital radio's wide accessibility and swift adoption in the UK with consistent and effective marketing. Its stakeholders are Arqiva, Bauer Radio, the BBC, Digital One, 4 Digital Group, Global Radio, GMG, UBC, and UTV.
www.drdb.org

Equity

Equity represents artists from across the entire spectrum of arts and entertainment, including actors, singers, dancers, choreographers, stage managers, theatre directors and designers, variety and circus artists, television and radio presenters, walk-on and supporting artists, models, stunt performers and directors and theatre fight directors.
www.equity.org.uk
Head Office: Guild House, Upper St Martins Lane, London WC2H 9EG
Tel: 020 7379 6000.
Fax: 020 7379 7001
Email: info@equity.org.uk

Hospital Broadcasting Association (HBA)

The HBA is a national charity which promotes and supports hospital broadcasting in the UK. It represents over 250 member stations.
www.hbauk.co.uk/public
Tel: 0870 321 6017

Institute of Broadcast Sound

The IBS is a forum for all audio professionals working within broadcasting in production and post production.
http://www.ibs.org.uk
The Institute of Broadcast Sound Ltd. PO Box 208 Havant, Hampshire PO9 9BQ

Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)

The MCPS-PRS Alliance is a world-wide organisation which represents music from songwriters, composers and music publishers. It covers the payments for use of music across all types of radio broadcasting, podcasting and internet radio.
www.mcps-prs-alliance.co.uk
MCPS-PRS Alliance, Copyright House, 29-33, Berners Street, London W1T 3AB.

META Europe

META Europe is a Europe wide training organisation for community media developed under the European Socrates/Grundtvig scheme by an international consortium of radio stations, universities and media training projects. It runs courses in station management and training for trainers for community media practitioners and adult educators.
www.meta-europe.de

Musician's Union

The Musicians' Union represents over thirty thousand musicians working in all sectors of the music business.
www.musiciansunion.org.uk
33 Palfrey Place, London SW8 1PE
Tel: 020 7840 5504 Fax: 020 7840 5599

National Union of Journalists

The NUJ is the main union for journalists and journalism. An active, campaigning organisation seeking to improve the pay and conditions of its members and working to protect and promote media freedom, professionalism and ethical standards in all media.
www.nuj.org.uk
Headland House, 308-312 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP
Tel: 020 7278 7916 Fax: 020 7837 8143 Email: info@nuj.org.uk

Ofcom

Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. It licenses and regulates all independent radio.
www.ofcom.org.uk
Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA
Tel: 020 7981 3000 or 0300 123 3000.
Fax: 020 7981 3333

Performing Rights Society (PRS)

See Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) above.

Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL)

PPL is a music service company working on behalf of their performer and record company members, licensing sound recordings and music videos for use in broadcast, public performance and new media.
www.ppluk.com
1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9DE
Tel: 020 7534 1423
Email: radiobroadcasting@ppluk.com

RadioCentre

The RadioCentre formed in July 2006 from the merger of the Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB) and the Commercial Radio Companies Association (CRCA). Its members consist of the overwhelming majority of UK Commercial Radio stations who fund the organisation.
www.radiocentre.org
The Radiocentre, 77 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1D 5DU
Tel: 020 7306 2603

Radio Academy

The Radio Academy is the professional membership organisation for the radio industry. It organises the industry's annual conference, the Radio Festival, plus seminars and workshops. Regional centres organise their own programme of events. It has produced a 'Getting into Radio' CD which can also be downloaded from their website.
www.radioacademy.org
5 Market Place, London W1W 8AE
Tel: 020 7255 2010 Fax: 020 7255 2029

Radio Independents Group

The trade body for UK independent radio producers. RIG is a non-profit making trade body funded through membership fees and other fund-raising activities that represents the interests and needs of the UK's independent radio production industry. RIG negotiates terms on behalf of members with broadcasters and audio consumers such as digital publishers.
www.rig.netfirms.com
Tel: 020 7079 2082

Radio Industry Diversity Group (RIDG)

RIDG aims to find solutions to the problems faced by Black, Ethnic Minority and Disabled people trying to get work in the UK radio industry. Members include BBC, Radio Academy, BECTU, Skillset, EMAP, Chrysalis Radio, Radio Independents Group and Channel 4 Radio.

Radio Joint Audience Research (Rajar)

Rajar is the official body in charge of measuring radio audiences in the UK. It is jointly owned by the BBC and the RadioCentre on behalf of the commercial sector. www.rajar.co.uk
Radio Joint Audience Research Ltd., Paramount House, 162 - 170 Wardour Street, London W1F 8ZX
Tel: 020 7292 9040 Fax: 020 7292 9041 Email: info@rajar.co.uk

The Radio Magazine

Weekly news magazine for the UK radio industry.
www.theradiomagazine.co.uk
21 West St Helen Street, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 5BL
Tel: 01536 418558 Fax: 01536 418539

Skillset

Skillset is the industry body which supports skills and training for people and businesses in UK creative media industries. Its website has up-to-date information on radio training and education, careers advice, industry information, and upcoming industry events and initiatives. It carries out research into radio employment trends.
http://www.skillset.org/radio

Student Radio Association (SRA)

The SRA represents more than 70 radio stations based at universities and colleges round the country. It holds member conferences, various events and organises the annual Radio 1 Student Radio Awards. They are also a member of RIDG (see above).
    http://www.studentradio.org.uk/
    c/o The Radio Academy 5 Market Place, London W1W 8AE
    Tel: 0709 284 5935
    Email: chair@studentradio.org.uk

Women's Radio Group (WRG)

London based training and networking resource for women interested in broadcast radio. Runs regular training courses and broadcasts
www.womeninradio.org.uk

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