

THE RADIO WAVE
"Keeping Radio People in Touch"

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THE RADIO WAVE
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"The Beginners' Guide To Becoming A Radio Star"..
is a far reaching e-book for radio beginners or people who
want to make radio their career. All the information you'll
discover here is "the basics" of radio. Stuff that applies
anywhere in the world where professional commercial radio
is established.

www.allaboutradio.net

G'DAY.

Welcome to issue 9 of the Radio Wave newsletter. It's
aimed at people who'd like to be in radio,
newbies who've just started and full-time professionals.

If there's anything you read in it on which you'd like to
comment ...feel free.

Anything you need help or advice with...ask. If I can't
provide the answer I'll find someone who can.

If you'd like to contribute an article...you're welcome.

You can reach me at ian@allaboutradio.net

AIRCHECK

"The telephone company is urging people to please not use
the telephone unless it is absolutely necessary in order

to keep the lines open for emergency personnel.

We'll be right back after this break to give away a pair of Phil Collins concert tickets to caller number 95."

- a Los Angeles radio DJ shortly after the February 1990 earthquake.

AM STEREO LIVES!

"Oh, really?" I hear you say.

I can remember the time that AM Stereo was launched in a big way by the Australian radio industry. This was to be the answer to the new threat of FM radio in the early 80's.

In fact the station I was with took the concept one step further and relaunched with a new music format called Album Music. ("A.M." geddit?)

This involved playing album cuts rather than singles some of which were quite long or even unfamiliar. Considering we had been a very successful Top 40/Contemporary Hits station this would seem to fly in the face of any conventional programming wisdom.

But, hey, who was I to argue?

As a humorous aside I should mention the TV commercial that was planned to launch this new AM Stereo format.

It took days to set up hundreds of 12" album covers like standing dominoes in a line weaving around the TV studio floor.

The idea was to film from overhead the spectacular sight of each album knocking the next one down weaving right along the line.

Unfortunately, before the cameras were rolling, an overhead light came loose, fell on the assembled line up and all everyone could do was watch them all come tumbling down.

That should have been seen as a portent of what was to come.

Of course, the format was a disaster, with most people listening to unfamiliar album cuts on their AM mono radios.

Sadly the manufacturers of radio receivers did not support AM Stereo with only a few of the major ones supplying the sets.

Which was a shame because the sound coming through a good AM Stereo receiver was quite equal to FM stereo. I had one in my car at the time and it was actually better than FM because it had a warm roundness to the sound compared to FM's rather cold hard sound.

So AM Stereo slowly faded from sight...and sound.

Many stations around the world are still broadcasting in AM Stereo, having gone to the expense and trouble of installing the gear, and there are still some sets out there.

In fact some of those stations are listed on a web site devoted to AM Stereo.

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/kevtronics/>

This site also gives an excellent background to AM Stereo including a history from the U.S. perspective.

In part it says:

Today, virtually all radios have FM Stereo capability. However, the untold story is that Multiplex AM Stereo was actually the first technology to be ready for widespread use.

Engineers such as Leonard Kahn developed and tested AM Stereo systems in the late 1950s that worked very well and would have made a very satisfactory solution for AM Stereo broadcasting at the time.

But, things were different back then. AM was still the most popular band for radio listening. Most people did not even have an FM radio, and FM stations were struggling to gain listeners.

Because of this, the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) thought of adding Stereo sound to FM -- and FM only -- as a way to help it gain popularity.

So, the FCC approved use of FM Stereo, but did not allow AM Stereo to be used, since it would have given AM even more of an advantage in listenership over FM.

Well, as well all know, by a few decades later, things had definitely changed. By the 1970s, the FM band has become the preferred place for music listening, and the monaural sound of AM radio sounded dull and lifeless in comparison.

AM Stereo Finally Arrives

By the arrival of the 1980s, the FCC had finally decided to take another look at AM Stereo, because now AM radio would need it in order to stay competitive with FM.

There were five different AM Stereo systems being proposed to the FCC, and the FCC struggled with the decision of which one to choose as the single standard for AM Stereo broadcasting.

At first, the FCC decided to select one of the systems, designed by Magnavox, as the standard. As you can imagine, the proponents of the four other systems complained, saying that their systems worked better than Magnavox and that the FCC should do some more research before trying to decide a single standard again.

The Marketplace Wars

The FCC was going to choose another system, designed by Harris, as the single standard, but by this time the popular opinion was becoming that they should simply allow all of the systems to be used, and that the preferences of broadcasters and radio listeners would eventually "fight it out" and converge toward one of the systems as the single "de facto" standard.

So, on March 4, 1982, that is exactly what the FCC did. There were now four AM Stereo systems to choose from, designed by Motorola, Magnavox, Kahn/Hazeltine, and Harris. For the first few years, except for Magnavox, all of the systems were about equally competitive. Many "multi-system" AM Stereo radios were sold so that listeners could tune in all of the systems.

But out of this group, Motorola was the largest company, and was already a parts supplier for many car radio manufacturers.

So, by 1986, the majority of AM Stereo radios sold only supported the Motorola system, named "C-Quam" (Compatible Quadrature AM). And other countries like Australia, Mexico, and Canada were choosing the Motorola C-Quam system as their single standard for AM Stereo.

But in the USA, Leonard Kahn, creator of the Kahn/Hazeltine AM Stereo system, was very vocal about the advantages of his system over Motorola's, and he managed to convince enough stations to stay with his system.

This confused listeners, because a radio designed for the Motorola system would not be able to receive a Kahn signal, and vice versa. It was becoming clear that a single system had to be chosen, if AM Stereo was going to survive at all.

C-Quam as the Standard

Finally, in 1993, the FCC did choose a single system for AM Stereo. Looking at its overwhelming popularity over the Kahn system, they chose the Motorola system as the single standard, which was also the standard for all other countries in the world with AM Stereo broadcasting.

Today's AM Stereo

However, Motorola didn't just stay put because their system had "won" and was the standard. They listened to complaints and worked to reduce or eliminate most of the past problems with the C-Quam system. By the early 1990s, they introduced new circuit designs which offered better audio fidelity.

Unfortunately, since then, people haven't paid much attention to AM Stereo. In fact, many people think it doesn't even exist anymore. But it does exist, and it is used by hundreds of stations all around the world.

And thousands of AM Stereo radios continue to be manufactured and sold every year.

AM Stereo has been with us for just over 20 years. People are still interested in getting good high fidelity audio quality from the AM radio band. AM Stereo is an established standard, it works very well, and it is affordable to both stations and listeners.

THE ABC'S OF BEING A RADIO PERSONALITY

by Jim McVay

As a radio personality, your main job is to be entertaining!!

For technical rules, and format, it is best to do what as you are instructed by your PD. Stop pouting; this is not going to turn into a lecture! You can follow a format and still be entertaining!!

Being a personality is more than telling jokes, and quirky facts about celebrities, and politicians; it is taking all of the separate programming elements (Music, commercials, promo's and weather, etc) and combining them into a "Show", and doing it with "feeling"!

We all know that Radio formats are designed to reach a specific demographic. For an example, in the United States (Mad Soccer Mom's driving Mini Vans).

Fulfilling the audiences wants and needs; or as Arbitron research shows, what people "perceive" as their wants and need, a radio personality must take all of the elements provided, and do the best show possible to please the "targeted audience"

Communicate with your listener one on one, with a natural sounding voice. Pretend your talking with your next door neighbour, or family while lounging by the pool. Casually, not with a "radio voice". That can destroy the elements of creditability, and integrity of a true personality.

Create the meaning of what you say by the words themselves. Have the word work for you, through emphasis, expression, and inflection. It is okay to have a pause...when you need to collect a thought, or...make a point.

Always remember why you are in this Industry, to "Entertain" and have "Fun". Don't get hung up doing the same schtick over and over.

You are the listener's friend, sound like one. Sound "Natural"; be informative by using elements of programming, with "Feeling" to transform you into a true radio personality.

"Keep that spot light shinning on you!"

Jim McVay has done stints on air; promotions; and news editing for stations in: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania/ Toledo, Sandusky, and Cleveland, OH. As well as Freelance reporting for stations in Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, and Indiana (Reporting on the opening of the Rock -N- Roll Hall of Fame)

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-----HOT TIP-----

There's no limit to what you can
achieve if you don't care who gets
the credit.

e.g. Let another member of your one-air team have the punchline.

-----HOT TIP-----

TOP RADIO PREP SITES

Some stations may already be aware of this site, but if not, you should bookmark it...

www.assignmenteditor.com

This is one-stop shopping for mostly every source of news-information-entertainment. Some of it is subscription-based, but most is free. You'll also see it mainly USA based, but there is an excellent area on breaking news and resources etc.

Thanks to David Rogerson, Managing Director, Strategic Media Solutions for this suggestion.

COMING UP

"The I.Q. Test for Radio."

A FINAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR.

The plan is to grow the list of people taking this e-letter, and encourage interactivity from our readers.

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