

How does a personality affect radio station loyalty?

 By [Kabelo Meko](#)

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The personality question is a challenge to all radio stations and each manages it differently here I share my thoughts about the matter.

Many may wonder why I started writing about radio... Well, it's simply the passion I have for the most challenging yet rewarding broadcasting medium.

Today I'm talking about something that challenges a lot of program directors whether to place the radio personality before the radio station brand or place the brand before the radio personality, although it isn't as simple as this of course.

The best example of good radio broadcasting to a great extent with limited personality in put on air from presenters are Primedia's 94.5 Kfm and 94.7 Highveld Stereo. It's all about the vibe, the great jingles, the fast-paced hot clock, good radio voices who can link limited content in a short space of time, and emphasis on excellent music playlisting. Though I found these radio stations pleasant to listen to, I didn't feel like there's a relationship created between myself and the presenter, however.

Breakfast shows the drivers

Both radio stations program line-ups are driven by the breakfast shows and those personalities are given more space than the rest of the presenters. With Ryan O'Connor, for example, you cannot think of Kfm without thinking about Ryan and the other way around. However, what would happen should Ryan leave unceremoniously - which is not uncommon in the radio industry? What then? You don't have to look too far for the answer... Look at what happened when Jeremy Mansfield left Highveld Stereo or when Chomane Chomane left Lesedi FM - the radio station goes through a tough period of trying to hold on to its previous success and move on, but at the unfortunate cost of reduced advertising revenue and listenership.

What am I saying? As program directors are you looking towards the future by growing strong personalities in the line-up with a strong relationship with their audience to provide radio station brand loyalty? 5fm, Kaya FM and Metro FM are the best examples of placing more emphasis on the personalities because in each case the radio station brand is strong enough because of good relationships built between listeners and presenters.

The Macintosh example

In 2002, a certain brand by the name of Macintosh demonstrated that customers having strong interpersonal relationships with a single employee show less interest in alternatives: they show more cooperation, have a greater sense of identification, and actively promote and defend the service provider.

Radio isn't any different from the latter. Research done in Italy at Bocconi University in Milan shows the effects that radio personality satisfaction by the audience has on radio loyalty via satisfaction and radio personality loyalty. From the results gathered it was found that the radio brand in fact grew stronger with radio personality satisfaction than without.

Playing safe might not be the best option in the long term

With high egos that generally go with radio presenters its understandable why limiting their influence on the station's audience would be the safest option - but playing it safe may not be the best business decision in the long run. With internet radio coming fast and furious and more commercial radio stations starting up, your listeners can hear the same music elsewhere. But part of what can differentiate you from the others are your presenters; they are your best asset.

Therefore, look after your presenters well so that they may look after your brand and grow it with you.

It is indeed because of the powerful effects that radio personalities have in radio today that I feel a radio demo from a prospective presenter isn't sufficient. Yes it is necessary, but you can have a presenter with an unpleasant voice or unique voice like Just Ice or Anele but they will yield great rewards for the station provided they are well managed and cared for.

ABOUT KABELO MEKOA

Kabelo Mekoa started on community radio early in 2009 at Motheo FM a community radio station in Bloemfontein Free State Province. Later he became Assistant Programming Manager at 104. 1 Med FM a health radio station in Bloemfontein Free State and subsequently became Programming Manager at Kopsie FM 97.0 Campus radio station between 2010 and 2012. Kabelo is currently a consultant for community radio stations in the line of programming.

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