

Primedia Broadcasting's annual community radio conference hits the mark

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Through the years, Primedia has earned its reputation of walking its talk. Primedia Broadcasting, the creative hot house for emerging talent, has played an active role in supporting and boosting community radio. When in 2021, studio equipment worth R5m was stolen from Alex FM, a community radio station in the Gauteng township of Alexandra, Primedia Broadcasting came to the rescue and helped to keep the station on air by providing financial, technical, and engineering assistance. This same spirit of commitment to community radio is the key driver of Primedia Broadcasting's annual community radio conference.

This year's conference, attended by community and campus radio stations, provided an opportunity to unpack current challenges. The conference explored collaborative opportunities to help navigate the stations through today's tough economic environment and prepare for a vibrant and thriving radio landscape.

"The wellbeing of South Africa's dynamic mix of community radio stations is intrinsic not only to the longevity of Primedia itself but to the industry as a whole," says Lindile Xoko, Primedia Broadcasting CEO. "Community radio stations are part of the frequency of a democratic voice in South Africa and should be nurtured and protected. Often community radio stations have been the early nurturers of the country's exceptional radio talent of today and for the current day radio superstars. For instance, our very own Anele Mdoda, Zweli Mbhele, Nick Explicit, Thando Thabethe and Frankie Du Toit, who form part of the primetime lineup on 947, all began their careers at community radio stations."



Ravi Naidoo, 947 station manager

"Talent is priceless, and it deserves to be nurtured. It is often in the most remote community radio stations where the most precious gems of talent can be found. If we want a viable and vibrant radio environment, we must invest in these stations and uncover the treasure of talent throughout the nation," adds Xoko. "Primedia Broadcasting is committed to playing an instrumental role in growing a healthy radio industry in South Africa. Community and campus stations are a very valuable part of the ecosystem of this industry."

The conference saw several top-notch Primedia Broadcasting executives and presenters in attendance. This included Bongani Bingwa, 702's Breakfast presenter and a highly regarded media personality. The ever popular and highly motivational Thando Thabethe, 947's Afternoon Drive host, generously shared her broadcasting insights and wisdom with participants. In a panel discussion, these seasoned broadcasters unpacked the changing role of radio and what is required to futureproof the industry.

Teddy Boyi, of Rainbow FM commented on the conference: "Initiatives like this help community stations by exposing us to new ways to grow audiences and revenue. Having a number of community radio presenters here today also motivates them to strive and understand what they can achieve in this industry. There are many challenges facing community stations, and we need to look for better ways to collaborate to ensure future sustainability."

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Stations that participated in the conference included TUT FM, Alex FM, TUCKS FM, VOW FM, Tshwane FM, and Boston Media House.

Trish Mokoena, station engineer at Tshwane FM, was one of the participants of the conference. She said: “The learnings will assist us with our submissions for the Radio Awards from an imaging perspective.”

Isaac Manaka from Westside FM got to sample Primedia radio systems: “I realised that we do not have to be limited to one system. Integration of systems is the way to go.”

Neo Koaho of VOW FM was inspired by Bongani Bingwa saying: “He shared on how to use content on social media appropriately.”

Skills development, the sharing of winning innovations, and lobbying together to build a sustainable radio industry are important steps towards a healthy industry. Primedia Broadcasting is committed to playing a leading role in these key developmental initiatives.

In the words of Primedia Broadcasting’s CEO: “At Primedia we recognise that the fate and fortunes of community and commercial radio stations are intrinsically linked. In a way we are one frequency, one family.”

With this spirit of collaboration and oneness, the radio family in South Africa looks set to flourish.

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