

## Programming Philosophy

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A Program Director is a strong leader, a strategic thinker, and someone who can manage different personalities in dealing with their own department, and other departments such as sales and promotions, and most important, protecting, and managing the brand of the station.

### Vital Resources

The first and foremost tool that will make a PD successful is good people. An effective program director surrounds themselves with people who are creative, strategic, and have winning attitudes. Tapping into the abilities and expertise of the entire team, is a must.

### PD Management/Motivation

The best way to motivate a programming team is to make them feel involved; like they are in a family rather than a job. The PD’s role as coach and mentor is vital and combines teaching, encouraging and empowering each member of the on-air team to excel.

### General PD Duties Responsibilities and Challenges

#### Air Staff Management

It is absolutely vital to have an empowered on-air team. A PD must know each team member’s motivations, strengths and weaknesses. The challenging of coaching each member of the team is encouraging the person to take ownership of their performance and help them recognize their weaknesses and learn to leverage them into strengths.

I see the role of program director to the on-air team as one of partnership as much as teacher. Giving each member of the team the tools to understand the brand and carry out the vision of that brand is the program director’s primary responsibility to the on-air team.

#### Imaging

Imaging must be kept fresh and compelling without interfering with the flow of the station. Use of over-intro and quick dry-voice elements can make the important branding of the station fit into the music mix seamlessly and without being perceived as an interruption to the music.

The key to writing and producing imaging is understanding of the brand and the concept of listener benefit. Imaging should be listener focused, speaking to the listener in the words they use to describe the station. It’s always better to show the use of the station rather than shouting about how great the station is in a self-aggrandizing way.

## Promotions

The main objectives for any promotion is to increase cume and TSL as well as clearly benefit the listener. Sales promotions must also have a client benefit. In addition to the filters above, all promotions must be appropriate for the brand. A balance between all of these objectives, along with creative thinking, will lead to successful promotions.

When challenging situations arise, whether it's a poorly thought out sales promotion idea, or other difficulty, creative teamwork between the program director and promotions director should lead to adjustments that will meet the main objectives.

## Ratings Analysis

Understanding the Arbitron ratings is vital to successfully programming a radio station. Using TAPSCAN and/or Maximizer to break down demographics, TSL and cume can provide important analysis of the ratings. It's important to understand what those numbers are telling us, without overreacting and making impulsive programming decisions without considering other factors. It is critical to always factor in the effect of the competitive environment; what was our competition doing during the ratings period?

Equally important is “listener engagement;” do our listeners act on our promotions and public service activities? (Do they show up for events, participate in shows (requests, etc.), play our contests?) The listener engagement question is even more important in smaller markets where sample size can cause dramatic swings in Arbitron ratings from book to book.

## Music

It is vital to be playing the right music. A combination of data gathering, networking and common sense will lead to an interesting and appealing music mix. Data gathering can run the gamut from frequent auditorium testing to using BDS and/or Mediabase with a strong panel of stations can be very helpful in providing guidance for classic/olides formats, as well as gold revisions for stations playing current music. These stations can use the same panel of stations for both gold revisions and current song selection. Additionally, record promoters, networking with other program directors in the format and music sales are all sources of useful information.

In live dayparts it is also paramount to provide a way for the on-air team to log any and all song inquiries and requests. If possible with the station's website, it can also be handy to create a music meeting and invite listeners to participate (possibly as part of a listener engagement program/station database.)

Whatever methods are used to determine what songs to play, it's vitally important to get the right songs in the right categories in the clock to ensure good flow and balance. Library management via Selector should entail weekly reviews of the current and recurrent rotations, along with power gold categories to ensure proper rotations are being maintained. Gold revisions should be done quarterly. For classic/oldies formats attention should be paid to the "seasonality" of songs to ensure they play during the year at the time most likely to connect with the audience.

#### Website/ On-demand content

Connecting to our audience outside of the "traditional" (read "old") methods of interacting is vital to the future of radio. Station websites should be full interactive suites of applications which are relevant to the listeners.

In addition to the online stream of the station's on-air signal, consideration must be given to independent content that is complimentary to the basic brand of the station. Stations should consider streaming other formats of music alongside that main stream.

On-demand audio and video should be priorities with each member of the on-air team creating content for the online features. A classic hits/oldies station could create a weekly podcast that spotlights new releases from core artists. A current-based format could do a "retro rarities" show that spotlights songs by the core gold artists that aren't being played on the station. The morning show should be recycling bits for a daily podcast, as well as creating unique content "exclusives" that can be promoted during the show. The station should take a video camera out to interesting clients and do a behind the scene interview with the owner. A good example would be sending the morning show host to a local candy shop and show how the chocolates are made. These things can be effective at driving audience to the web.

#### Website/ Listener database and engagement opportunities

In addition to the on-demand aspects of a station's online presence we must look toward creating and using a loyal listener club which encourages listeners to participate in "secret" online-only contests as well as offering items of value (coupons/discounts/etc.) from our clients. A weekly "here's what's happening" e-mailed newsletter provides an opportunity to push listeners to our websites and other online initiatives, as well as promote station features and appearances, on-air contests and more. This newsletter can be sponsored overall and also feature client coupons and discounts. Every contest which requires an online registration should be simple for the listener to participate by having them register into the listener club, thereby growing the database and increasing the value it represents to our clients.

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Website/ Social Networking and Blogging

It's vital that the station connect to the audience where the audience is and do so on their terms. Facebook and Twitter continue to grow in popularity and usage across many demographics, especially among adults in the 25-54 demo.

Being active on both of those services; creating station pages which get frequent updates of what's happening on the air, as well as providing a way to interact with some of the most passionate members of the audience.

Twitter can be set up to “simulcast” updates to Facebook, but it is still paramount that all members of the on-air team are actively reading and responding to the audience on those sources.

Additionally, the on-air team should create and frequently update companion blogs which can be opportunities to expand on comments made on-air, share behind the scenes happenings at the station as well as let listeners share in each team member's life.