

...BULLET POINTS...

Raw Notes from Bootcamp

If you missed the Morning Show Bootcamp this year here are some raw notes from the sessions getting the best response. The Living Focus Group received the strongest reviews, although its success had little to do with my moderating skills. Paragon Research recruited one of the most responsive and vocal groups I've witnessed in years of working with focus groups.

There are also notes from The Producers' Forum, which had a lot of useful tidbits, and Matt Weinstein's "Managing to Have Fun".

Word on the street was that the best format session was the Country panel hosted by Tony and Kris, US95-7 San Diego, for the unique twist of having a famous artist (Lee Ann Womack) on to talk about what works and what doesn't work on radio interviews from an artist's perspective.

Steve Stockman's personality branding session "How to Become Famous" was also really well received. It gave attendees insights about providing a memorable experience and keying in on what you're famous for.

The Living Focus Group: Randy Lane Company/Paragon Research

The Randy Lane Company and Paragon Research recruited 11 female fans of Los Angeles area morning radio. The focus group elicited little hard data as the members passionately discussed the various L.A. morning shows. The impact was more an emotional one on the audience, many of whom had never witnessed a focus group. Many of them were thinking, "What if that were ME they were talking about so passionately? Could MY show hold up to a focus group like this?"

Comments from some of the participants in the focus group:

- New is better with commentary. "I want to know what the news is and hear different people's perspectives on the news as well." They liked hearing the personalities' opinions on the news.
- National radio games are not fair since a person in another town can win. The listeners in the room who played radio contests (2 or 3) were aware of national radio contests. Most of the others didn't understand what a national radio contest was and assumed that all contesting was won by local winners. Most of the participants did not indicate much interest in playing radio contests at all.

- Personalities who put a lot of their character on the air need to be very careful how they talk about themselves on the radio. Ryan Seacrest and Danny Bonaduce were both hammered for being too self centered and not in touch with everyday people.
- Ryan Seacrest's show was criticized for being the same show as it was when Rick Dees was the host. They said Ellen was boring and laughed too much. Ryan is now "too big for his britches" and talked too much about himself and his TV show. He was better when he was on with Lisa Foxx on Star. They said Rick Dees was corny.
- The women that listened to KZLA wanted more music and less talk in the morning.
- Jamie and Danny were "loud", but that was good in the morning to help one participant wake up. Several women said they would like a strong female lead on the show that was more representative of them and not such a slut. One said listening to the show made her feel "normal".
- The only benchmark on any morning shows that came up, even after probing, were the prank calls on Big Boy's show.
- Howard Stern got positive feedback from one participant for 'telling it like it is'.
- There was very little concern about indecency on the radio. The general feeling was that no one remembered hearing anything on the radio they would qualify as indecent. They know they have the option to change stations if there was objectionable content and they don't care if others want to listen to it.
- They don't like it when listeners call into the show, the hosts start talking to them and then ignore the caller and start talking among themselves. They want hosts to take the time to thank callers for participating and permit them to make their point just as you would in any private conversation.
- They liked the 'positive thought of the day' from Steve Harvey. They also liked the way he is encouraging people to get an education, get a GED, etc.
- They said Big Boy was uplifting and made them feel good to listen to.
- They seem to understand that radio stations had to run commercials for their livelihood, but complained about so many of them on Kiss, specifically. They also did not perceive that stations were running any more commercials than they had in the past. They complained that all of the stations run commercials at the same time.

The Morning Show Producers Forum

Hosted by Spike O'Neill of the Bob Rivers Show

- Just because something is popular, doesn't mean you HAVE to talk about it. If you don't feel passion for a topic, you will not sound interested. If there are multiple players on your show, have the person with the most passion for a topic take the lead.
- Good TSL pushing language: "hang on through the break and we will find out is this is really true/happening, next with Roula and Ryan"

- Chick topics can be used to engage men. Men may not be participating in PMS stories but they can relate.
- When possible, keep your fellow players in the dark about topics/audio you want them to react to. The first reaction is usually the best reaction.
- Take the time to email back to people who send nasty emails about the show. Usually taking the time to acknowledge their concerns can easily turn them around.
- Do stupid stuff. Live your life so you have good stories to talk about on the radio. Don't forget to take your pen mike and mini-disc with you to record audio as a supplement to the story whenever possible.
- There is no such thing as a successful morning show without opinions.
- Try leaving one open break a show and experimenting
- When out and about talking to people you think would be great on the air, GET THEIR NUMBER. Don't rely on them calling you.
- Have a weekly brainstorming meeting that focuses on upcoming shows other than tomorrow.
- When a feature fails on air, take callers and invite them to rip you apart for failing at the bit.
- All benchmarks on your show should have as their goal to increase awareness of your on air character definition.
- Only throw people on your show under the bus that can fight back. Know your staff well enough to know who can and can't stand up on air.
- Great positioning: "Listening to the Murphy Show is like riding to work with your old high school friends."
- A difference between male based and female-based shows is that men like arguments that come to blows, women don't like anger on the radio.

Managing to Have Fun: Matt Weinstein

- Start the day with play. Give yourself a least a quarter hour of play to start each day. Romp with your dogs, tease the wife, wrestle with the kids.
- Doing the same thing the same way it's always been done every day is no way to be creative.
- Try doing one small new thing each day.
- Creative change does not happen overnight. It will be hard to see immediate improvement. Work at being more creative and you will see large results when looking back a year later.

- You can't succeed by yourself. Your team is critical to your long-term success.
- As a manager, work hard to catch someone doing something right and tell them about it.
- Nobody ever gets too much sincere positive feedback.
- Stop comparing yourself to others. Work on reducing thoughts about what is wrong and concentrate on what is right with your life.



The Rule of Working for Success is summed up in a simple song:

- ***Row, Row, Row Your Boat:*** you have to work for success
- ***Gently Down the Stream:*** all things happen for a reason, uncertainty creates stress. Stress and tension are all in the head -- they don't actually exist. Be gentle with yourself and quarantine stress-making thoughts.
- ***Merrily, Merrily, Merrily:*** do something unexpected for people. Make life merry for others and your life will be merrier. Pay the toll for the person behind you.
- ***Life is But a Dream:*** Work hard, be gentle on yourself and others and life will be more dreamlike. Serenity comes to those who work for it.

And One Final Bootcamp Note:

The best advice to come out of Walt Sabo's session: "Be remarkable."



2660 Townsgate Rd. Suite 800 Westlake Village, CA 91361
 Randy Lane: (805) 497-7177 Fax: (805) 497-9858 Email: randy@randylane.net
 Stan Main: (512) 266-7952 Fax: (603) 215-9557 Email: stan@randylane.net