

BULLET POINTS

New Year's Resolutions for 2006

10 Ways to Make Your Show and Radio Station Razor Sharp for 2006

1. Attack Yourself Before a Competitor Does.

First, ask yourself, "How would I beat my show or station?" If I were a new show or station coming into the market, what are my vulnerabilities? What would I do to exploit the weaknesses of my show or station? Take the time to spend a day listening to your radio station or a tape of your show and review each element from the perspective of a brand new program director or morning show. Listen to everything.

'Map Content' for the show and station. Review every element and evaluate it with one of three grades: A – 'great as it is', B -- 'needs improvement' or C – 'it is no longer relevant, it's old or tired and needs to be replaced.' Take the list and make sure the A's are placed as well and as often as they deserve, the B's are improved and brainstorm on ways to replace all the C's as soon as possible to create more unpredictability and newness.

2. Kill Some Sacred Cows

"We've always done it this way" is usually a recipe for predictability and staleness, which will slowly eat away at P1 TSL. If you've been working on your show/station for awhile, there are probably several promotions or features that have been done for the last several years and may have been initially great, but now aren't as exciting or interesting especially for your P1s that have heard it all before.

The best way to remove old tired stuff is to brainstorm around new and cooler stuff. Coming to your sales manager with "we have a great new idea we want to do this year" is a better sell than "we are not going to do that old tried and true sales no-brainer any more."

3. Is Time Really on Your Side?

It really is not in most instances. Pledge to use the increment of time better this year. Great bits and other programming/promotional content frequently are built over time. It is not too early to be sitting down now with producers and promotion people to get Q2 promotions and content on the board and start working on collecting the material needed to make a big on air event or promotion strong for spring. Permissions, sponsorship opportunities, contacts, and great prizes are always easier to obtain and better executed when there is ample lead time to build and implement them.

Now is the time to be planting the seeds for a successful 2006 rating periods. Just like regular savings with compound interest, there is a lot of power in brainstorming content and promotions for the spring and fall rating periods that grow a little day-by-day toward a large payoff at maturity.

4. Employ the Power of Positive Intent.

“You are what you think.” So are morning shows and radio stations. Life coaches, motivational speakers and psychologists will all tell you how powerful it is to speak in present tense terms as if what you’re saying has already happened. Write all promotional copy from the perspective that the listener is **going** to win.

“You **could** win \$1000 **IF** you can answer the question of the day” is better written “You **are** going to win \$1000 **WHEN** you answer this easy question of the day.”

Instead of “Your show isn’t sounding as good as it used to”, try “Do you remember when you used to do that great feature that everyone talked about, what do you think about bringing something like that back?”

5. Eliminate the BIG BUT Syndrome and implement the Power of AND!

Numerous studies reveal how powerful the word “but” is in communication. A well-intended compliment such as, “That was a great interview” followed with “BUT you forgot to ask him about his new local charity,” becomes a criticism. People completely forget any compliment that preceded the word “but” and only hear the negative that follows it.

The power of AND keeps the compliment intact and conveys a reminder of an omission or other point of improvement. “That was a great interview AND next time you could bring up his new local charity. Another example of the power of AND is, “I love the new relationship feature AND it would be even better with a creatively produced intro.”

6. Do It Now.

Every radio station has some problem areas that need to be addressed. Tackle one of those problems and get it resolved early in the new year or the new quarter.

7. Write More Press Releases.

Work with your producer/marketing/promotion director to build a contact list of the major and secondary contacts in town. Make it a goal to send out a press release at least once a month about something on your show or station that could get some press on a slow news day. The next step is to consider having a media event where you trade out finger food and some drinks and invite all the press contacts you identify to socialize after work for a couple of hours. Give them a reason to attend by making some announcement.



8. Master the Muscle of Stealth Marketing.

We are in a business that requires that we stay top of mind with our listeners. We (talent and programmers) are a product that without some visual reinforcement dissipates in the air to nothing. There are never enough marketing dollars to keep us top of mind all year long. Getting out in the community and being noticed can actually make you and your show more memorable than a marketing campaign.

Howard Stern never concerned himself with the company doing TV or billboard campaigns. He inventively found ways to create news and keep himself top of mind in the media. Take advantage of the value of stunts, events and promotions that create an impression and have an impact on your audience. For example, during President Bush's last visit to San Diego, The Mikey Show on KIOZ/Rock 105-3 sent a large group of listeners with Mikey Show signs to "protest the protesters". This 'stunt' garnered TV coverage from every local news station in the market.

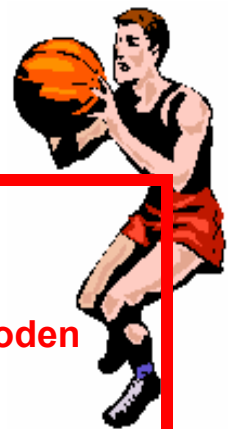
Are you on any local community boards, do you have a pet charity that you meet with regularly? Look for opportunities to get in front of large crowds and MC or just introduce your show or station.

9. Lunch More.

Make it a point to take your co-host(s) or other team members out to lunch or for drinks from time to time. Investing some time in an informal 90 minutes of conversation outside the office can sometimes accomplish tons more without the bad feelings that formal meeting discussions can. In a relaxed setting around food or drink it can be easier to communicate about behavior or feelings that need to be addressed. You'll also be amazed at how new ideas can come out of casual food settings. People are more creative around food.

10. Use The Rule of Three

Three is a powerful number. Researchers will all tell you that the vast majority of people can only remember three things about anything. Listeners can only remember three things about your radio station, your morning show or your character as a talent. Determine what three things listeners love most about your station or show and schedule them often. Also be sure to highlight them in promos in every daypart.



A Coaching Tip From Famed UCLA Basketball Coach John Wooden

The team that makes the most mistakes --- wins!

If your players/talent know that they are free to make mistakes, they also have to be mature enough to let them go as soon as they're made. The team that makes the most mistakes may not always win, but a team that tries to make no mistakes hardly ever will.

Much of our culture, the vast majority of our educational process and most radio stations are focused on elimination of mistakes and dissent. Most great ideas, when first considered, seem crazy to some people involved in evaluating them. You cannot be frightened by the prospect of being wildly wrong, or you'll run the risk of never being wildly right.

It's true in sports and it's true in radio that playing not to lose and playing it safe sooner or later (usually sooner) surely means you'll lose.



SO YOU'RE ON THE BEACH...WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

How do you keep your sanity and your edge when your new full time job is to be looking for a job? It's never easy, but the challenge now is to keep your head in the game and keep your edge, so that you can be ready to go back on the air with a minimum of difficulty.

Be practical: Based on some of my unofficial polling data, the average time a jock is out of work is 3-9 months. Even if you have people beating down your door for interviews for you, it's time to cut back on those expenses and file for unemployment. Even if you're totally sure that a buddy of yours knows this PD who's going to call you with an offer for a new gig later that day, file for unemployment. Even if you have severance, file for unemployment. If you're not sure if you're entitled to it, go down to the Unemployment Office and find out. At the very least it'll give you some good material for when you get back on the air; and if you discover you're eligible, you'll have money coming in.

And speaking of that, save all your receipts for everything pertaining to your job search, from postage for padded envelopes to the padded envelopes themselves; most of it is tax-deductible so check with an accountant come tax time.

Develop new habits: Sometimes we take for granted just how deep we depend on habits to get us through the day. We've heard Program Directors and Consultants tell us that people are creatures of habit; that they like to do the same thing around the same time every workday. This applies even more especially now. Not that you should keep waking up at 3:30am just to be ready for the next morning job, but you do need to get with some kind of regular program so that you can feel less like a sloth, and more like a normal human. By no means does it have to be a rigid schedule, but having things to do makes it easier.

Getting to the gym can be a great way to start the day and keep your mind focused. At first, make it a priority to spend at least a couple of hours each day updating your aircheck, and then edit your resume. Even if you're not sure you want to jump back in immediately, the daily routine will give you the structure you need for the first week or two. Later on, you can begin the few-hours-every-day-project of job hunting, read the trade emails and websites, keep in contact with old co-workers, and go through your address book and old emails to re-establish relationships with contacts.



Call or email everyone you know and tell them you're available and ask for their feedback on your material. Now's a great time to take advantage of all those people who said, "If you ever need anything, let me know." Set up lunches with as many people as you can and don't neglect previous clients who were hot on you while you were working. One former co-worker of mine continued to do a regular gig at one of the clubs he worked. And there's a car dealer in New Jersey who I got along with real well who ended up putting me in some of his TV spots.



Stay current: One of the hardest things about being on the beach is keeping your edge. No matter what kind of show you do: topical, reality/life stories, stunts, games/bits, or a combination, you have to ask yourself: would you be able to go into an on-air audition tomorrow and know exactly what you'd want to do? However you prepped your show on a day-to-day basis, you should continue doing so. Read the papers, go online and check out the latest celebrity news and offbeat stories, watch the hot TV shows.

Keep a running list of those stories that you feel are good enough to still work when you get back on the air. You can always cross them off the list later, but keeping that story-selection skill is important. If you don't have access to the same prep (or even if you do), customizing a "My Yahoo" or "Google News" page is an easy way to keep yourself in the loop as to what's going on in the world. The same holds true to those events in your life that previously would have been "Man, I can't wait to talk about this on the air!" stories. Start a list of those events as if you were going to talk about them the next day. It'll keep your powers of observation sharp and keep your mind in the right place.



The bottom line is that you never know when that call is going to come, and if you're serious about getting back to work, you need to stay sharp.

Good luck on the hunt!

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