

Chapter 2: Finding and Developing Talent

Overview

Chapter 2 discusses how radio stations find and develop talent. Topics in this chapter include: Where do we find tomorrow's talent? Finding talent; What to look for in a talent; Right casting; Managing off-air staff; Right person, wrong show; Right casting and the passion quotient; Right casting for everybody; How do you know you're on the right track; Talent and managers; Similar goals; and Tips for finding and developing talent.

Student objectives:

After reading and understanding this chapter, the students should be able to:

- Identify what radio station management is looking for in the talent they hire.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the process involved in becoming an on-air talent.
- Organize on a chart the positions and personnel involved in the production of the on-air product.

Instructor objectives: Key Lecture Points

1. The qualities of successful on-air personalities are that they are true individuals, gifted storytellers, and good listeners. They have original thought, intelligence, and passion. These people have a spark of life, a sense of humor, and a strong need to be seen and heard.
2. The process for developing talent is one that requires time and faith. Many famous personalities honed their craft ("paid dues") at smaller stations before they got their "big break." Even talent at large stations need to have their performance shaped (developed) by the Program Director or Management.
3. Consolidation of radio stations into large group ownership is eliminating the "training ground" for talent. Radio stations often look for talent outside of the radio industry.
4. "Right casting" is the pairing of the right personality at the right station for the success of both.
5. Radio is a team effort. There are many "support positions" at radio stations that may not receive the credit and attention that the on-air talent does. Many people take other positions off-air with aspirations to be on-air when the opportunity presents itself ("foot in the door".)
6. The "passion quotient" is the talent's desire to work at the station (in radio) for more than just a paycheck. (It is how much they love the work and want to do it.)

Discussion topics:

- Discuss the different paths to careers in the radio industry. There is not one particular way to become an on-air talent. There are also many other positions in radio, which may have the same passion quotient and may not be in the limelight.
- Ask the class to name radio shows they know of where the hosts came from non-radio backgrounds (e.g., legal advice or lawyer, computer expert, car expert, gardening show, home repair, etc.). Make a list on the whiteboard.
- A visual aid of the various departments, managers, and support staff of a radio station compared to and contrasted with the structure and framework of your student station is a great correlation for your students.

Key words:

Talent

Programmers

Radio market

Right casting

Off-air staff

Passion quotient

Class Activity:

- **Tell a story three times three different ways:** Student groups of three persons. You are a “Morning Zoo Crew” on a radio station. It’s an ongoing story. Select the facts of the story (who, what, when, where, how, and why) and create three different “angles” of the story in order to tell it on the air three different ways so that it is not boring (or a “rehash”) to your regular listeners. (Cite example in the book.) Each group must prepare how they will present their three versions to the class (tell the three versions of the story three different ways.)
- Each group is given a letter. Instructor does not reveal the fact that only a few letters will be chosen at random for the groups to tell their three stories in front of the class (so that everyone in each group will be prepared to tell their stories to the class.) This can be taken an extra step to having each group record their three versions of their stories in the production room, for playback at a later date.

Assignment/Quiz:

Creating Powerful Radio: Chapter 2 Reading Assignment and Worksheet/Open Book Quiz