

"KEEP YOUR FEARS TO YOURSELF, BUT SHARE YOUR COURAGE WITH OTHERS"...  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



BROADCAST PROGRAMMING & RESEARCH

B P & R E - N E W S L E T T E R

J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 7

## SNAPSHOTS

BP&R welcomes Star FM Berlin to the BP&R Family in 2007!

BP&R also extends its involvement with DMG Radio Australia in 2007 with strategic input to its VEGA brand stream stations.

Congratulations to Stefan Bielau who steps up to the GM's position at Radio WaWa Poland.

Remember a movie called "Moscow On The Hudson" starring Robin Williams?...well it was a case of "Moscow On The Harbour" over the New Year in Sydney when Mikhail Eidelman the GM of RELAX FM and CITY FM Moscow visited with his delightful wife Anya.

*In our next Newsletter:  
"Aircheck sessions and leveraging performance"*

[www.bpr.com.au](http://www.bpr.com.au)

## Developing Talent

By Wayne Clouten

The goal for the PD when it comes to the presenters is to maximize the potential of the on-air talent to enhance the execution of the format and engage the interest of listeners when they talk... which means entertaining and informing. At a minimum you want efficient communicators who deliver the format consistently. At the other end of the scale a station needs a "star", particularly if you want to be market leader. In a music station this invariably needs to be the morning DJ.

There is probably no more demanding a role for a PD than developing the on-air talent. It's a realm of egos to be soothed, paradigms to be changed, expectations to be managed, energies to be directed and often taking risks. The rewards can be enormous like staff that are both successful and very loyal. It's not just about having experience in radio...it's also about having experience in managing and coaching people who often may have been around longer than you have or

think they are god because they got lucky in the last survey.

I've known Programme Directors that consign talent development to the "too-hard basket" either hiring a talent coach or churning through people until they find the "right" person or "buying" who they think they need at great anguish to the financial controller. I call this talent "brokering" not talent development...and I don't suggest it's necessarily wrong...

### "It's not just about having experience in radio...it's also about having experience in managing and coaching people"

it's a wise PD who understands their time or experience limitations but for the sake of this article let's talk about talent development by the Programme Director, the art of coaching and directing your on-air staff to personally achieve things they wouldn't have without your personal involvement.

The key is developing a meaningful rapport and respect from the person you are dealing with. This doesn't happen from an office. Staff don't have to like you but they do need to respect you

or at least respect what you "bring to the table" if any progress is to be made.

Lets discuss some of the fundamental goals the PD has to achieve in order to "make a difference" with the on-air talent.

Establish your credibility by sitting through their show every now and then, know how it works intimately, listen to at least part of their show every day, congratulate them on the good bits, ask where they thought they could improve. Its im-

portant to contribute ideas in equal proportion to criticism.

Develop empathy by getting to know them as people but don't get too close or personally involved. Set yourself up as a person who is a resource to them not just the boss. Never act in anger. Don't cut people off halfway through them telling you something but do manage expectations and your time efficiently. Make appointments with staff and keep them!

Do you have some news, a tip, suggestion or question?

Email [wayne-clouten@compuserve.com](mailto:wayne-clouten@compuserve.com)

**“ You know you have both rapport and respect when they seek your feedback immediately following their show, write down your suggestions on a piece of paper and you hear your suggestions on-air the next day”**

Encourage dialogue by listening to their ideas first, give them an air check and ask them to self assess. Only highlight the negatives they don't spot first, always acknowledge what they did well because you want to direct their focus on their natural strengths. You know you have both rapport and respect when they seek your feedback immediately following their show, write down your suggestions on a

piece of paper and you hear your suggestions on-air the next day.

So...aren't we just talking about regular air checks? If we are dealing with a compliant, eager mind...then yes, that's about it. But what if we are talking about a fading star, an egomaniac, some raw talent who has never had a chance to blossom. or a 24 year old PD trying to direct the 48 year

old morning jock? (*Hey son; I was in radio before you were born*). In these situations things become far more complex and the PD has to work strategically not just by force of personality or position. Sometimes you simply have to force change but its always best to avoid "malicious compliance" - staff who say they will do it but behind your back try to de-rail your ideas.

**“I am yet to listen to a presenter anywhere in the world that couldn't do with some direction or polish”**

In these situations you will have to apply different tactics to different situations. Stars respond best to suggestive direction, lay the seed of an idea with them and when they come up with "their" idea, let them have the glory.

Egomaniacs hate criticism and will take things personally. You will need to "de-personalise" your communication with egomaniacs. Instead of saying "How about you do it this way". Say "I wonder how it would

sound if we could do it this way" Egomaniacs generally like a challenge as long as you don't make it a "test" for them.

Obviously you must have confidence in your own ability to direct and develop staff. Simply listening to your staff and channeling their ideas and energy is a very worthy outcome for a PD. You don't have to be the person who has all the ideas, but you do need to be the person who gets the decisions made.

Sure, some presenters "have it" and some don't but I am yet to listen to a presenter anywhere in the world that couldn't do with some direction or polish. Its what I call the "continual pursuit of excellence" and no one is immune from its benefits.

In a future newsletter we'll cover the detailed mechanics of an air check session and setting measurable goals.

**BP&R has moved it's Australian offices from Military Road, Neutral Bay to Georges Heights overlooking Sydney Harbour. We are delighted to be located at this heritage listed site with its magnificent views of the harbour and surrounding bush land. Needless to say we would be delighted to show any visitors to Sydney the sights!**

