

# Radio Rocks!

*Radio affects people intimately, by offering a one to one communication between speaker and listener.* – Understanding Media, Marshall McLuhan.

**One** of the oldest forms of entertainment in India – Radio, which was dominated by AIR, is now witnessing a sea change. Radio is making a comeback in the lifestyle of Indians. Today personality is the heart and soul of radio and it is also the hardest ingredient to maintain on a daily basis. All the Radio channels have got the best of research and advertising. Also, all of them have the access to the same kind of contemporary hit music. But, **“radio is not only about music and entertainment, it’s about engagement.”** Thus, the next big trends in radio, which would define the industry, are going to be:

## 1) Create Radio listenership by appointment –

Engage customers in such a way that Radio emerges as a medium wherein the listenership will happen by appointment. Can we ever forget the days when people used to wait throughout the week and switch on their Radio sets on weekend to listen to Binaca Geet Mala? Thus, if a program is conceptualized, executed and marketed well, will definitely result in a great listenership. With intense competition around it’s just the right time to experiment with programming in a very innovative way

## 2) Connect communities through radio –

Internationally, if we see the trend we realize that although radio is a very personal medium but the most successful channels are the ones that have got involved with people and have connected like-minded ones. These are the channels, which have engaged their listeners purely on emotions and have worked hard to develop an interactive process that has been able to strike the right chord, which eventually connects like-minded individuals. The forte of Radio is the fact that perhaps no other medium can create a personal experience like the one Radio can. To create a successful radio, one must know how and when to entertain. People tune in to radio for entertainment, which should sound very personal to them. All successful Radio channels are like a person who relates to people around him. They weave humour around issues that matter to listeners. Radio has to talk about issues that are personal to listeners and they can relate to – such as: in-laws, daily problems and highs of having a spouse, co-workers, TV shows which are most popular. Radio has to be predictably unpredictable – the listener should tune in expecting to get familiar stuff but should always get surprised by the scope of content. The potent point is to sustain a one-to-one contact with the listeners, both on and off-air. The person speaking on Radio should sound real and very much like me. He should be able to talk about everything that concerns the life of a normal individual. Given a choice between topical and personal, I would say it’s the latter that would create a competitive advantage. Remember, nothing can substitute the personal touch.

## 3) Integration of content for customized solutions –

Radio is perhaps the only medium that allows you to create very personal communication for advertisers within the realm of consumers’ comfort and entertainment. On radio, everything is a story. Advertisers’ communication can be part of story told on radio by the jock. Research shows that some of the most effective radio ads are often the ones that are read live by the RJ. A listener is emotionally attached to his / her favourite radio channel. The audience regards the on-air personality as a familiar friend and puts more confidence in advertising message when the personality reads the spot live. However, the RJ has to communicate the entire message in a very creative manner. There is a third party endorsement happening out here. This is one beauty of radio that can never be replicated by print or TV. In the near future, advertisers are very heavily going to capitalize on this feature.

In addition to the above, the industry is expected witness another breakthrough wherein the existing radio players may get multiple frequencies at one station. This will open up a new segment of niche channels catering to specific needs of listeners. This will also add tremendous value to the advertisers who are looking at targeting specific audiences.

To sum up, listeners today don’t want prepared stuff, they want things that touch them every day and radio as a medium is fulfilling that need. It’s a medium that compels listeners to take action. ‘The Future of Radio in the Age of Convergence’, is the base for all radio players to be able to meet standards. They all are working towards identification of radio’s position within the current media landscape of multiple platform deliveries; and discuss how radio can adapt to cater to the fast-changing audience’s profile and needs.

As an advertising platform in the commercial arena, Digitalisation provides significant opportunities for radio to expand its relevance as an information medium in the public service sphere.

The challenge for radio now is how best to generate and sustain new audiences and revenue streams through these technologies to ensure that they remain timely and relevant. New technologies and convergence have changed the way in which all media operate - be it from a technological or business perspective. Radio has evolved and has benefited the most from these changes. In fact, radio has traditionally set the path that other media have adapted for their own purposes. Radio rocks. As someone says, “It’s radio that creates better pictures”.



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