



Why not run your School Radio Station as a virtual business??

To start off with:

We need to appoint a “Station Manager” and give them a Virtual Budget. They need to employ their “Management Team”, which will include:

Programme Controller – Responsible for Choosing presenters, competitions and shows. Overall control of the sound of the station. Analyse Audience research. Provide feedback and mentoring for producers and presenters. Make sure station fulfils OFCOM regulations. They Report directly to Station Manager over the rise and fall in Audience figures.

Head of Sales – Responsible for Choosing the Sales Team, Liaise with Accounts, Traffic, Programming, Commercial Production Departments and Outside Sales Agencies, who sell all the national brands (such as Coca Cola) on your station. Set Sales targets, and mentor staff to hit or exceed those targets. Agree how much airtime is available with Programme Controller.

Chief Engineer – Responsible for maintaining all the broadcast and office IT equipment, they manage contracts with suppliers. Approve and manage health and safety policies for studio and outside broadcasts and ensure smooth running of all technical areas of the operation.

Head of Commercial Traffic – Responsible for the advertising / sponsorship Inventory on the station. They make sure the adverts conform to advertising regulations, and are correctly scheduled for broadcast. They also oversee that they were broadcast correctly and the campaign achieved what the sales staff promised to the client.

RADIO INDUSTRY JARGON –**Traffic Manager** means: *verb (used without object)* to carry on traffic, trade, or commercial dealings.

Head of Accounts – Responsible for cash flow of the business. Invoicing Clients for Airtime packages, commercial production and script writing services. Paying the Bills, ensuring that any royalty payments are made to PRS / PPL / MCPS, the copyright bodies.

Have a look at our “Typical Commercial Radio Station Management Structure” flowchart diagram, for a better look at the roles and responsibilities of staff inside a commercial radio organisation.

http://www.schoolradio.co.uk/media/5919/typical_commercial_radio_station_management_structure.pdf

Now we need to:

Get our team together, and decide which shows we are going to broadcast, here are some examples:

- Breakfast Show – General Entertainment and music, normally presented by several people, this is called the “Zoo Format” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoo_format

- Drive Time Show - Typically this is at the end of the day, with an emphasis on Travel, News and fast paced music.

How about something different?

- Games Review – Take an in-depth look at the latest computer games. Reviews, Cheats, and social trends – is Angry Birds still popular?
- Science in 60 Seconds – come up with an explanation to a puzzle of the universe in just 60 seconds. Why is the sky blue?
- The Weekly Play – How about your own on-going soap opera like Eastenders? Why not try out “The Mystery on Spooky Hill”
- Revision Bits - In the run up to exams, let's recap some key facts and figures that might just get you out of a hole when it comes to sitting your exams?
- Fitness First – How about taking a leaf out of the Japanese work ethic, and getting the whole school to have an aerobic exercise for a few minutes before school starts?

So now:

We have to get these shows ready for broadcast, preparing any music or sound effects required. We also have to decide how much airtime we want to sell during the broadcasts.

Now our sales team can go to the different departments / clubs within the school and extol the virtues of Radio Advertising. Try to sell the PE Department a campaign with a 15 or 30 Second advert for joining the School Football team:

[PUMPING MUSIC- DRIVING BEAT]

VOICE OVER 1 [ECHO EFFECT – LIKE ITS YOUR OWN VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD] “11 Players, one aim, just one aim. Get more points than them.”

VOICE OVER 2 “You can hear the blood pumping in your temples; you are rapidly running out of breath. Your legs are burning with exhaustion. You Shoot!”

VOICE OVER 1 [ECHO EFFECT – LIKE ITS YOUR OWN VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD] “I’ve scored!”

VOICE OVER 2 “You Score!”

[CROWD NOISE GOING WILD]

VOICE OVER 3 “Join up for St Cuthbert’s First 11 Football Team, Try-outs start this week. Be there 3.45pm Wednesday. Could you be the first to score?”

How many times should this advert be played? How much are you going to charge the PE Department for writing the script and the time spent producing the advert, and how much will you charge per play?

Don’t forget you need to pay PRS for the music used; also you’ll need to pay the Voice Artists!

So now you need to arrange to have the script recorded, and the sound effects and the music added.

Have you checked that the script is ok with the client? And any advertising regulations?

<http://www.cap.org.uk/The-Codes/BCAP-Code.aspx>

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/other->

[codes/adv sponsorship code.pdf](#)

All of this will need to be agreed with the programme controller, it will need to be scheduled by the Commercial Traffic Manager. Now it needs to be played at the right time by the presenter. Most importantly it should be invoiced to the client by the Accounts Team and they should collect the money and bank it!

Now we are up and running:

We must make sure all of the shows get broadcast at the correct times.

We need to make sure any adverts are produced in time for the campaigns to start.

We must stop playing old adverts! (No point giving away our product for free!!)

Programme Controller- you should hold “Snoop” Sessions with your presenters, to make sure that they are broadcasting to the best of their abilities. Are your listeners enjoying the choice of music? Is the Speech content interesting? Is anyone listening?

Accounts - please make sure all the bills are paid and that invoices for airtime have been settled. (Or is it time to send round the bailiffs?)

Chief Engineer- is the equipment still in tip top condition? Do you have to work out the health and safety aspects of your Outside Broadcast of the Football match next week?

News Editor – are your team getting enough exclusive stories? Do they relate to what the audience wants to know? Are you trying to Entertain or Inform?

Station Manager – how's business?

Is your programming team doing enough to hold, and build new listeners? The more you have the more you can charge for your airtime! Should you be doing audience research?

Is your Programme Controller able to control their staff? Do the on-air talent do what they are told?

Are you selling enough airtime to cover your costs? If not can you get a loan from the virtual bank? Do you need to sell the station to a virtual company with more money?

Are the accounts team invoicing correctly, is the revenue actually coming in and being banked?

Do you need to hold staff reviews; are they performing at the best of their ability for the good of the business? Do you need to negotiate virtual wage packages? (Don't forget the virtual Tax and National Insurance!)

You don't have to run a complete radio station, but lots of these roles / issues can easily be introduced to the students, to give them a greater understanding of the “real world”.

All sounds so simple when it comes out of the speaker on your radio in the car, doesn't it!