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Dedicated to You

May this book open up new avenues in the world of Radio
"Theories and Techniques of Radio Broadcasting" is a small manual for radio hosts created from a careful collage of articles which appeared on the Blog of Radiobroadcaster.org from November 2009 to August 2011. The book tries to follow a sequential didactic path. We start from a broad, general panorama of Radio (from the structure of a Radio Station to the most widely used broadcasting formats, going from the subdivision of the roles of a radio to the structure of a broadcasting clock) to then get into the more specific, didactic aspects: how to become a Professional Radio Host. The book tries to shed light and clarity on the tasks a Radio Host must do during his presence on the radio, illustrating the radio broadcasting techniques that are most widely used on national networks. It attempts to answer questions like “How do you become a radio host?”, “What are the main rules of radio broadcasting?” to then move on to more technical questions like managing the duration of broadcasting comments, the use of the AIDA technique for the writing and structure of radio scripts, and the preparation of an effective demo to send as a calling card.
Lastly, several useful techniques are included to improve microphone performance, like: how to warm-up the voice, how to use correct voice pitch, and how to articulate words well.

This is a constantly evolving book. It is subject to continuous additions and corrections in relation to the evolution of the radio host’s role. Anyone buying the electronic version of this book will receive the updates made to the book itself from time to time.

Hoping to hear your feedback, I wish you pleasant reading.

Giorgio d'Ecclesia

C.E.O. Radiobroadcaster.org
1. RADIO

WHAT IS RADIO?

To approach the subject of Theories and Techniques of Radio Broadcasting we have to begin from a broader, more general question: What is radio?

To answer this question, we’ll take a real episode which radically changed my way of seeing radio.

I was in Milan, at a famous regional radio, for one of many auditions. I was 25 at the time. I’d left home,
friends, and family to pursue my dream of becoming a professional radio host and I found myself sitting across from a very important Station Manager who had to choose between me and another ten candidates vying for the job as broadcaster. Luckily, the audition began with a cordial interview in which the “director” tried to break the ice by asking me the very question with which we are starting our discussion regarding radio: "So, Giorgio, what’s radio?". “Great! – I thought – I know this one!” And I started in with my rigmarole: "Radio is a means of communication based on music and words that entertains and informs the public – I replied – a means that broadcasts warmth, emotion and draws in the listeners ".

I thought I’d given an impeccable answer, straight from the book!

Well, maybe too much from the book, because he smiled in a strange way, as if to say: “I knew you’d give the usual cookie cutter answer” and a moment later he said: "Sure Giorgio, radio’s all of that, but for anyone who wants to work in radio and be a professional radio announcer, like yourself, radio is a company and we’re all its employees".
These words came out of the blue. My prospective and way of looking at Radio suddenly changed. What!? Radio is a company?! Like the one where you clock in, with offices, secretaries, and rules imposed from above? Where there are directors in jackets and ties and everyone has a specific role?”

Yes.

My old “romantic” idea of “Radio“, my naive, enthusiastic idea of something where everyone says what they want, chooses the music they like, sets the timing of their own programs, and jokes around on the air, anywhere and anytime they like, became totally unhinged by that one phrase: Radio is a Company.

Okay, this is our starting point, the basic concept for talking about Radio: a radio is the Company we work for. Let’s change our prospective and look at radio from the inside. We’ll look at it through the eyes of those who work there every day. For any technician, newscaster, radio host, publicity agent, secretary, artistic director, or station manager, Radio is none other than the company where they work. Each one has a precise role, precise responsibility limited to his or her own sector, and is
paid to do his or her specific job. The common objective is to satisfy the demands of the Station Manager, who, in turn, is an employee like all the others and must satisfy the demands of the CEO, the real head and owner of the Company.

This being said, we can concentrate on the specific role of the Radio Company that is most important to us: the role of the Radio Host.

The Radio Host is none other than the Voice of the Company.

A radio builds its “image” through various elements: music, programming, sound effects, hosts, jingles, theme songs, etc... The host’s voice gives life to the Radio Station and is fundamental in carrying out the Company’s sound image, the so-called Stationality (the "character" of Radio).

The role of the Announcer is more difficult and more delicate than you may think. Technicians, Programmers, Directors and other professional figures work “behind the scenes”. They organize the program’s schedule, produce the radio sounds, and select the music, but in
the end, they’re represented by the voice of the Radio Announcer.

In essence, the Radio Host is the person on the front line, the one who expresses the Stationality to the public, recapping, with his voice, the work of the entire staff.

Every radio announcer is entrusted with the task of giving a voice, a color, an intensity, an intention, a style, a rhythm and thus a soul to the Company he works for. The Company broadcasts its messages, its personal style, its own intentions, and its placement, through the voice of the Announcer. He represents the entire company (including technicians, directors, and editors). A good radio broadcaster has to learn to serve the public, serve the radio he’s working for and serve himself as well; mediating between his own personality and the Stationality of the Radio he works for. This is much harder than it seems.
JOBS IN RADIO

In these first few pages we mentioned Editors, Station Managers, Radio Broadcasters, Technicians, etc. more than once. So, the moment has come to analyze the various jobs within the Radio Company and to structure them in an organizational pyramid with the Editor of the Radio at the top and, underneath, a series of diversified professional figures.

**Editor:** the owner of the Radio Station, the person who signs contracts, hires personnel, pays all the Radio Station expenses (including the salaries of all the personnel). He owns or rents the radio premises and sets
down the rules, or the “editorial line” as well as the format to follow. Usually, he personally hires the Station Manager, the Marketing Director, and the Managing Editor.

Station Manager: handles the general management of the company, coordinates the directors of the various sectors (advertising, music, programs, editing), makes sure the editorial line and format are respected and that they correspond to the format agreed upon with the Editor. He checks to see that each one does his or her own job and listens to the needs of all the personnel. In general, the Station Manager selects the radio broadcasters as well as the technicians for live broadcasting and production.

Marketing Director: as the name suggests, the marketing director studies the advertising strategies that the radio will have to follow. He coordinates the agents in the search for new advertisers and he handles the relations with the large firms which are in contact with the Radio (for commercials).

Advertising Agent: an essential figure for the proper functioning of the Radio Station because it is his main
task to procure advertisers, in other words, money for the Station itself. For the most part, marketing agents work by appointment, hunting down advertisers. They spend their day on the phone and also move physically from one advertiser to another, presenting the advertising offers proposed by the station.

**Music Director:** deals with the Station’s choice of music, tries to respect the Station’s “musical line” and broadcasting format agreed upon with the Station Manager and Editor. He usually directs a music office where his collaborators, and he himself, listen to and select pieces which will later be put into the programming of the radio.

**Program Director:** checks that all things aired are correct. He resolves any sudden problems that come up during the program and, together with the Musical Director and Station Manager, studies the airing of new programs or makes changes to an existing program.

**Editor-in-Chief:** directs the journalistic section of the Station, checking that the information is impeccable and correct and usually provides the Radio News. He
personally chooses and hires new newscasters and the Station’s press agent.

**Newscaster:** handles the editing part of the Station. He collects the news, does the interviews, writes and anchors the Radio News, and in addition records features and in depth analyses to air during the news program.

**Radio Announcer/Broadcaster:** The Broadcasting Announcer is the Company’s Voice, he is on the front line to express The Company’s image to the public. His voice represents that of the entire staff: technicians, newscasters, editors, and directors included. (We’ll go deeper into the figure of the radio announcer in the following pages of this book).

**Broadcast Technician:** deals with the airing of programs. Checks that the volume levels are correct, the radio has no holes (minutes of silence), and that everything that arrives to the public sounds good. He’s the announcer’s right-hand man, he’s with him for the duration of the airing, and often intervenes with sound effects, theme songs or pieces of songs. His role is very
delicate, at least as delicate as the announcer’s: the airing of the entire staff’s work is entrusted to him.

**Production Engineer:** produces audio material which will be aired as pre-recorded material: jingles, backing tracks, promos, liners, theme songs, programs, spot ads, interviews, etc.

**Web Designer:** as you can imagine he’s the one who is responsible for the internet site of the Station. He usually has a number of collaborators, often the members of the Radio, including the marketing agents with whom he works with in order to insert advertising campaigns online.

**Secretaries:** handle all the work associated with secretarial duties, phone calls, faxes, prize games, editorial work, etc…
Like any self-respecting business or media sector, the broadcasting sector is characterized by stiff competition between companies where the object of contention is the market share.

Every Broadcasting Editor will try to secure the greatest number of listeners in order to increase the advertising income of the company. The reason is simple: the more listeners a Broadcasting Station is able to gather, the higher the advertising selling price will be....