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The Three C's Of Morning Shows

Building a new morning show is probably the most challenging, frustrating and potentially rewarding thing a PD can do. Despite an incredibly high failure rate, the opportunity to build something new and affective, mixed with the potential for great ratings and revenue rewards, makes the process exhilarating.

New morning shows come in several forms. Stations can plug in one of many syndicated options, hire an established show away from another station or, as has been the case at several top 40 stations lately, assemble a new show by mixing new hires with existing staffers. Unfortunately, this option may be the most complicated to execute effectively.

"We are very careful about who we wake up with in the morning, so you can't just say, 'Let's put our night guy in morning drive,'" says Steve Reynolds, a former morning host and president of the Reynolds Group, who coaches a number of major-market morning shows. "You need chemistry, goals and content strategy. If not, you'll just get on the air and talk a lot about Lindsay Lohan, and that doesn't work."

THE FIRST C: CHEMISTRY

Reynolds explains that it's tougher to build a morning show by combining hosts from other dayparts than hiring an existing show away from another station or going syndicated, because

"it's easier to buy chemistry than to create it."

But that doesn't mean it can't be done and that there aren't ways to minimize the risks. Bicoastal Media mainstream top 40 KDUK Eugene, Ore., PD Valerie Steel suggests exposing the potential cast members to each other before making a hiring decision.

When she set out to hire a co-host for "The Morning House Party," Steel involved current host Chino, who had handled mornings on his own for nearly two years, right from the start. Having him listen to tapes of potential partners and provide feedback helped narrow the field of candidates. Then, when Janita Jones, who would eventually get the job, came in for her first interview, Steel sent her and Chino off to lunch together. "Before we took that next step I wanted Chino to buy in. If he had come back and said, 'Something doesn't really ring right,' I would have looked somewhere else," Steel says.

But it's not always possible to have the current host involved in the process. In the case of Local Media rhythmic top 40 XHTZ (Z90.3) San Diego, PD R Dub! was looking for an after-

noon host when he found Chunky, who had recently left the night slot at CBS Radio mainstream top 40 WXRK (92-3 NOW) New York.



Building chemistry for a new morning team can be challenging. Just ask Bicoastal Media mainstream top 40 KDUK Eugene, Ore., morning hosts Chino and Janita Jones (bottom) or Local Media rhythmic top 40 XHTZ (Z90.3) San Diego's Tati & Chunky (top left and right).

MIGUEL

ADORN

Crossing to Top 40 Now!

Top 5* Rhythm Record!

#1 Greatest Gainer!

#1 Urban Record for 5 Weeks!

#3 Billboard Album Debut!

123K Sold!

335K Singles Sold To Date!

KIIS/Los Angeles KAMP/Los Angeles WKQI/Detroit KEGY/San Diego WEZB/New Orleans KBFF/Portland 20 on 20/SiriusXM

At that point, morning host Tati had been working alone for a while and was getting good ratings—consistently top three in demo—despite competing against higher-profile shows with bigger budgets. So, when the decision to hire Chunky for mornings was made, he immediately had a frank discussion with Tati to find out what concerns she had.

Tati was primarily worried about what Chunky would be like to work with, because a previous morning show partner of hers had been so difficult to deal with she had begun dreading coming into work. To help get the team off on the right foot, R Dub! held a number of meetings and phone calls with the two hosts—some informal so they could get to know each other, and some more business-oriented where they brainstormed ideas and discussed mechanics for the show.

So far it's working out well. "They have a great relationship and seem to be having fun on the air. You would think they've known each other for years."



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Emmis rhythmic top 40 WQHT (Hot 97) New York afternoon host Angie Martinez tweeted this picture when Mike Tyson visited the station recently.

THE SECOND C: CONTENT

Once the players are in place for a show, the next step is determining what that show will be about. Reynolds suggests starting with an analysis of other shows in the market to assess what they're delivering. "You have to have a strategy for content that can't be duplicated across the street."



REYNOLDS

When he started working with J and Julian at CBS top 40 WBBM-FM (B96) Chicago, Reynolds looked at their primary competition at the time and saw a show that was very Anglo-oriented. In contrast, J and Julian are Jamaican and Asian, respectively. "It hit me: We're the multicultural show. Add in Showbiz Shelly, our hip, white sidekick, and our Hispanic producer and we reflect multicultural Chicago."

Once a show has a plot and direction, Reynolds says it's easier for the hosts to focus on choosing and delivering the right content. For example, he's noticed the efforts of NBC's "Today"

in helping viewers get to know new co-host Savannah Guthrie. That's probably what led to a recent segment where she took a ride in an Air Force fighter jet piloted by her brother. "That's choosing content to reinforce your current plotline or content goal," Reynolds says.

However, just because there's a content strategy in place doesn't mean a new show should go overboard. R Dub! says that as much as he loves what Chunky and Tati are doing in the mornings, there are times he has to pull them back. "This

early in their development I'd rather leave [the audience] wanting more than roll it out too fast," he says. "There's so much to be gained from a slow build."

THE THIRD C: CONFLICT

Regardless of how good the team's chemistry is or how well thought out the content plan is, every morning show will inevitably hit bumps in the road and have conflicts.

"Think back to the beginning of any relationship. How did that chemistry form?" Reynolds asks. "You have to go on a lot of dates. And while it might be euphoric at the beginning, the path is going to get rocky at some point."

For PDs, Reynolds says it's important to foster an environment of honest communication and instill a sense of collective responsibility into the team. Of course, that has to include the PD as well. "We are all in the people management business, and if a PD wants to get the most out of show, they can't fake it. Talent know if a PD means it or not."

When it comes to conflict, R Dub! suggests that PDs try to hold back at first. "I like my personalities to be PD of their own show. When bumps come up, quite often

they will work them out themselves. Then, when I'm needed, I'll be there to guide them. I will moderate and mediate and make executive decisions as necessary."

Steel says that quite often the best thing a PD can do to help shows get past bumps in the road is to simply listen. "Sometimes people just need to know they are being heard and that you take their feelings seriously."

And while listening in, Steel says, try to stay calm. "As a PD you can dictate how they are going to deal with problems. If you fly off the handle with every little thing that goes wrong, how do you think they will react?"

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES: MANAGING TOP PERFORMERS

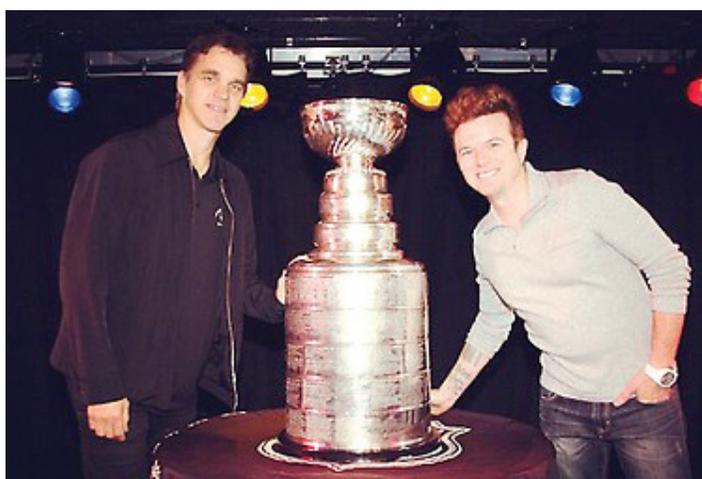
Each week in *Outside Influences* we'll share a piece of advice you might not have seen because it's from someone outside of the world of radio and records.

A team can't be successful if its top players aren't performing. Take the Boston Red Sox's dismal season. According to a SmartBlog on Leadership [story](#), 27 different players, including 13 former All-Stars, were on the disabled list at some point.

S. Chris Edmonds, a senior consultant with the Ken Blanchard Cos., says managers should make it a priority to ensure their top performers are able to operate at their highest level. If not, be proactive in addressing whatever challenges are in their way so your team can be in a position to win.

NEWS AND NOTES

- The 40th annual American Music Awards ceremony taking place Nov. 18 will feature performances by Taylor Swift, Nicki Minaj, Chistina Aguilera and Linkin Park. Billboard.biz has all the details on nominees and voting [here](#).
- Fans of One Direction and/or the New Orleans Saints can get the lowdown on the supergroup 1DB—the combination of One Direction and Saints quarterback Drew Brees in this [article](#) on Billboard.com. The story includes a video that chronicles the group from its inception to the band telling Brees it wasn't working out.
- According to research by the Intelligence Group, 73% of consumers ages 18-34 say they plan on voting for the candidate they feel will make the world a better place as opposed to who they believe will improve their personal situation. Reporting on the study, an OnlineMediaDaily [article](#) says the 900 people surveyed also listed climate change as a "hot" issue.
- Young people haven't forsaken printed books and libraries for e-readers, according to a new [study](#) by the Pew Research Center. More than 80% of Americans between 16 and 29 have read a book in the last year and 60% have used their local library.
- Nielsen has some good news for midsize markets: Retail spending is expected to grow at a double digit rate during the next five years, resulting in more ad dollars. The [report](#) mentions cities like Denver; San Antonio; Raleigh, N.C.; and Austin as the types of cities expected to see big growth.



Clear Channel mainstream top 40 KIIS (102.7 Kiss-FM) Los Angeles night host JoJo Wright is finding ways to make do while the NHL is on strike. He recently tweeted this shot of himself (right) with the Stanley Cup and Luc Robitaille, a former star player who's now president of business operations for the Los Angeles Kings.

The CHRONICLER

GETTIN' ALL UP IN T-SWIZZLE'S BIZZLE

The song "22" from Taylor Swift's new album *Red* refers to the superstar's age, but it could just as easily be the number of retailers Swift's partnered with, and media appearances she's made, to promote both *Red* and herself. Radio is well-represented, given Clear Channel's Monday release party on iHeartRadio, along with special content, a contest and Swift's intros for songs from *Red* on its stations.

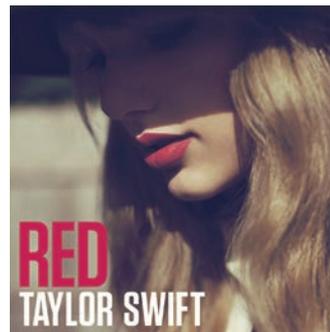


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While the media and retailer [blitz](#) has made Swift hard to avoid, putting *Red* on course to sell 1 million during this first week of release, what happens next week and after that, just in case there's someone left on the planet who doesn't know there's a new Taylor Swift album?

To address this, the CHRONICLER would like to propose additional measures that Big Machine, Clear Channel and Swift Inc. should take to get more of America seeing *Red*, if you will.

"Date N' Dump Taylor Swift" radio promotion and reality show.



QUEEN

From "Teardrops on My Guitar" to "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together," Swift's biggest hits have been fueled by her relationships, specifically their breakups. No way anyone wants to stop that gravy train, so how about a national radio contest to find the next guy to, shall we say, provide inspiration? This promotion's success would naturally lead to a TV dating show titled, what else, "Taylor Swift, You Belong With Me."

The Taylor Swift Mall. Speaking of relationships, Swift's never had one longer than with Target. Who'd blame us if we thought this the reason for the album title *Red*? If that's not enough TayTay at retail: Walgreens shoppers can visit the "Taylor Swift Store"; Papa John's has an album-with-pizza deal (come to think of it, tomato sauce is red); other stores carry Keds limited edition *Red* sneakers and Swift's perfumes from Elizabeth Arden (neither named "Red-olent": file under "missed opportunity"). At this rate, "Operation T-Swizzle" is only a few retailers shy of taking over every shopping complex. Orange Julius, watch your back.

The "Swiftly 50." Big Machine's strategy of releasing a new song from *Red* every week for several weeks leading up to release day has sent each of those songs into the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 and Hot Digital Songs. Songs from *Red* account for half of this week's iTunes top 10. Why not keep this going every week and just give Swift her own chart? Along with her own weekly countdown show: "American Top Me"?

Finally, here's a tie-in that somehow hasn't happened yet but feels like a natural: Swift and Burger King (pictured). Note the nearly identical fonts. There's already an Angry Whopper, so there may as well be a "Mean" one. Jingle? Glad you asked. Ahem. "Beef—and cheddar, cheddar—we put 'em back together." No charge, people, no charge. ●●●



KING