

Strategic Advice from Radio's Premiere Talent Coach

Planet Reynolds

We Create Personality Radio



The Reynolds Group

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Ten Things That Will Make You Live and Local

The line receiving the most applause at last month's NAB was "live and local". For stations with local talent, it's the perfect sell against the equally viable national-platform strategy. Both work as long as they are entertaining and engaging for their respective audience. As I have coached local talent across the country, it's easy to lose one's connection to their community given the routine of life. So, we regularly review the list below, ten easy things to do to communicate that you're live and local to the audience:

- When was the last time the air staff went on a tour of the metro, sitting in drive time traffic, visiting local landmarks and restaurants, and the market's biggest employers? Connect them to these common listener experiences and they'll be more apt to reflect it on their show.
- Do your key personalities know leaders in the community? Knowing the movers-and-shakers in local politics, entertainment/TV, community-service organizations, and sports will open doors to get you involved. If they don't know these people, what's the game plan to do that? (See sidebar.)
- I work with shows and always ask: do you read the local paper? What I get back is "we look at it online". I never believe them. At best, they occasionally go to the website, but I am sure (like most of us) get bored after 30 seconds and leave for another, more engaging site. Go old school - read the actual paper and clip out articles of interest for content.
- Watch the nightly TV newscasts. Not to find "blood and guts" for content, but it'll give you a sense of what's happening locally.
- Festivals, Fairs, Concerts, and Conventions. They're scheduled years in advance and somewhere online there is a comprehensive list. Know it and be at them either as a station or ask talent to experience them as a visitor. Bring back fun audio and you'll be local.
- Any idea what fun stuff is going on in your market each weekend? In Des Moines, we put a Thursday feature on with the most fun person from the city called "On the Go with Mo" and had a great time telling local listeners what was going on in the market that weekend.
- How about serving a local charity or a charity with local images instead of one out of your market or a national charity?
- Give the weather. There are lots of talent who never say what the day or weekend is going to be like. How hard is that?
- Ask your talent to join a local community organization to connect them to the good things happening in town.
- Commit to doing less on Kim, Kanye, Lindsay, and other generic Hollywood topics anyone can do by placing in your clock one break in each hour that reflects things going on in your market. If you reflect the right local stuff and do it regularly, listeners will understand that you live there and care about the community and affirm or grow images that you're local.

Each Sunday we publish the Hot List your talent can use to stay on the topics that make you accessible to the biggest audience. Sign up for (it's free): email steve@reynoldsgroupradio.com

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Steve Reynolds

I rarely tell "back when I was on the air stories" but this one is instructive. When I started doing mornings in Raleigh, NC, we decided we wanted to get to know the important people in town. Raleigh is the state capital and, knowing we'd never develop a relationship with the governor, we went unconventional. We wrote a letter to his wife offering her something of value: unconditional media attention for any project she was working on. I kept reminding both she and her office and one day they took us up on the offer. The governor's wife was like everyone's grandmother. She and I bonded and she remained loyal to us for the time her husband was in office. This led us to crazy ideas we wanted to do, and whenever we asked, she said yes because she liked and trusted us. This led to the other benefit we were looking for, a relationship with the governor, who soon came on board to appear on our show and also have fun. It's harder to get to know the key people today. Don't send an email or letter and expect a response. They're overwhelmed. Go unconventional and make the ask creatively and you might penetrate their bubble more quickly.

The Reynolds Group coaches morning shows to better connect with their audience. Focusing on the demo and challenging them to develop fun, relevant content and entertaining ideas makes more people want to tune in!