

Strategic Advice from Radio's Premiere Talent Coach

# Planet Reynolds

## We Create Personality Radio



The Reynolds Group

919.821.4700 • www.reynoldsgroupradio.com • steve@reynoldsgroupradio.com

## Knowing Your Port of Entry

Talking with a friend a few weeks ago who does a morning show and owns his market, we chatted about the coverage of the missing Malaysian Airlines flight which, at the time, was topic #1. I asked him to tell me one of the more interesting breaks he and his team did on the topic in the previous week. He told me he was very curious about how a pilot could turn off the communications system to an entire airplane without anyone noticing, which was the current speculation at the time. He said he had so many questions about this they put on an airline mechanic, which was easy because their city is a hub for a major carrier. The mechanic explained everything in vivid detail and color, he said, clarifying a few things and adding even more mystery to the story. He then asked what I would have done had I still be on-the-air. Thinking for a bit, I told him my neighbor is a pilot for Southwest and that I believed pilots were having a different conversation about this story in lounges and cockpits than we regular people and that I'd get him on to bring us inside that perspective. These are called "Ports of Entry" in the coaching world. Every show must be on the biggest stories of the day. I heard several shows just convey information as this story unfolded. Yet, a better angle to take was for each cast member to understand what about this story intrigued them, and then go there in the break. When this approach is taken, the show is positioned as genuinely authentic and the audience takes that ride. Highly inquisitive talent bathing in the topics of the day come up with the most "Ports of Entry" and thus the

most interesting breaks for the audience. Listeners end up being fascinated because you're fascinated. That's the perfect recipe to do current topics, while defining each cast member through their perspective and take.

### Cultivating Human Cume and TSL to Your Show

As a general rule, unlikable doesn't work. Talent develop relationships with listeners much in the same way you would start a new friendship. I talk in meetings about "human cume and TSL": What are the attributes of those people you want to spend a lot of time with in your personal life? They're likable, approachable, vulnerable, fun, at times unpredictable, share the same interests as you, and being around them is never a struggle. If they venture from these qualities, you spend less time with them, eventually ending the friendship. Listeners developing a relationship with a talent or multi-cast morning program is the same thing. Unlikable, edgy personas have a place on a show, but only as ancillary characters. People who laugh at others' misfortune tend to not work. But, each central, regular cast member must be likable, flawed, genuine, someone who shares your values, and a person you would root for in life. In one of our many evaluative exercises listening to morning shows, test each cast member to see if they share these qualities. If not, you could be brewing an environment where listeners push back or even openly reject that cast member/show which will cause human cume and TSL, the two things that make the ratings go up, go down.

On Sundays we publish the Hot List talent can use to be on the most relatable topics of the day. Email us if you want it (it's free): [steve@reynoldsgroupradio.com](mailto:steve@reynoldsgroupradio.com)

Issue #41

April, 2014

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!



Steve Reynolds

## Beware the Noise

In regular coaching sessions, I occasionally have a talent say that we should start or stop doing something because they "heard from listeners" on the phones or at an appearance something negative. As I probe, I ask how many people they actually talked with who offered a contrary take on what we were doing. That number has never exceeded ten. Talent is in search of affirmation, but this number is minuscule. I do the math and remind them the infinitesimal percentage this represents against the show's cume. I ask if they're comfortable changing our strategy based on the input of .0001 percent of the audience. While what they heard might have been on point, strategy rules everything, not the whims of a handful of listeners. With social media and everyone having an instantaneous voice, be careful of the noise and don't make changes to your strategy without doing proper diligence. Protect your talent from advocating changes, too, out of a desire to please the latest person they heard from or the most recent Facebook or Twitter post they read. That's dangerous.