

**2NCR FM**

**92.9**

**THE 2NCR**  
**PRESENTERS BIBLE**

**(OR HOW TO BE**  
**A GOOD...OR**  
**BETTER...PRESENTER)**

## **Preparing for your show – before you enter the studio**

- If you have a music show, think about having an album of the week (see the music team for ideas), or a theme that runs through the music you play.
- Obtain and keep a copy of the Community Radio Codes of Practice - they dictate what we are allowed to say and not say on air. A copy is available for downloading from the Legal Stuff section of our website.
- Think about, and understand who your target audience is.
- Always think about how you can improve your show. Even the professionals aren't perfect.
- Think about adding interesting pre-recorded content to your show. 2NCR FM has three digital recorders for presenters to borrow and has digital editing facilities for presenters to be trained on. Think about sharing your show with another presenter so that you are better able to prepare pre-recorded content regularly.
- Be Local: Learn about the area that you are broadcasting to. Sound knowledgeable about the area, check pronunciation of place names if unsure. Have a drive round the area that you are broadcasting to, look at the local landmarks so when you mention the local football club you know what you are talking about. Be topical, or trivial, or relevant (or all three!!!)
- A consistent show format helps you plan your show and also makes it recognisable and appealing to regular listeners. Every week have regular features, running topics/items, the same main presenters, the same imaging (intro, jingles, stabs, beds) and a consistent musical style
- Choose music to be in keeping with your approved program. If you are a backup presenter, choose music to be in keeping with the regular presenters

program. For example if you are filling in for a blues show, don't play old time rock and roll.

- Research the music and artists you are playing. Rather than saying "coming up is a song from Madonna", say something like "coming up is the woman who has had more number one hits than any other female artist". People will stay listening to find out who it is!
- Plan your entire program.

## **Preparing for your show – after you have entered the studio**

- Plan your links ahead - jot down ideas and structures for links during songs before you open the microphone. It helps stop links consisting mainly of "umm, anyway, so, what next", and also helps you avoid boring "that was ....., this is ....." links.
- Pre fade intros + outros - you should know how each song you're about to play starts *and* ends - it could be solid start, fade in, instrumental intro, fade out, suspended ending. This allows you to plan your links and to sound slicker. This is how presenters finish links bang on time before the vocals and sound slick when they stop and a track immediately kicks in.
- Sit comfortably. Relax. Mentally prepare.
- Always prepare your voice before going on air. Do vocal warm ups.
- Keep water with you in the studio. Any drinks must be kept away from the panel at all times and stored on the approved drinks resting place. Avoid milk products before going on air and while you are on air..
- When going on air, turn your mic on a few seconds early with the fader down, then turn it up when you are ready to speak. This will stop the clunking noise when you turn the mic on.
- Begin and end your program with an eye and ear to good smooth continuity from the program before and the one coming after you.
- Check any CSAs or other notices before reading them on air - you don't want to be the one to find the spelling mistake or the line that doesn't make sense.

- If the station is running a competition make sure that you understand any elements that may involve you.

## **General radio etiquette**

- Try not to use too many big or confusing words. You don't want to alienate your audience by saying something that they don't understand and making them feel stupid. Talk to them as if you were talking to your friend, rather than trying to impress them.
- Get your message across using the least amount of words possible. Why take 30 seconds to say something when you could say it in 10? Get straight to the point! Just because you can string words together for 30 seconds doesn't mean you should - keep it short and sharp.
- Imagine you're talking to a single, sole, listener. Radio is a personal medium, and listeners should feel that you're talking directly to them. Never refer to your listeners as a group.
- Avoid TV News style talking amongst yourself with links like "..and so we're going to cross over to John in Ballina. John, what's it like over there? - Well Peter, it's nice weather but..." the listener is not John or Peter so is left out and confused by this sort of link on radio.
- Don't make jokes about how few listeners you have. Even if it's true, it sounds unprofessional and ruins the illusion of radio. Never assume the listener has been listening for longer than 1 song. If you call for song requests and no one makes any, don't draw attention to the fact. Just pretend someone did.

## **When the microphone is on...**

- Try not to use 'in jokes' with other presenters. Listeners don't always know the back story and may not understand what you are saying.
- Always back-announce songs and forward announce the song you are going into. If you are going into a sponsorship break, forward promote a song coming up to keep people listening. Some people will want to listen for a large chunk of time. Others will only want to listen for a small amount of

time eg for the news. The trick is to get them to listen for just 'a little bit longer' which can turn out to be a large chunk of time if you do it properly.

- Don't use plurals when talking to listeners, like 'everyone out there' or 'all of you listening'. Talk to the listener one-on-one, as though they are the only one listening.
- Structure your talk breaks. Know the order you are going to say things. If you are prepared you will be more confident and less likely to make a mistake.
- You can forward promote the news, weather and other program highlights, but don't forward promote a sponsorship break. Promote things that you think are interesting and the listener will stay for.
- Try to keep talk breaks informal and conversational. Use language you would use in normal conversation, rather than trying to sound clever and smart because not everyone will understand you.
- Always keep an eye on sound levels (just below the red lines) and an ear on the levels through your headphones. By not wearing headphones you are really asking for trouble. Headphones are not training wheels. They ARE your wheels.
- Humour that offends against good taste or decency should be avoided. There is a danger of offence in the use of humour based on particular characteristics like race, gender or disability.
- Programming should not contain references to drink, smoking and drug taking; unless in an educational context.
- Saying the phone number, email, frequency, text number... the same way as everyone else ("one ohh six point seven" not "one hundred and six point seven"). It gets it in peoples' heads if everyone says it one way.
- Trailing the station - upcoming events, other good shows, trail flagship shows like the chart. Always thank the previous show. Always trail the next show (when is it on, what they'll be playing...).
- No presenter is bigger than the station so you always say the stations first and your name second. "You're listening to 2NCR FM and I'm....."
- Mention the station name at least every 15 minutes. Some stations require this to be done during every link. If playing 3 songs back to back then a sweeper ID is played between each song.

- Paint pictures: Make use of imagery on air - use links in a way that paints a picture in the mind of the listener. Use produced sound - edit live.
- One thought one link: Most listeners will only take in so much information at one go, if you hit them with three different items by the time they have heard the third they will probably have forgotten what you said at the beginning.
- Shrink your link: Do not waffle, think about who you are aiming each link at, plan ahead and if you have nothing to say then just play the music, your audience will love you for it. Keep links short into breaks, use Q cards or teasers to features or strong songs that are on the way in the next 15 minutes.
- Promote ahead: You should always be looking to the next 15 minutes to keep your audience listening just that little bit longer.
- Never talk out of breaks - play a station ID and straight to music.
- The gratuitous use of offensive language, including blasphemy must be avoided. Bad language and blasphemy must not be used in programmes aimed at young listeners (under 18) or before 11pm when young listeners may be listening in significant numbers. Use of bad language must be defensible in terms of context and authenticity. It is one thing, for example, when such language occurs in documentary output, and quite another when introduced for its own sake in, for example, a music based, entertainment programme. Many people who would not be unduly shocked by swearing are offended when it is used to excess and without justification. Stations usually have their own policy on swearing. If you swear, DON'T apologise it only draws attention to it. Any complaints received should be treated as per the Listeners Complaints Policy.
- Where a popular feature or show has been moved due to restructuring of the schedule, talk up the change at the old broadcast time, this obviously reminds regular listeners that they can still hear the "horoscopes/comic cuts etc. at....." Always sound positive about the moves.
- Only talk about the weather that will immediately affect the listener – the same day is ample during the morning. If it is after 5pm you can add in tomorrows weather - unless it's Friday and everybody is looking forward to the weekend or to a special event.

- Always preface your tracks, do not trust your music computer to give you the correct information, this will also remind you of how the track starts and prevents the chance of you talking over the vocals.
- If a song has a proper end then let it finish before talking, if a song fades, still remember that it's someone's favourite song before you destroy it! Do not talk over the beginning and the end of a song - this really annoys listeners especially if it is their favourite song. Respect the music. Ask the question is it necessary to back announce every song you play, it's sometimes better to throw ahead to a song - and don't always make it the next one.
- Don't mention other radio stations or other station presenters even if they are in the news as this just gives the opposition free publicity.
- Always make the station sound Big, sound authoritative and friendly. Don't put listeners down, you can never have too many listeners.
- Don't start a break with 'welcome back' or 'you're back on...' The listener hasn't gone anywhere, so how can they be back? Instead, say "you are listening to 2NCR FM and I'm ...".
- Don't specify places unnecessarily eg. 'the time in the studio is' or 'the temperature outside is'. Just say "the time is" or "the temperature in Lismore is".
- Don't use words like 'currently' or 'right now' to tell the time, eg 'Currently the time is...'
- Don't overstate the time. Why say '27 minutes past 6 o'clock' when you could just say '27 past 6'
- Don't use phrases like 'Coming up right now', 'Coming your way' or 'Coming right up'
- Keep a smile on your face while you're announcing. It keeps your voice brighter and happier!
- If you or a guest swears on air, don't apologise, don't mention it no one will have noticed, people are more likely to complain if you apologise and draw attention to it.

## **What to avoid saying**

- In jokes - Listeners do not want to feel excluded from your show. Think hard about whether what you are discussing is entertaining to everyone or just you and a couple of friends.
- Begging people to phone/email the studio - sounding sorry for yourself or complaining about the lack of audience interaction is just one more reason for people not to get in touch. Would you want to talk to someone that desperate?
- Discussing listening figures - if you know or suspect that listening figures are low or non-existent do not discuss the fact. Keep the listeners you have by continuing in a professional manner.
- Discussing broken equipment - do not blame problems with your show on studio equipment. Even if things are broken the listener really does not care. Just get on with things. Apologise (rather than complain) only if technical difficulties mean your show needs to be cancelled.
- Talk like you would talk in real life, if you don't say "massive shout out to..." in real life don't say it on the radio. See a list of radio clichés. Common Radio Clichés include: "OK That was 'xxx'", This is 'xxx'- Timechecks - Goodbye (the station isn't finishing, just your show)
- Talking about mistakes - everyone makes mistakes, and if you do don't open the mic and talk about them. The chances of someone noticing it are small to none and you talking about it will just make you look bad. Sshhhhhh... move on and forget about it.

## **The illusion of radio**

- Radio can make people forget what they are doing, where they are, and forget they are listening to radio. Avoid ruining it for them by talking about things they can't see, people they don't know and technical terms that break the magic of radio or confuse the listener.
- When on air, never mention problems with studio equipment, station problems, and internal issues. It sounds amateurish and is not acceptable. If something like a CD starts skipping get another one cued up and cross fade, don't mention it, it only draws attention to it. Don't refer to technical terms or studio equipment. Don't say "I'm just going to put a CD in" or "It's not cued properly" - it spoils the illusion of radio. People don't imagine you're sitting in a small wee studio, and don't know what "cue" means.

- Dead Air 5 seconds of dead air on radio can seem like an eternity (try it - sit in silence for five seconds), 10 seconds and people will have retuned or switched off.
- Avoid dead air at all times. It is good practice to have a back up song on CD, MD, vinyl or something ready to go on the computer just in case something fails.

## **2NCR FM studio rules**

- Eating is not permitted in any room that has electronic equipment, including but not limited to, studio 1, studio 2, the production studio and the CD library.

## **Being a 2NCR FM team player**

- Love what you do! Not everyone has the chance to be a radio announcer, so enjoy every second of it!
- Write any glitches or failures during your show, or any missing or broken equipment on a fault report form.
- Never give out anybody's private phone number, address or personal details either on air or to anybody in person. All 2NCR FM presenters are allocated 2NCR FM email addresses so that they can be contacted without giving out private contact details.
- No music is to be removed from 2NCR FM premises unless required to perform your volunteer role and the removal has been authorised by the music director in writing (via email is fine).
- No equipment is to be removed from 2NCR FM premises unless required to perform your volunteer role and the removal has been authorised by the technical manager in writing (via email is fine).
- Smoking is not permitted on 2NCR FM premises, or anywhere from where smoke may blow back into 2NCR FM premises.

- The double carport is for the sole use of PFD Food Services. 2NCR volunteers are not permitted to park in the carports at any time on any day. This includes weekends. There are plenty of car spaces on the street.
- Remember to play all scheduled announcements (sponsorship or otherwise). All scheduled announcements have been scheduled for a reason, whether that be monetary for sponsorships, or for another reason. If you do not play them, you are not being a team player. If you have a problem with a particular announcement, grit your teeth, play it, and talk to the program manager ASAP after your show to resolve whatever the problem is.
- If you have a friend or acquaintance that is publicly known, or you interview someone that is publicly known, consider asking them to record a little something for you - a station ID or a program pointer for your show or for someone else's.
- Don't plug businesses on air! We are only permitted 5 minutes of sponsorship announcements per hour. Plugging businesses is a sponsorship announcement that the station doesn't benefit from and it is vital that all sponsorship announcements are scheduled by the scheduling officer so that we can keep track of how close to the 5 minutes we are. **Going over 5 minutes per hour is a breach of our licence conditions.** If you know of a business that would benefit by sponsoring us, pass their details onto the sponsorship team.
- People listen to radio when they want to. Research shows most people don't tune in for specific shows. Your show isn't standalone; it is part of a larger sound, The Station. The station has to have a consistent sound so that every time a listener turns on they get the same Station sound. This means using the station's imaging (jingles, id's, trails).
- The station is responsible for what presenters say on air. Don't make false claims/accusations about people or companies, particularly if they are big and are likely to sue. As the individual making the claim/accusation you are legally responsible for proving the truth behind any such statements. In other words your statement may, in fact, be true but if it cannot be backed up with evidence then this is irrelevant.
- If the music wasn't chosen by you, never criticise the music because as far as the listener is concerned all the songs were chosen by you. If you don't like a particular song just ignore it, if you really do like a particular piece of music then say so.

## **Sounding like a professional**

- Links are the chat between songs that isn't a feature - the bread and butter of presenting. Each link you ever do needs to have a structure. If it's 10 seconds long or 2 minutes long you still need to know exactly what your message is, and know what you are going to do at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. You should do all this even before you open the mike.
- Be yourself: You have to put your personality into your links. Talk naturally, because a listener can spot a phoney a mile off. Try not to put on a different accent or imitate a radio presenter you admire. Talk from your diaphragm (not your nose). Don't use phrases you wouldn't use off air. Avoid radio clichés. Make sure you have an interesting life and be yourself on-air.
- There are many styles of presenting, usually it depends on the station, the time, the music and the presenter. Styles range from fast-paced, punchy, lively shows to mellow, thoughtful, spacious shows. One major difference between these extremes is the creative use of music and jingles. For example, fast paced shows will try to avoid waiting for the song to finish before talking and use the introduction of songs and 'talk up' to the lyrics.
- Talking over songs - When talking over a song, the easiest thing to get wrong is the levels. The only way you can be sure to get this right is by listening on the headphones. If you're unsure it's better if the music is too quiet than too loud.
- Avoid talking over the vocals in songs; something listeners find very annoying. If you don't want to talk over silence, use songs with long intros/ outros or even use an instrumental loop to talk over, then drop in the full version after your link. This is known as a bed. One technique is to use the same music as your bed for every link to give a consistent sound to your show.
- When talking over music, although it is essential to be heard over the music by dipping the music, avoid dipping the music while you're speaking and then fading the music back up during pauses - known as ducking. It sounds bad, and has the derogatory name fader wanking.

## **Encouraging people to keep listening rather than turning off**

- The main reasons that people turn off or retune their radio is because what they hear (chat, music, news, information) isn't relevant to them. Usually though, it's just that they've finished with using the radio, it's the end of their journey or they're going out, and there's nothing you can do about it.
- Interaction: Involve the listener - get listeners involved in your show. Features are the best way of doing this - for example, competitions, or polls. Be wary that people will not always get in touch, if a poll or feature doesn't get suitable interaction (usually a sign of a dull feature or low listener figures); either make up the names and messages, or move on. Don't keep asking for people to get in touch about it.
- Get in touch - when asking for people to email in give them a reason to, ask a question or their opinion on something. There's no point just reading the phone number out, no one will phone you just to say hi, give them a reason to call.
- Trailing your show - once your show is full of good features and other interesting things, keep people listening by letting them know something good is coming up. Try saying "coming up next, the Darkness speak to us after their MTV appearance," don't play the interview till after a couple of songs and a jingle or two. It gives the listener a reason to stay tuned. Tease your listeners a few items at a time, don't reel off a big list of things coming up, except possibly once at the start of your show.
- Pace your show: Break down your show into small chunks. First by hour, and then by 20 minute slots.
- With mainstream programming you should aim to play about 14 songs every hour (assuming two ad breaks and a news bulletin). If you're playing too many songs then you are probably not delivering enough "other material".
- One technique to control the pace of your show is to plan out a "show clock". It's a chart that lists where and when you do things. It helps you space out your features and help you week in and week out to prepare the show. Some people even lay it out in a circle per hour like a clock.
- Basic Show Clock Example: News Two Songs Link - Establish the show and yourself, what music and special features to expect etc... Two Songs Feature 1 (about 20 past) Two Songs Sponsorship Announcements (about half past) Two Songs Feature 2 (about 40 past) Two Songs Link - What's coming up in the next hour, programme or the station Sponsorship Announcements HOUR ENDS

- There will also be some very small links saying what music you're playing and maybe a few jingles.
- If you are presenting on your own, unless it is an interview or a feature something you should make your links last at the maximum a 30 seconds. Radio is a passive medium and people will be doing something else whilst listening to you. They won't take anymore information in after 30 seconds. General banter is great in small doses, but putting up with it for five minutes is something that most listeners aren't prepared to do. Features can be longer, but two minutes is about as long as you want to go. Again peoples brains will just switch off.
- Remember to include these things as well: Station id and the frequency (every two songs minimum) Your name (every 15 minutes), show name. Song names, artists, tour dates and release dates. Station strap line Station phone number Website plugs

## **Reviewing your performances**

- Monitor and review your own performance through recording and listening to your show. And ask a friend or another 2NCR volunteer for honest constructive criticism – about the stuff you did well and the stuff you could have done better.
- Ask for a copy of your show to be downloaded to your USB thumb drive or laptop so you can listen at home. Listen to it and constructively work out if there is anything that you could have done better. Ask a friend to help you.