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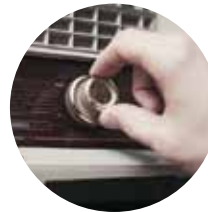
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THE 66 BEST PROGRAM DIRECTORS IN AMERICA

Program directors have enormous responsibilities these days. They must produce the best content in all of audio, because the competition for ears has never been greater. They have to find and teach and massage new local talent. And they surely must help produce a product the sales department can successfully sell, so that fire-breathing GM can be calm, cool, and collected while sending that nice big piece of the cash-flow action back to corporate.

Putting together this list every year starts with a nomination, typically from someone who ranks higher in the company than the nominated PD — maybe even the CEO. We go from there, with a

questionnaire and a look at ratings, experience, awards, and several other factors. We reach out to programming experts in the industry for input, in all formats and in all market sizes, and we crunch the numbers. Then we crumple them up and crunch them again. We also ask each PD to confidentially rank who they believe to be the five best program directors in America. Those rankings are also used to help us decide on our final order.

In addition to listing names next to numbers, we put this list together hoping each and every PD who appears will provide you with something to help your career grow. This year we asked all the PDs two very important questions: What

is the key to managing on-air talent to success? and, What advice do you have for a young broadcaster hoping to become a successful PD someday?

So, in addition to one of our coolest lists, you are also getting a gold mine of ideas. The PDs on our list were extremely open and willing to teach, to pass it on. This is an issue you'll be hiding from your boss. In fact, we'll be using some of what these PDs have provided us in several future issues — there was so much, and it was that good.

Here are the 66 Best Program Directors in America.

1

CHRIS CONLEY

WLTW/New York

iHeartMedia

Years in Radio: 39

Years as a Programmer: 25



Chris Conley is one of the programming kingpins for iHeart, and deservedly so. When you are at the helm of one of the longest-running successful stations in the country, that certainly qualifies you as an expert at your craft. Conley is not only responsible for the day-to-day programming and management of WLTW, he's also the brand manager for all iHeartMedia mainstream AC stations. He acts as an in-house consultant, helping guide research, marketing, and product decisions.

So who does someone as successful as Chris Conley look up to and admire? "Marc Chase and Brad Hardin are two leaders I especially respect," he says. "Marc is

a mad scientist who also has that wacky right-brain thing going. Brad is creative, but also could be a top-level Wall Street finance pro if he chose to be. Thea Mitchem leads an entire region and still manages to keep Power 105 on top in the New York young Urban battle as the day-to-day PD."

On managing the winning WLTW on-air talent, Conley says he's honest with them; they always know where he stands. "Beyond that, I'm not a red pen, hotline kind of PD. I redirect, coach, and then stay out of their way. Also, the architecture of LTW programming allows them quite a bit of freedom to be real communicators. They don't have liner cards and things of that nature."

If you want to win at the PD craft, Conley advises developing a strategic mindset. "Understand how a brand works for consumers within a given media landscape," he says. "Gain the skills to outmaneuver a radio competitor. If you have an analytical mind and are great at extrapolating data, be sure to surround yourself with creative people and then give them the freedom to be creative. Conversely, if you are the brilliant imaging and creative idea person, make sure you have someone who can help you with data, music-scheduling setup, etc."

2

JIM RYAN

WCBS-FM & WNEW-FM/New York
SVP/Programming
CBS Radio



Jim Ryan is responsible for two legendary New York frequencies, WCBS-FM and WNEW-FM. He's also managed and been around some of the greatest on-air talent this industry has ever heard. And Ryan says

there is no set way to manage talent, because everyone is different. "I've always believed there are many paths to being a great talent," he says, "but it all needs to start with common sense and hard work."

This 36-year programmer has some advice for young broadcasters — after pointing out that those of us in radio are very lucky. "If you are a heart surgeon, there is only one way to do a heart transplant," Ryan says. "Do it wrong and the patient dies. There are many ways to achieve success in media."

He goes on, "You need to work hard and have passion for what you do. I've worked for and with some of the very best in the business, and each and every one is driven by success. Whether it's being first with an innovative promotion, first to break the next big artist, stealing or developing a great talent, or taking a loser station to the top, the passion to be part of something special is inside all the great ones. I was just as excited when I had a good rating book in Lansing, MI, 35 years ago as I am in New York today."

3

KEVIN WEATHERLY

KROQ-FM, KAMP (AMP Radio) & KCBS-FM (Jack FM)/Los Angeles
SVP/Programming
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 42
Years as a Programmer: 27

Kevin Weatherly's dad owned a small station in Arizona, so he grew up around the business and started working at the station at a very young age. "My dad was a big influence on my decision to pursue radio as a career," Weatherly says. And according to him, every day in radio is different. "The bottom line: You surround yourself with really good people and then get out of their way."

Weatherly says to get the best out of your on-air talent, it's important to develop a relationship based on trust. "There has to be a mutual respect and two-way dialogue." And his advice to young PDs is to be a sponge: "Soak up as much knowledge as you can from people you respect," he says. "Have a vision, passion, and work hard."



4

JOHN IVEY

KIIS-FM/Los Angeles
iHeartMedia



5

ARTURO SOSA

WSKQ-FM/New York
Spanish Broadcasting System



6

MARK CHERNOFF

VP/Programming
WFAN and CBS Radio New York
VP/Programming
CBS Radio Sports

Years in Radio: 43
Years as a Programmer: 40



Mark Chernoff's consistent success has made him a respected programmer for years, and he's also been able to learn from and work with a who's who of radio. He says, "I've always had great respect for the wonderful talent I've worked with through the years: Scott Muni, Pete Fornatale, Dennis Elsas, Howard Stern, Don Imus, Mike Francesa, Chris Russo, Boomer Esiason, Craig Carton, to name a few. On the management side, I learned a tremendous amount

from my college and later WDHA PD, Bob Thomas, and have worked for exceptional managers through the years, including the opportunity to be just three doors away from Mel Karmazin while at K-Rock. And not to leave out names: Mike Kakoyiannis, Tom Chiusano, Joel Hollander, Lee Davis, and Don Bouloukos were also great influences on helping me become a better manager."

On talent, he says, "I try hard to be a listener as well as a boss. I've also learned there are times to break the rules and times to follow them." And to be successful as a PD today? Chernoff advises, "I highly recommend an early career on air (as mine was as a rock jock for many years). It's like being a bank teller before becoming president of the bank — you see the work from the ground level. Same for being behind the scenes, whether as a board operator, producer, production aide. Take it all in, do a lot of listening, and of course be adaptable to the changing world of radio, embracing the digital world, working closely with sales, being involved in events inside and outside the station."



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PROGRAM DIRECTORS
IN AMERICA

STEVE BUTLER

KYW-AM
Philadelphia

PETER CASEY

WBZ-AM
Boston

MARK CHERNOFF

WFAN-FM | AM
New York

SHELLY EASTON

WXTU-FM
Philadelphia

RON GLEASON

WBBM-AM
Chicago

MICHAEL MARTIN

KLLC-FM | KMVQ-FM
San Francisco

BEN MEVORACH

WINS-AM
New York

JAY MICHAELS

KJKK-FM | KVIL-FM
Dallas

STEVE MOORE

KMOX-AM
St. Louis

TIM RICHARDS

KMLE-FM | KOOL-FM
KALV-FM
Phoenix

TIM ROBERTS

WYCD-FM | WOMC-FM
WDZH-FM
Detroit

REGGIE ROUSE

WVEE-FM
Atlanta

JIM RYAN

WCBS-FM | WNEW-FM
New York

TIM SCHELD

WCBS-AM
New York

MIKE THOMAS

WBZ-FM | WZLX-FM
Boston

KEVIN WEATHERLY

KROQ-FM | KAMP-FM
KCBS-FM
Los Angeles

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REACH 65 MILLION PEOPLE
EVERY WEEK!

7



MARY ELLEN KACHINSKE

WTMX-FM/Chicago
Hubbard Radio
Years in Radio: 36
Years as a Programmer: 23

Over the past year, thanks to Mary Ellen Kachinske and her team, The Mix was honored with the NAB Crystal Heritage Award, given to radio stations with five or more Crystal Radio Awards for community service. WTMX was also nominated for its sixth Crystal award this year.

Kachinske says a positive atmosphere where honesty and communication are valued is the basis for any successful relationship, with anyone on her team. "We all need current information to do our jobs well," she says, "and getting together weekly is a time for both sides to set goals, ideate, or simply talk about what's going on. Making sure that you're always available to talk when needed is essential, as your staff needs to know that their ideas and suggestions are heard and that they matter. We also can't forget that radio is entertainment, and there has to be an element of fun behind the scenes as well. While I take my duties here seriously, I try not to take myself too seriously."

On becoming successful in the business, Kachinske offers up a great analogy. "My son Max is now officially part of this amazing business (WFMB in Springfield, IL!), and what I told him (and hope he listened to!) is to be a sponge and soak up everything that you can. Spend as much time as possible at the station, with all departments, and really learn what everyone does and how they all interconnect. Remember to never say, 'That's not my job,' because you'll limit yourself, and your company. Always say, 'How can I help?' He is lucky to be in a station environment where he is being encouraged to study and grow."

8



TIM SCHELD

Director of News & Programming
WCBS Newsradio/New York
New York City
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 47

This is a big year at WCBS: 2017 marks its 50th year in the all-News format. Back in 1967, Charles Osgood was a news anchor, Ed Bradley was a street reporter, and Howard Stringer was a news editor. Scheld tells *Radio Ink*, "We're proud to carry on the legacy as one of the most respected brands in the broadcast news business. 2017 is a celebration of storytelling."

Scheld believes success in any field is driven by hard work and passion. "It's no different in the radio business, but I do believe that those who will be the most successful programmers will be the ones who are not afraid to 'think differently' and to innovate. Sitting still is not an option."

See *Publisher's Beat* (page 9) for more on Tim Scheld and WCBS Newsradio.

9

RON GLEASON

Dir./News & Programming
WBBM Newsradio 780 & 105.9 FM/
Chicago
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 38+
Years as a Programmer: 25

As a youngster in L.A., Gleason grew up listening to and admiring the best play-by-play broadcasters in the business.

"Vin Scully, Chick Hearn, and Dick Enberg were entertaining, informative, and intelligent," he says. "They were always fully prepared. I got the radio bug from them, and haven't been able to shake it since."

Gleason says what WBBM does on a day-to-day basis is extraordinary. "We have an amazing group of reporters, anchors, editors, writers, and producers who cover the top stories, can switch gears in an instant when big stories break, and deliver the information that matters most to Chicagoans. That was proven again last year, when WBBM won the national Edward R. Murrow Award for best breaking news coverage. To me, breaking news is what this format is all about, along with the reliability of our benchmark elements — traffic, weather, business, sports, local news, and CBS network news."

To get the most out of the talent you manage, Gleason says it's all about honesty. "Tell them the truth. We let our people know exactly what is expected, teach them that little things matter, listen closely to what they have to say, and let them do their jobs. If we need something done differently so we sound more authoritative — just let them know."

"In our format, talent comes in many forms. Not just the on-air reporters and anchors, but also the off-air editors, writers, and producers. Writing is the most important element of all-News radio. Every word matters. I've probably been more insistent about writing style than anything else over the years. Great writing is incredibly difficult and requires a unique talent."



10

BEN MEVORACH

Director of News & Programming
1010 WINS-AM/New York
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 33
Years as a Programmer: 9

Is there anyone left working in radio who has not heard of 1010 WINS in New York City and is unaware of its greatness? The man steering that ship today is Ben Mevorach, who oversees every aspect of station operations and the expansion of the brand onto new platforms. He's responsible for helping create NTR events, creating shows for Facebook Live, supporting staff, directing the 1010 WINS investigative unit, implementing creative promotions, and fostering an environment that rewards the smart risk-taking that keeps the station consistently relevant across all demos.

Mevorach tells *Radio Ink* that over the past year, 1010 WINS solidified the sum of all of its parts, "creating seamless digital and social integration with brand extension and exposure at every turn for every demo." He says, "I believe we are now the most contemporary-sounding all-News station/brand in the country."

Mevorach says his philosophy on managing talent is pretty simple: "Hire really good people, give them feedback, listen to them, and get the obstacles that interfere with their ability to perform out of their way. Everything else is just noise, and I tune out the noise." He says the best PDs today are the ones who proactively innovate, who take chances, who aren't afraid to fail, and who succeed in spite of these challenging times. "Never think you have all the answers, never say, 'It can't be done,' listen far more than you speak, take calculated risks, and know everything there is to know about the community you serve."



11

THEA MITCHEM

WWPR-FM/New York
EVP of Programming, Northeast
iHeartMedia
Years in Radio: 32
Years as a Programmer: 16

Mitchem tells *Radio Ink* that the people she's admired and looked up to over the years in her career are Guy Zapoleon, Cathy Hughes, Dennis Clark, and Doc Wynter. And she says her biggest accomplishment over the past year was helping to bring along the next generation of women PDs and talent.

"Nothing makes me more proud than seeing the growth in Cara Hahn, programming coordinator, NYC, who I hired right out of college. I and the PDs of NYC iHeartMedia have been teaching her the science behind programming. She's flourishing and is ready to move to the next level. Jill Kempton, APD/MD of Lite FM, is smart, intuitive, and creative. She understands the nuances of the AC format. In addition to her Lite FM duties, she recently was named MD of WASH-FM in DC.

"Honey German, WWPR social coordinator, wanted to move into programming. She's a hard worker, quick learner, very detailed. She recently started on air as she begins her path to PD. No matter how busy I am, providing opportunities and opening the door for the next generation will always be my biggest accomplishment and will make me the most fulfilled."

As far as talent on the air goes, Mitchem says it's about respect. "They are what differentiates our radio stations from all others. I'm very direct and straightforward with my talent. I believe it's important to set clear expectations and coach them to reach their full potential."

12

LEE HAMMER

KNBR-AM/San Francisco
Cumulus Media
Years in Radio: 38
Years as a Programmer: 20

With nearly 40 years in the business, Lee Hammer still can't wait to arrive for work every day. "Each and every day is completely different," he says. "I always start off with a plan, but invariably things come up and that plan needs to be adjusted. I know it may sound strange, but one thing I try to do is listen to the radio 'live' in my office as much as possible. But between talent and show meetings, sales meetings, promo meetings, phone calls, etc., I wind up listening quite a bit on a time-shifted basis. I love listening on the logger – mainly from home at night on the logger."



On managing talent, Hammer says there's no magic formula. "Just like each of us, they're all different, and you have to treat them in different ways. Working with them over time, you learn their hot buttons and what makes them tick."

And if you want to one day hold the corner office with the PD sign, Hammer says to learn everything you can about the business. "Learn from the bottom up. Do as much as you can. Work nights. Weekends. Short turnarounds. Listen. Learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

"I think it's also beneficial, when you get started, to work in different size markets all around the country. What works in California under one programmer might not work in Minnesota under somebody else. Having varied experiences to call upon will allow you to put together a plan you think will best fit the station you'll be programming.

"If all you have is one or two stations to reflect on, you're probably missing out on a lot of programming plans and philosophies you don't even know exist."

25 YEARS

13

MIKE McMEARTY

Director of News & Programming
WTOP/Washington, DC
Hubbard
Years in Radio: 28
Years as a Programmer: 2

Putting out great content for the No. 1-billing station in the country (in the seventh-largest market) carries a hefty responsibility. McMearty says the exceptional WTOP sales staff and DOS – Matt Mills – get the credit, but he takes pride in his role.

So how do you succeed in the programming chair? According to McMearty, it means maintaining an open mind and open ears. “Listening to everything and everyone and learning how your station operates through a wide lens is important,” he says. “Treat and respect everyone you work with as the individuals that they are. One size does *not* fit all. Take the time to know your staff, and always have an open-door policy. When necessary, don’t be afraid to close your door to allow employees to express themselves confidentially.”

WTOP is one of the top all-News stations in the country and has been for years. To keep the talent motivated and moving in the same direction, McMearty says he does his best to single people out every week who raise the bar in the newsroom. “The challenge is always to make sure that it isn’t the squeaky wheel getting all the oil. As a management team, we also try to be transparent with the staff about our audience’s wants and needs – whether it be voicemails, e-mails, or our research findings.”



14

BILL WESTON

WMMR & WMGK/Philadelphia
Beasley Media Group
Years in Radio: 39
Years as a Programmer: 33

Let your air people know where the boundaries are, then let them go do their jobs, Weston says about managing talent: “Praise them when they succeed, redirect them when they step out of bounds or fall short.”

Aspiring PDs should learn how to deal with and motivate people of all sorts. “Manage them differently, but fairly in all cases,” Weston advises. “Know your stuff in the digital realm and ask yourself, ‘Am I doing all I can to create programming/content that stands out from a pureplay experience, with a gazillion songs and no spots?’”



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Mike McMearty
WTOP-FM, Washington



Mary Ellen Kachinske
WTMX-FM, Chicago



Rob Cressman
WDRV-FM, Chicago



15

MICHAEL MARTIN

KLLC & KMVQ/San Francisco
SVP/Programming & Music Initiatives
CBS Radio

On managing talent, Martin says to hire the right people, put them in the right positions, give them the tools they need – then get out of their way. “I’m there to give support and tap them if they are about to go off the rails,” he says. “The talent we hire isn’t supposed to be micromanaged. They know their job. They weren’t hired to read liners. They are there because they have that thing you can’t teach. That type of talent needs support and nourishment, not micromanaging and ‘I didn’t like that part of the bit at 8:06a.’ They know when they missed the mark. They don’t need me hot-lining them to remind them of it.”

To PDs looking to advance, Martin says to never give up: “Make your voice heard. Speak your thoughts and ask questions. Learn from others around you, but don’t become a clone of those around you. Do your own thing. Have your own swagger. Don’t try to fit in. Be yourself. Surround yourself with people who are positive. Leave surroundings that are negative.”

16

DON PARKER

KMEL/San Francisco
iHeartMedia



17

CHUCK KNIGHT

WBEB/Philadelphia
Jerry Lee Radio

Chuck Knight says that as a PD these days, he has two important jobs: “One, take care of the detail work so that our people can focus on the hardest job of all, execution. Two, give our people confidence that what they’re doing is right.”

So what’s his advice to others hoping to become successful programmers? “There are many similarities between Major League Baseball and radio,” he says. “A baseball player comes out of college and starts in small-town Class A ball, working on their pitching, hitting, and fielding. After they’ve proven themselves, they move up to Double A, then Triple A, and finally the Major Leagues. Radio works the same way. It’s great to set a goal of being a major-market PD, but identifying the steps you take to get yourself there is just as important.

“Also, realize that any station isn’t successful because of *you*. It has taken a team of all the great people from the past who worked hard to put your station on the map, and all the people from the present who are currently working to push your station down the successful road it’s on. With that, please let me acknowledge and thank every single employee, past and present, for making 101.1 WDVR, WEAZ, and WBEB the success we’ve all enjoyed.”



PHOTO: CHORUS PHOTOGRAPHY

18

MARK ADAMS

KYLD-FM & KIOI-FM/San Francisco
CHR Brand Coordinator
iHeartMedia
Years in Radio: 28
Years as a Programmer: 23

Mark Adams says he’s most proud of helping people advance in their careers. “Over the past year we’ve had the opportunity to promote from within across several departments, including programming, marketing, and digital,” he notes. “We’ve been able to promote others from part-time positions into full-time roles. And I’ve helped mentor a number of younger employees who have programming aspirations to further their career goals.

“One of my favorite examples from the past year is in helping a young woman move from possessing no real on-air experience, to a small producing role with our morning show on the CHR, to assuming a character role on that show, and now taking over a regular weekend on-air shift of her own. I’ve always enjoyed having a small part in helping others progress and consider that one of the most important roles for any program director.”

The best advice Adams can give young and aspiring PDs is to find a great mentor, and more than one if possible. “Networking with other programmers is often the best resource you have,” he says. “Whenever I get off the phone with one of my peers, I almost invariably say to myself that I need to do that far more often. In talking out my own issues and challenges, and in turn hearing about other people’s issues and thoughts, I invariably learn something new.

“I can be relentlessly self-critical – a byproduct of which is questioning everything again and again. The questioning aspect is something I try to instill in others so that collectively we can arrive at better solutions and results. Having someone, or several people, that you can both learn from and, in turn, teach can’t be anything other than helpful. I love talking shop with other programmers, and I feel like the process itself has value.”



With recording artist Alessia
Cara

19

MIKE THOMAS

98.5 The Sports Hub & WZLX/Boston
VP/Sports Programming, CBS Radio
VP/ Programming, CBS Radio Boston
"Been in radio since age 14, PD since 1991."



With Jon Bon Jovi

Radio runs in Mike Thomas' blood; he's got a nice roster of people to learn from and look up to. "First off, my father, Gary Voss," he says. "He's been in radio his entire life and has been a successful salesperson, sales manager, general manager, and owner. I wouldn't be doing this without him. Secondly, my brother, Bruce Gilbert, SVP for Sports for Cumulus. He gave me my first full-time job in radio and has been a sounding board ever since. Also, several general managers along the way that believed in me – Mark Hannon, Gayle Olson, Tim Huelsing, Tom Walker."

Thomas says if you want to build a strong on-air team, develop a relationship, and don't act like the boss unless you need to. "Everyone is different. Get to know what makes them tick

and what will push them away. If they respect you and your opinion and you respect them, there won't ever be a problem. When there's no mutual respect – and I've had that situation at previous stations – it's not a fun time."

In 2016 WBZ's Toucher & Rich took home a Marconi for Major Market Personalities of the Year. Thomas says that when the duo started, nobody gave them a chance. "We were just 'playing out their contracts' was what everyone in Boston would say from the 'traditional' sports media world. That was never the plan, and they have proven everybody wrong."

His advice to all the young PDs out there? "Care more than anybody else at the station. Be passionate. Hate to lose. Lead by example, and don't be afraid to move."

You have choices when it comes to music scheduling...

First, there's the obvious choice of which songs to play and when to play them. Then there are other choices, like how you'll build cume while also extending TSL, or how PUM will affect your programming strategies. Of course, when using MusicMaster, you and your programming team are able to choose so much more. Like which custom database fields to create so you can make better scheduling decisions. Which of the many MusicMaster real-time integrated playout systems will you use? How many different radio stations can you program using a single curated music stream? How can you optimize your mix and flow using Optimum Goal Scheduling™? How many songs should you Auto-Platoon™ to create the illusion of variety while maintaining your tight rotations? Which colors do you use to highlight different types of music so you can easily check the balance and flow? Which custom views will help you narrow your focus and speed up your workflow? Which Wizards save you the most time when setting up your scheduling rules? What kinds of remote changes will you make to your music logs using the MusicMaster Mobile App?

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20

ROBIN BERTOLUCCI

KFI & KEIB/Los Angeles
iHeartMedia



21

REGGIE ROUSE

WVEE (V-103)/Atlanta
VP of Urban Radio
CBS Radio

Reggie Rouse says the key to managing talent these days is to talk to your people every day, and not just about radio: "How's your family doing? What's going on in their lives? I also text them. I try to make sure that I understand what motivates them." And in order to be a successful PD in 2017 and beyond? Rouse says, "Practice your craft, study the game, and prepare, prepare, prepare."



22

JAY MICHAELS

KJKK (Jack FM) & KVIL-FM (AMP 1037)/
Dallas
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 25
Years as a Programmer: 18



Michaels tells *Radio Ink* he's had a lot of great people to help him along his way to success. "I look up to my market manager, Brian Purdy, who has helped me grow as a manager over the last three years," he says. "Other people throughout my career who have had a profound effect on me include John Peake,

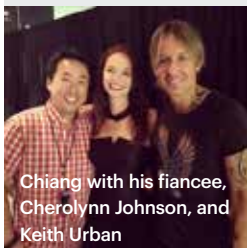
Joel Folger, Jim Ryan, Pat Paxton, Michael Martin, Tom Poleman, Chris Oliviera, Jeff Sottolano, Darren Davis, Wendy Goodman (RCA), and Dina LaPolit (the best entertainment lawyer and sister-in-law)."

The most important advice he can give broadcasters wanting to be PDs is to never give up, no matter what. "Work hard, have fun, and always think outside the box, and, most importantly, be a good decent person."

25

JOHNNY CHIANG

KHPT, KGLK, KKBQ & KTHT/Houston
Cox Media Group
Years in Radio: 25
Years as a Programmer: 18



Chiang with his fiancée, Cheryl Lynn Johnson, and Keith Urban

When managing talent, it's important to let them be themselves, according to Johnny Chiang. "If I critique them too much, they will begin to second-guess themselves," he says. "I hired them for a reason, so it's incumbent on me to find a way to enhance them with positive reinforcement." If you want to be a winning PD in 2017, Chiang advises always thinking about the big picture. "How will what you do or say, at this moment, impact the overall team? Most importantly, have fun."

23

STEVE MOORE

KMOX-AM/St. Louis
St. Louis
VP/Talk Programming
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 27
Years as a Programmer: 22

Steve Moore tells *Radio Ink* the person he admires the most is his dad. "My dad is a great guy who has a wide range of interests and enjoys living life, but he taught me at an early age about hard work, commitment, and taking responsibility," he says. "He's offered me plenty of advice and guidance, and he allowed me to make decisions and my share of mistakes. He preached that learning from mistakes and using those experiences to guide me would help me make much better decisions when similar scenarios present themselves in the future."

So how does Steve manage the people on the air at a legendary powerhouse like KMOX? He says, "I want to have a relationship with the people I work with, so they know I'm going to be honest and fair with them. I try to communicate with them regularly, whether it's talking about work or talking about life away from the office. It's probably fair to say that none of them would be surprised if they got a call, e-mail, or text from me at nearly any time of the day or night. The goal is to create the best radio possible, and the process needs to be collaborative between the talent, producer, and PD."

"I try to avoid jumping to conclusions, encourage risk-taking, and really work at being open-minded to their ideas. I want to treat people how I like being treated. If there are issues, let's put them on the table and get them resolved as quickly as possible and then move forward."



Moore and his son Ian

24

LESLIE WHITTLE

KRBE-FM/Houston
Cumulus Media
Years in Radio: 24
Years as a Programmer: 13

Over the past year, thanks to Whittle and her team, KRBE received Cumulus' first ever HABA Heroes Operating Award. This award is given out once a quarter to a Cumulus market or Westwood One division that delivers the greatest performance against budget as well as demonstrating great cultural strength. Whittle says she's proud of this because the award is based on performance at every level – sales, engineering, business, promotions, and programming.

"It's the very definition of the culture our market manager, Alex Cadelago, has instilled," she says. "Success only comes if we all work together collaboratively. And the best part? After the award was announced, Mary Berner flew in for the day and spent time with our entire staff. It's a great example of the culture she has worked so hard to establish."

On managing on-air talent, Whittle says it's about communication and respect. "It's so important to give your talent the knowledge and education they need to succeed. They have to know the why's and how's. You also have to realize there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Everyone responds differently. Do these things and trust your talent to make good decisions based on the foundation you've built."

Young PDs looking to move up the ladder should always be curious, according to Whittle. "Curiosity leads to knowledge and creativity," she says. "Use all the resources you have to never stop learning. Make sure you ask questions and listen to others. You may not always agree, but different points of view are important. Once you realize you are no longer curious about something, you should probably look for something else to do."



25 YEARS

26

DOC WYNTER

KRRL (Real 92.3)/Los Angeles
SVP Urban Programming
iHeartMedia
Years in Radio: 30
Years as a Programmer: 22



Doc Wynter oversees more than 70 Urban and Urban AC stations for iHeartMedia, and he's also involved with some of the company's most successful talents — Steve Harvey, *The Breakfast Club*, Keith Sweat, and Big Boy, in addition to programming Real 92.3 in Los Angeles. Wynter tells *Radio Ink* that Frankie Crocker and Barry Mayo were among his career mentors; in the '90s, he says, he learned from Tom Owens, Randy Michaels, Marc Chase, and a few other recognizable names.

"I was extremely lucky to apprentice under some of the most influential names in radio

programming," says Wynter.

Managing talent to succeed all starts with respect, he says. "Big Boy and I have a great relationship. He's been successful for a long time, as have I. So asking someone with his track record to do something differently can be asking a lot. But we've managed to be quite successful in the two-plus years since we've launched Real. We work hard and we play hard. I sleep with an eye open because Big is always pranking people! I treasure my relationships with Keith Sweat, Envy, Angela, and Charlamagne as much as I do my local talent here in L.A."

27

SHELLY EASTON

WXTU-FM/Philadelphia
CBS Radio
Years in Radio: 30
Years as a Programmer: 20



Shelly Easton tells *Radio Ink* she never looks at what she can "get" from talent, she looks at the talent her team can bring to the WXTU brand each day. "All of us have unique, if not exceptional, talent in some area," she says. "What I've noticed in working with people over the years is that they often don't recognize their true talents to their full potential because they come easy for them.

People tend to feel they need to work harder in a more challenging area for them, rather than allow their natural talent to flow through them.

"It's the 'keep it simple' principle. As the manager with an eye on the 'big picture, it's my job to help them recognize and utilize their unique talent to its fullest potential. It is also my job to identify how all these talents complement one another and work in harmony for the brand."

If you want to succeed as a PD, Easton says you'll need drive, determination, and a belief that you can do it. She also offers up a list of other important qualities that will help to set you apart: "Feeling inspired and enjoying what you do; strong intuition in safeguarding the brand and determining which are the most important battles; advocating for others and enjoying watching others succeed; loving music; creativity; the ability to multi-task and brand-manage multiple platforms; anticipating cultural shifts and trends; being open to change; not making fear-based decisions; caring about your product, your team, and your community."

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28

JEFF CATLINKTCK-AM & FM (The Ticket) & KESN-FM
(ESPN Radio)/Dallas

Cumulus Media

Years in Radio: 25

Years as a Programmer: 17

Catlin says about managing talent: "Respect them, respect their shows, let them perform and do their jobs." He goes on, "I work hard to provide an environment where they feel safe to create and take new chances. I communicate very openly about the ratings and how they work. I try to help them understand how what they do on air and the content choices they make translate to shares. It is also my job to hold all talent and programming employees accountable for the ratings and for the business end of things. We are in a results-oriented business, and these days that means both ratings and revenue, and we all have to do our part on both sides of the operation."



On becoming a successful PD, Catlin says it's a cliché but it holds true: Once you've got any job in radio, you start by working your tail off. "Make the most of every opportunity you are given, and then ask for more," he says. "Don't say no to any extra work. Set a goal of being a PD and then work toward getting there. Find a good PD that you can learn from. Talk to PDs. Learn about programming as many formats as you can. Note the similarities between them all. Good radio is good radio."

"Educate yourself on the ratings. Act like a mini-PD every day. You could be the producer/PD of the show you work on, or the PD of your shift, making sure everything is running like it should be. Do every programming job you can: Run the board, producer, anchor, do an airshift, traffic reporting, etc. And finally, teach yourself how to listen to a station and talent critically."

29

MIKE BROPHEY

WKLB-FM/Boston

Beasley Broadcast Group

Years in Radio: 40

Years as a Programmer: 30



Getting to know your air talent individually is the key to their success, according to Brophey. "I try to see each every day," he says, "not for a critique – but just to keep up to speed on their lives and concerns. Talented people are fun to be around, and when they feel comfortable bringing ideas to the table, the end result is usually pretty good. When they are part of the process, everyone strives harder for success."

To be a winning PD, Brophey says you'll need to be fully engaged, open-minded, not necessarily married to one format, and dedicated. "The position includes programming, promotions, and marketing, of course, but add to that HD2, websites, social platforms, events, clients, technical sound, and legal."

"Of course, one can't be an expert in every facet, but a working knowledge is required. Spend time with people who are more experienced in those areas and develop an interest in how things work. Before you know it, people will be coming to you for that advice! And, of course, learn time management."

30

TIM ROBERTS

WYCD, WOMC & WZLH/Detroit

VP/Country Programming

CBS Radio

Years in Radio: 39

Years as a Programmer: 38

Country Radio Hall of Fame member Tim Roberts has been a successful programmer for a very long time. In addition to his duties for CBS at WYCD in Detroit, Roberts works with all of CBS' Country stations and programmers across the country. Roberts tells *Radio Ink* his biggest accomplishment over the past year was what his station did for a fallen team member.

"We all went on a journey with the late great afternoon host Linda Lee as she bravely battled cancer," he says. "She won the ACM Award, and I was proud of the tribute WYCD did for her on the air – that was a fitting tribute to a Country Radio Hall of Famer. To say that she will be missed is an understatement. We are a family here at WYCD/Detroit, and that loss was profound for all of us."

On managing talent, Roberts says you have to get to know your people first and find out what makes them tick. "You try to maximize those strengths and help them grow professionally and personally. I get a lot of satisfaction in helping people grow at their craft – that's the true joy of coaching. I love that part of the business, and it's also very creative."

On becoming the best programmer you can be, Roberts says it all starts with building the right culture. "Everything you do, the way you conduct yourself, the way you treat people with respect, live, communicate, and hopefully lead by example, it all matters," he says. "Think before you speak or react emotionally. Try to help people in your journey. It always pays off."



Toby Keith and Tim Roberts

31

MIKE KAPLAN

KYSR (ALT 98.7)/Los Angeles
iHeartMedia
Years in Radio: 25
Years as a Programmer: 20



In addition to overseeing the programming for ALT 98.7, Mike Kaplan assists the iHeart national Alternative Rock team as brand coordinator. Want to get the most out of your talent every day? Kaplan says you've got to let the talent be the individuals they are, "coaching and supporting each of them differently based on their own motivators."

To be successful at programming, he says you'll need to be tenacious and network with the programmers you admire. "Absorb all the knowledge they've gained through their years of successes and tribulations."

32

KEITH CUNNINGHAM

KLOS/Los Angeles
Corporate Programming/Rock Formats
Cumulus Media
Years in Radio: 22
Years as a Programmer: 20



Keith Cunningham explains the job of the program director perfectly, telling *Radio Ink* that every day in radio is a circus, with a to-do list that is miles long. However, he did take the time to offer the most comprehensive advice in this issue for PDs who hope to be successful:

- "1. Have a vision.
- "2. Be willing to admit you don't know everything, and be open to learning every part of the business, from promotions and sales to traffic and beyond — the best PDs know how to navigate all departments, and they aren't afraid to ask for help.
- "3. Realize the audience does not listen as much or as closely as you'd like, and everything you do is truly for the audience, your parent companies, and the brand itself, not your own personal tastes.
- "4. Just because you're a PD, it doesn't mean you're not in sales. *We are all in sales.*
- "5. Having good ears is a prerequisite, but 'where the puck is headed' and how listeners truly consume media, and what they expect and want from your station, is knowledge you must have to put together a winning strategy.
- "6. Be prepared to take smart risks, don't be afraid to fail, always admit and accept your mistakes, and never be without a Plan B.
- "7. One of the most important skills to learn is the ability to accurately decipher research, as data can lead you in the wrong direction if you're not looking at it correctly.
- "8. Realize the law of averages applies in radio. You're going to have up quarters and down quarters, all brands do, and one of the hardest things to do is avoid changing something that doesn't need to be changed. Whether a brand is up or down, truly learn the *why* first, so you can take the appropriate action.
- "9. All young PDs should believe in themselves and be courageous enough to sometimes challenge the status quo, as the media landscape and what works and doesn't are constantly changing, especially from market to market.
- "10. Be available and committed to 'paying it forward' and helping others get ahead. I try to talk with or respond to every young programmer or DJ that contacts me. We need to all work together to develop the next generation of radio stars; it's not going to just magically happen without some assistance."

33

CHARLIE COOK

WKDF & WSM-FM/Nashville
VP Country
Cumulus Media
Years in Radio: 47
Years as a Programmer: 43



Charlie Cook started his radio career at WSDS in Ypsilanti, MI. He spent time at KLAK in Denver, Wheeling's WWVA, and WHN in New York. In 1980, he joined KHJ/Los Angeles, flipping the station to Country, then went to KLAC/Los Angeles before joining McVay Media in 1983 as SVP of Country programming. In 1996, Cook joined Westwood One as VP programming/formats, and in 2006 he headed to Cumulus as VP of programming for the company's 61 Country stations. Cook has previously served as president of both the Academy of Country Music and Country Radio Broadcasters,

and in 2010 he was awarded the CRB's President's Award. He was inducted into the CRS Radio Hall of Fame in 2011.

Just in the last year, WSM-FM was a finalist for the ACM Large Market Station of the Year, and both WSM-FM and WKDF were finalists for the *Country Aircheck*/CRS Large Market Station of the Year. Cook says the reason he can get the most out of air talents who work under him is that he knows what makes them tick. "I know that the ego needed to perform well each day has everything to do with being told that this break or that break was good," he says. "Talent needs to know that you're listening to them to be entertained, not just because it is your job to do so."

If you want to be a successful PD, Cook says you should hitch your wagon to someone you can call and ask for advice. "Network, network, network. Adapt good ideas. Be honest with everyone you work with and for. We have a mantra in Cumulus: 'FORCE' — Focus, Responsible, Collaborative, and Empowered. Do that and you will be successful."

34

MARK PENNINGTON

WRIF/Detroit
Beasley Media Group
Years in Radio: 27
Years as a Programmer: 10



Mark Pennington's approach to every day at WRIF: "The buck stops with me, as they say, for better or for worse — depending on who you ask on any given day! I try to set the vision and keep everyone focused on that vision."

He manages one of the most experienced on-air staffs in the country. "They are seasoned veterans; they all understand the common goal of winning and what it takes to get there. Managing talent is not a one-size-fits-all proposition, I have learned. Where one person might need more structure and guidance, another may need more creative space to breathe. It's about knowing your people and how best to motivate them. Again, it's about getting them to share in the vision of what WRIF means and trusting that they will execute."



36

STEVE BUTLER

KYW Newsradio/Philadelphia
CBS Radio

35

PETER CASEY

WBZ (NewsRadio 1030 AM)/Boston
CBS Radio

Years in Broadcasting: 37
Years Programming WBZ: 20

There are three ways to manage talent to success, according to Casey: "Meet with them and go over issues; give them feedback and provide examples when you can, as opposed to merely suggestions; and then stay out of the way an appropriate amount as well."

For up-and-coming PDs, Casey advises, "Know your station and your market. Read everything you can. Listen more than you speak. Always do what is best for the station and your people."



37

BILL HESS

WMAL/Washington, DC
VP/News Talk
Cumulus Media
Years in Radio: 40
Years as a Programmer: 37



Hess tells *Radio Ink*, "I'm so fortunate to have been able to spend my professional lifetime in the one career I desired, and to work with, and learn from, so many great predecessors and peers." He gives credit to consultants Pete Salant and John Lund for

helping him grow during the early part of his career.

The most important step in talent management, according to Hess, is good hiring. "When you have the right people in place, your job is to keep them focused and let them do their thing," he says. "When working with talent, it's important to help them understand that you are all about their success. You've got their back. And that the things you talk with them about are all designed to make them more successful. After all, when they win, the station wins."

Hess says young PDs should never stop learning. "Ask questions, read the trades, and understand the big picture. Try to hear your radio station the way listeners do and understand how they consume the product. The more deeply you understand the product and how it is consumed, the better informed your own decisions will be."

38

DREW HAYES

KABC/Los Angeles
Cumulus Media



Drew Hayes' first paying radio job was at age 15, as fill-in traffic reporter "Peter Parkway" for WMCA in New York. His first programming job was at a bankrupt station in Tampa-St. Pete, WPLP, where they joked that the calls stood for "Please listen, please!" Since then he's programmed WKRC in Cincinnati, WLS, WSCR, WCKG, and WBBM in Chicago, and WMAL in DC, and was the GM of the ESPN Radio network. Today Hayes is responsible for programming at KABC in Los Angeles.

Hayes says KABC is back in the conversation. "KABC sounds different," he says. "We are not reinventing Talk radio, but we are evolving it. We have developed and acquired some great talent; this is an ongoing priority. We are always looking at talent for how they might be deployed — often in ways that might not be readily apparent."

His advice on managing talent: "Be honest. Back them. Give them candid, frequent input. Trust them, and they will trust you. KABC has many big-name, multimedia personalities who have lots of outside interests — we look at all of these as outlets for our brand, too. Their success is our success."

His advice to up-and-coming PDs? "Listen to your radio station — always. When a staffer asks if I've heard a great segment, I never want to have to say no. Empower people. Delegate — map out opportunities for your staff. Be impatient, but have patience. Tell the truth — especially when it is difficult. Have an idea. Learn from history, but don't wallow in it. Always move forward. Evolve."

39

MARK MEDINA

WHTZ (Z100)/New York
iHeartMedia

Years in Radio: 27

Years as a Programmer: 17

Medina steers the ship for what's been New York's top-billing radio station for the past two years – and that billing, he says, is his biggest accomplishment over the last year, in addition to executing a commercial-free strategy.

Medina says that when managing talent, be honest. "Respect them, listen, and understand they are adults. If they make a mistake or drift off target, we can have an honest, open conversation about it, and solve it together. Just be honest." His advice to young PDs is to keep an open mind, learn from everyone (good and bad), and always strive to find the *why*.



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JULY 24

40

KEITH HASTINGS

KISS-FM & KTKX-FM/San Antonio
Rock/Classic Rock Formats Leader
Cox Media Group

Years in Radio: 40

Years as a Programmer: 31



Hastings tells *Radio Ink* that managing talent is not so much about managing as it is about leading. He says, "I sometimes joke that great radio talent were 'raised by wolves,' in that they are all different and unique. They stand out in a crowd. They have a compelling story, and they want badly to tell it to millions of people. They're passionate, emotional, and they don't fit in most people's idea of a box. To 'manage' that is to put a chokehold on the things that make them special.

"Cox encourages all our people with the slogan 'Be yourselves, make us better.' That's not just a slogan, they really mean it. I encourage talent to be themselves, to truly connect with the audience in their own innate way. If we've done our job and hired true talent, I'd rather stay out of their way and spend my time blocking and tackling for them, getting them the tools and support they need to feel appreciated and encouraged to raise the bar for themselves."

And if you aspire to be a programmer in this business, Hastings says you'd better love the job, and never give up. "When things don't go your way, learn from it and grow. Don't be arrogant, but be confident. Listen as much as you speak. Treat people with respect – your career will only go as far as the team that you build and coach. Great content matters, but great people matter as much, or more. As great as Spurs coach Greg Popovich is, his life might have been very different had Tim Duncan landed with a different NBA team. The same can be said for the NFL's dynamic duo of Belichick and Brady.

"And the single most important piece of advice I can hand down is this: Believe in yourself and your vision. Don't let fear paralyze you into inability to take a chance. You are the only person that can ever hold you back completely from achieving your dream."

41

ROB CRESSMAN

WDRV/Chicago
Hubbard Radio

Years in Radio: 31

Years as a Programmer: 23



Cressman says that while program directors are ultimately responsible for most aspects of a radio station's image, appearance, and sound, one of the paramount responsibilities of the position is developing a vision and strategy for success. The collaborative design and creative conveyance of that blueprint are among the most rewarding facets of his career.

For radio broadcasters aspiring to be successful PDs, Cressman offers the following checklist:

"Prepare. Seek information and launch vigorous research on the job description so you have a better understanding of what may be required of you. This knowledge will assist you in gaining experience and practical skills.

"Observe. Take everything in. Make mental notes on the kinds of management styles that have the most impact on you and your colleagues. These observations will help you to avoid echoing the tactics and maneuvers of ineffective managers. Successful new managers mirror the positive influences solid leaders imparted to them earlier in their careers.

"Engage. Say yes to everything (within reason). Make no task too trivial. Start conversations across departments. Multi-faceted employees with experience in more than one area are often prime candidates for career advancement.

"Persevere. The most ambitious and persistent applicants are not always the best candidates. The aspirants who apply patience and thoughtfulness to the process of gaining experience, acumen, and insight often reach much higher heights."

Cressman adds, "Motivation and inspiration have always fueled my desire to succeed, so I strive to apply tactics that catalyze initiative and growth every day."



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CADILLAC JACK

WBQT/WMJX - Boston, MA



MIKE O'BRIAN

KKLZ - Las Vegas, NV

42

MAURICE DeVOE

KMJM-FM/Kansas City

Cumulus Media

Years in Radio: 28

Years as a Programmer: 16



When managing talent, DeVoe says the first thing you have to realize is that every talent is different, and you have to get to know them and find out what motivates them. "They know there are things that must be done to help ensure the station's success," he says, "but I also want them to be a part of the process and contribute. When the talent feels they are being involved in the process, they tend to put forth more of an effort to contribute to the station's success."

Young PDs, according to DeVoe, must be willing to learn all aspects of the radio business. "The more you know, the more valuable you will be in this industry," he points out. "Find good people at your station and in the industry who can mentor you. Also, make sure you let them know you want to be a PD."

"Finally, never give up! If you want to be a PD, work hard to make it happen. The road will not always be easy, but with hard work, passion, and perseverance, you'll be well on your way to making it happen. As a side note, we as PDs must be willing to mentor these young broadcasters and take the time to teach them the fundamentals of being a successful PD. This will help ensure our industry continues to grow and be more successful."

43

CADILLAC JACK

WBQT & WMJX/Boston

Beasley Media Group



45

TIM RICHARDS

KMLE, KALV (Live 105) & KOOL/Phoenix

CBS Radio

Years in Radio: 25

Years as a Programmer: 21



Tim Richards says the most important rule of managing talent is to hire great people and let them do their jobs. "We have regular programming/morning show meetings to make sure everyone knows and is in agreement with our plan," he says. "Communication and dialogue are key. If the team believes in a plan and they are committed, they will work hard to see it through. My responsibility is in making sure we have that communication and that our team believes in the vision."

And to be a great programmer in this very competitive field: Richards says it may sound clichéd, but it comes down to hard work, commitment, and having a plan. "I aspire to grow as a programmer, leader, and person every day. As I get older, I realize that I will never have all the answers and therefore need to surround myself with people much more talented than me. When you do that, everything else becomes easier."



44

DREW ANDERSSSEN

WMMO, WDBO, ESPN 580 (WDBO-AM)/

Orlando

News/Talk Format Coordinator

Cox Media Group

Years in Radio: 22

Years as a Programmer: 18

How does Drew Anderssen manage talent? He cares. "That's it, in a nutshell," says Anderssen. "I may not be the best at showing it, but I deeply care for the people on my team, and I always try to act with their best interest in mind. I'm passionate about our brands, and I want our teams to succeed every time they go to the line of scrimmage. I use the incredible resources I'm given from CMG to help me be a strong coach, but I often find that I'm also acting in the roles of an agent, a defensive line, and a quarterback, and a referee."

His advice to young PDs waiting in the wings is to work smart, be determined, and become efficient at doing many things. "Don't pass on opportunities to do something outside your comfort zone," he says. "Learn everything. Speak up. Read more. Be kind, but not a pushover. Find a mentor, and be a mentor. Surround yourself with people who are better than you. Be competitive. Celebrate success. Learn from mistakes. Listen to your inner voice. Listen to those who have been there before you. Have a vision. Be confident. Develop relationships, and be smart about calling on them. Be pissed only when it matters (easier said than done). Get out from behind your computer. Have a life outside the business. Execute like a champ. Expect to win."

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46



HURRICANE DAVE SMITH

WHTA-FM, WAMJ-FM, WPZE-FM &
WUMJ-HD2/Atlanta
Radio One

Years in Radio: 30+

Years as a Programmer: 20+

Smith says managing talent comes pretty easily to him because he was once on the air himself. “I know some of the challenges of being creative every day,” he says. “I remember days when you just didn’t feel good or had a situation happen earlier in the day that could affect you on the air. On those days you have to dig deep inside, because your audience is not that concerned with that part of your life. They want you to entertain them regardless of what your day has been. So I get what it feels like to be a talent. I am also a big believer in treating them with respect and holding them accountable. You pretty much know where you stand with me at all times.”

And if you want to win at programming a radio station, Smith says you’ll need to be willing to work long hours and make personal sacrifices with your time. “Being a program director is a 24/7 day job,” he says. “You’re never really off the clock. Take pride in your work, no shortcuts. Study some of the successful program directors, there’s plenty to choose from. Be coachable, and never forget you’re always learning. Becoming a program director is one of the greatest jobs you’ll ever have.”

47

CHRIS EAGAN

WSB-FM & WSRV-FM/Atlanta

Hot AC Format Leader

Cox Media Group

Years in Radio: 18

Years as a Programmer: 8

Eagan tells *Radio Ink* that talent want feedback – though some want it more often than others, and everyone wants it in a form that’s tailored to them. “Employees want to know when they’re doing well, and also want to know when they can improve,” he notes. “If you go through your entire career without getting any feedback, how can you ever grow? My employees always know what I expect and where they stand. I don’t play games, I shoot straight. It’s very clear where we’re going and how I need them to pitch in.”

Being a PD in 2017 isn’t just about scheduling music, writing imaging, and scheduling the jocks for remotes, according to Eagan. “Great program directors are also great leaders of people. It’s important that you learn all of the fundamentals of programming a great radio station and building a brand, but you’ll be even more impactful if you know how to recruit, coach, motivate, and retain great employees. Learn about people and what makes them tick. If you can find out what motivates someone, you can usually figure out how to coach them and make them great. Surround yourself with a great team and you’ll be successful.”



48

DERRICK BROWN

WVAZ-FM & WGCI-FM & WGRB-AM/Chicago

Director of Urban Programming

iHeartMedia

Years in Radio: 31

Years as a Programmer: 18

Brown says to manage on-air talent, dig deep to find out what moves them, and play to that passion. He says, “I also remind them their opinions and feedback matter in making our brands the best they can be.” And, according to Brown, up-and-coming programmers should be in a constant state of learning, maintain a positive, progressive attitude, be great listeners, and embrace change.



49

MARK McCRAY

KBFB-FM & KSOC-FM/Dallas

Radio One

Years in Radio: 26

Years as a Programmer: 19

The key to managing talent is to be a leader, not a boss, according to McCray. “Lead by example,” he says. “Don’t ask others to do the things that you aren’t able or willing to do. Instill a great culture and a winning attitude, and you can get the best out of people. Fair but firm works, also. Build people up, but make them accountable.”

“I am also a big believer in letting people shine!

If they are great at something, empower them to be successful and help them achieve their goals. If people trust you and believe in you as a leader, they will work hard with you.”

If you want to be a successful PD, McCray says to be coachable and inquisitive. “No one owes you anything,” he says. “You have to go after what you want. Show the leaders in your organization that you are serious and they can count on you – they are looking for people like you! Understand that if you are talented, passionate, and hard-working, you will rise to the top.”





50

JOHN LARSON

WWRM, WXGL & WDUV/Tampa
Cox Media Group
Years in Radio: 44
Years as a Programmer: 38

Thanks to Larson and his team, WDUV won a Marconi over the past year, and Larson says that was a great accomplishment. "We were all pretty excited to be nominated, and even more so to win."

So how does Larson lead and manage his on-air team? "I do my best to match them with their natural interests and let them do their jobs. We all have a lot of fun at work, not that some days aren't challenging – but I feel I can be of the most help removing any of the obstacles that would prevent them from doing their jobs."

And if you want to one day occupy that leather PD chair, Larson says you should spend a lot of extra time at the station and learn from as many people in as many different areas as possible. "I don't see as many of the younger people hanging around as we used to do when I started in radio," he says. "I asked a million questions. I'm sure I was a real pain at times, but they were always kind enough to answer my questions and explain their answers so I would truly learn why we did some of the things I didn't understand at the time. I feel that's something we're also responsible to pass along to those who are learning the business. I really enjoy doing that, and they teach me a thing or two also when it comes to digital and social media applications."

51

TOMMY CHUCK

WIHT-FM & WPOC-FM/Baltimore
Top 40 Brand Coordinator
iHeartMedia
Years in Radio: 36
Years as a Programmer: 17



In addition to overseeing all listener-focused aspects of two very big radio stations, Tommy Chuck provides ideas and insight to help drive revenue and is part of a team that helps guide iHeartMedia's Top 40 stations.

Talking about managing talent, Chuck says, "We 'manage' things. We protect, coach, motivate, and empower people. I work hard to earn the trust and respect of those I've been called on to lead. I set high expectations that I know they will fight hard to meet. Most often, they do."

Be bold and ask to be included if you want to succeed as a PD in 2017, Chuck advises. "Sit in on all the meetings you can. Speak up and ask all the questions you have. Provide consistent ideas to make your station better. Be the first to volunteer to do the jobs that nobody else wants to do. Show up when you don't have to. Learn other formats, and don't limit yourself to one."

"Network with every PD in your building, in your region, in your format. Mentally prepare to move to a different city than you are currently in. Then, when opportunities finally present themselves, don't give them a reason to hire anyone else but you."

53

JOHN KAGE

KYGO/Denver
Bonneville
Years in Radio: 24
Years as a Programmer: 10

To help him succeed, Kage says he's had the good fortune of working with and learning from some very successful radio executives such as John Dimick, Bob Call, and Steve Smith.

His advice to others is to stay focused on what comes out of those speakers, and, now, what goes out over social media. "Make it as 100 percent right as you can every minute of each day," he says. "Every break, segue, and song matters. Don't schedule your music five days past your callout date just to get it done when you know it isn't right. Update your imaging each day, live in the moment. You won't see me out of town much. I am focused on making KYGO the best it can be every day."

"Drop the ego and get the best decisions on the air, regardless if it's your idea or someone else's. There are really talented programmers out there doing great radio every day. Stream these stations for inspiration and ideas. Do good business with the labels, but do what is right for your audience first and foremost. Lastly, with sales, try not to say 'I can't,' but instead 'How can I?' Those things have worked for me, anyway."

52

ISABEL GONZALEZ

KLVE & KRCD/Los Angeles
Univision
Years in Radio: 25
Years as a Programmer: 12

Gonzalez's advice to young and aspiring PDs is to be ready to work long hours. "Make sure you surround yourself with people that can help you grow, whether it is someone you can learn from or someone that stimulates your creativity," she says. "Get to know your audience very well – this is key. But overall, make sure you love radio, and you will definitely enjoy this ride."



54

KEITH DAKIN

Regional Operations Manager
Connoisseur Media Connecticut
Years in Radio: 23
Years as a Programmer: 10



To get the most out of your talent, Dakin says, you must treat them differently: "I have talent that have been on WPLR for 40 years, and then I have folks who have never done radio before. Some of our talent needs to be met with every day, and go over each break and discuss show maps and plans for the next day. We have others that are Type A personalities and actually need to be told to calm down. I try to check in with everyone every day, whether it be a hallway conversation or a real meeting.

"We are always presenting the morning shows with ideas and giving them guidance on how to use our social and video platforms. I believe if programmers can be looked at as contributors to coming up with the best content, as opposed to just bosses trying to shut things down, then everyone wins."

55

FLETCHER BROWN

WXFL-FM & WLVS-FM/Florence, AL
Big River Broadcasting
Years in Radio: 20

This past year WXFL-FM earned its sixth consecutive nomination for the Academy of Country Music's Small Market Station of the Year.

Fletcher Brown tells *Radio Ink* that to manage talent, let them do what they do. "I give them the parameters in which to play, but then I step away," he says. "No one, especially creatives, can work at their best with management looking over their shoulder all the time! I listen, and pay attention, but mostly I leave them to it. They know what they're doing."

And for PDs to be successful, he says to build your team, and give them the best of yourself. "Don't take them for granted, and don't lie to them! Also, give yourself permission to fail. Our whole paradigm is win, win, win at all costs. It can be cumbersome, and the fact is you will not win every battle, but you can learn. If you fall seven times, stand up eight. Trust yourself, and trust your team."



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56

MIKE O'BRIAN

KKLZ-FM/Las Vegas
Beasley Media Group
Years in Radio: 40
Years as a Programmer: 11



Managing talent to success means letting them do what they're best at, according to Mike O'Brian. "We communicate each and every day," he says. "Everyone on our staff is an impor-

tant part of the team. Whether they are full-time or part-time, each talent brings something to the table, and that's the reason for our station's success."

To become a winning PD, he advises, learn every aspect of the business. "Be prepared to do the work, and surround yourself with people you can trust and that are better than you, that think outside the box and are willing to do everything it takes to win."

57

MIKE SHAMUS

WKOA-FM/Lafayette, IN
VP/Programming
Neuhoff Media
Years in Radio: 22
Years as a Programmer: 13



Shamus says managing talent is like managing artists. "I believe in setting up people to succeed," he says. "Give them the tools they need, and then trust them to push themselves and their stations to a higher level. I think air-checking every break and critiquing them can do more harm than good. I don't want anyone thinking of me when they are on the air, just the listeners and the show. I want to hear the whole show and get an overall feel for what they are doing and get their input. Everyone wants to feel they are in charge of their show."

Shamus' advice to aspiring PDs is all about trust: "You have to trust your employees and build a team atmosphere to have a successful radio station. Focus on what they do great, and have them do that."

58

SUE O'NEIL

WKSE, WTSS & WWWS/Bufalo
Entercom
Years in Radio: 30
Years as a Programmer: 22

Communicate with your talent if you want them to succeed, O'Neil tells *Radio Ink*. "Do it informally, do it formally, but make sure you are talking to your talents every day," she says. "Include them in everything. Let them know the strategy and empower them. Telling people what to do is not as effective as someone who *knows* what to do."



59

MIKE BECK

WNOR, WAFX & WJOI/Chesapeake, VA
Saga Communications
Years in Radio: 42
Years as a Programmer: 29



In dealing with talent, Mike Beck advises creating trust, encouraging creativity, making positive suggestions – and not micromanaging. To become a successful PD, he says you'll need to make compromises, but keep the listener benefit top-of-mind: "Do the right thing and live by the Golden Rule. Have fun."

60

MOJOE ROBERTS

KUPL-FM (98.7 The Bull)/Portland, OR
Alpha Media
Years in Radio: 21

Years as a Programmer: 11

To manage talent across the finish line as winners, Roberts says you'll need to clearly communicate expectations and work with talent to achieve them. "We set weekly/monthly/quarterly goals to help keep us on track," he says. "It's good to find out what motivates each team member and use it to motivate them to be great."



61**GREG MOORE**

WYKY & WTLO/Somerset, KY
 Forcht Broadcasting
 Years in Radio: 31



Learn what people are good at when it comes to talent, says Moore. "Let them know that you're aware of, and appreciate, that aspect of what they do," he says. "Try to gear and steer things so that they have as many opportunities as possible to employ those particular aptitudes."

To be a successful PD, Moore advises establishing strong, respectful relationships with co-workers. "Try to familiarize yourself with other positions at your station. If you understand how a co-worker does their job, then you know how what you do affects them. If you can get everyone you work with on a daily basis on board with this philosophy, it can turn into a roundabout of respect and synergy that

will have your station humming like a well-oiled machine."

62**OSCAR RIOS**

KLNO/Dallas
 Univision

**63****ELENA JOVEL**

Elena Jovel
 KRZZ-FM/San Francisco
 Spanish Broadcasting System

**64****BOOGIE D**

WFUN & WHHL/St. Louis
 Radio One

Years in Radio: 26

Years as a Programmer: 21



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WMAL-AM/FM
Washington, DC

Leslie Whittle



KRBE-FM
Houston, TX

Thank you
for all your hard work and dedication!



65

SUE WILSON

WQMX/Akron, OH
Rubber City Radio
Years in Radio: 36
Years as a Programmer: 30



Sue Wilson oversees four stations for Rubber City: Classic Rock WONE, News/Talk WAKR, Smooth Jazz WN WV, and Country WQMX – the last of which she also programs. To succeed at programming, Wilson says you'll need to

become an advocate for radio and believe in it.

"There's so much being written about millennials, and people in general, not using radio, but *Tech Survey* and the *Share of Ear* studies tell a different story," she says. "As long as radio is free, and portable, it is still the resource to keep people up on not only their favorite music, but their communities."

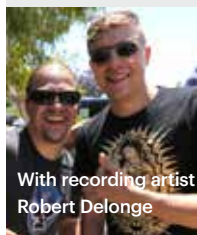
"I would also tell them to find a mentor, and keep an open mind to the integration of the old technology into the new. I would say the same for PDs who are well seasoned in their careers. Keep an open mind to what the younger people we are mentoring can teach us so that we, too, can integrate new media into what works in traditional radio."

66

MATT STONE

WHWY, WZLB, WECQ
& WWAV/Ft. Walton
Beach, FL

Community Broadcasters
Years in Radio: 20
Years as a Programmer: 15



With recording artist
Robert Delonge

Stone says when managing on-air talent, lead by example. "I can't ask someone to do something I wouldn't do. I am a lot younger than most of the people I have managed over the years. I earn respect at each station by showing my staff I can get down in the

trenches with them. I try to be a positive and open advocate for the talent who work for my brands."

On being a successful PD: "My first GM always said, 'The ones who will make it in the business are the ones who can do it all.' Try to learn a little of everything in the station. Make yourself as valuable as four employees."

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