

What the "Today Show" Leaned from Radio

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Someone in charge of producing the nation's highest rated TV morning news program, *The Today Show*, has a background in radio. I say this, because I believe it's the best morning show in the country. Yes, it has the best TV ratings in the US, but it's also the biggest competition to YOUR radio station's AM drivers. In the last three years, *Today* has added a third and fourth hour to its line up. NBC wouldn't do this if they didn't know that the top ratings from the first two hours, and the revenue as well, would follow.

But I digress into the business and economics of the addition of the extra hours, when this Weekly Tip is supposed to be about what you can learn from your biggest competition in morning drive.

Your AM stars could learn a lot from the Today Show. Here are the things that make them the best at what they do.

1) *They have fun.*

All the players, Matt, Meredith, Ann & Al all have fun at what they do. They work well with one another. They seem to get along well. They tease one another, because they know each other well and they don't take themselves too seriously. They allow their audience inside their heads and their lives.

2) *They are as comfortable outside the studio as they are in it.*

Everyday they have the opportunity to meet and greet their fans at 30 Rock and they interact with them well. They seem to be appreciative that their fans showed up to see them. AND they are comfortable performing and doing their job in front of them.

3) *Benchmarks*

They do news at the top, weather at the top and bottom and you know that the local news and weather comes twice an hour at twenty and fifty. BUT they aren't afraid to break the format if something is going on that is more important. I have personally waited for the headlines well past the 7:30 mark on occasion.

4) *They do relatable bits.*

It's a tradition that the players dress up every Halloween. Who wouldn't want to travel with Matt Laurer during "Where in the World is Matt Laurer" every year? AND they giveaway a wedding annually, putting the perspective couples through their paces with challenges allowing their audience to vote during every step of the process on every detail of the nuptials.

5) *They are credible.*

Their audience has no problem believing them when they interview or report on an important figure or event, OR when they are discussing or reporting on the latest Hollywood scandal or gossip. They believe that the hard news is just as important as the fluff to their audience.

6) *Interviews*

The more important the interview, the further out they promote and tease it, the more often they repeat it, and/or the longer they drag it out in easily digestible pieces. If they know they have a big interview scheduled, they will begin to talk about it a week or more out. They know that their audience cannot stay with them throughout their entire program, so they will repeat an interview later in the program or later in the week. AND

if it's that big, with cut it up to try to drag their audience into a hour they don't normally watch.

7) *They tease into every break.*

They never miss an opportunity to drag their audience through a commercial break. I always say, if you think its important enough to mention, then its important enough to tease.

8) *Preparation*

They never make a mistake or sound foolish during an interview because they do their leg work to get the background before they hit the air. Of course they have dozens of producers to help with this, but even if they didn't, wouldn't tackle anything on-the-fly. With one exception, a breaking news story. BUT when this happens, they also ad-lib well.

I can't miss a day without Matt, Meredith, Ann & Al. AND it's because they do these tried and true morning show basics everyday. When you execute the basics well, it makes anything look easy. Ask the Memphis mens basketball team about their foul shots during the NCAA championship game. If their coach had stressed the basics, we might have a different National Champion.

Bob is a master at training and stressing the basics. Find out how you can be. Call him TODAY at 706-358-9103.