

No silver bullet for radio in 2023

 Bylloyd madurai

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I like trends pieces, because it gives us an opportunity to take a punt on where we think our sector will be in 12 months' time and that can be a bit of fun, particularly if we take the trouble to check in again in a year's time to see how right - or wrong - we got things.



Lloyd Madurai, managing director at Hot 102.7FM

But, I want to take a slightly different approach with this BizTrends 2023 piece, and I'll explain why.

Back to basics

One can gaze into one's crystal ball and attempt to see what the trends in 2023 might be, but the reality is that the basics of radio and what makes it such a compelling and effective medium haven't changed and won't change in 2023.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, don't look too hard for the new and shiny magical 'silver bullet' in radio, because there might not be one, and that's okay.

Radio must be radio

Sure, everyone is talking about digital and its role in radio, but we mustn't lose sight of what radio is— its essence and what it can offer, both to the listener and the advertiser.

Radio is radio and must not try to be anything else. And what it is, is good enough. Not only good enough, but great! It's consistent, compelling, engaging, effective, immediate, and a platform that can achieve things other media platforms just cannot get close to achieving.

Quite simply, what radio is, is a personal relationship between station and listener, and no other medium, in my opinion, can get close to that. That's also what makes it so attractive to advertisers – there's an authenticity that can't be replicated and that's what many brands are looking for.

Long may that continue!

Digital has its place

Sure, the lure of digital is also attractive and radio stations need to find ways to organically work that into their offering, but for me, digital expansion is more about meeting the listener on the platform on which they want to be met and engaged with.

It's just an extension of your 'bread and butter' radio offering, but obviously it's a space that is evolving all the time. As a result, radio stations need to be equipped to meet that changing need – again, with the listener and their needs front and centre.

Radio is my friend

The radio station-listener relationship is one-on-one and when executed effectively and with the listener at heart, it's your best friend on the other side of the radio.

If anything, the Covid-19 pandemic reminded us even more of this fact and a lot of people relied on radio for their human interaction. It was a return to basics of what the essence of radio is, which is a personal relationship based on trust and honesty.

What do listeners want when they tune in every day? They want accompaniment, they want a relationship and they want to be part of a tribe.

Radio can give them that and more.

Radio should be your best friend, your mate, and we have Covid-19 to thank for that reminder, notwithstanding the fact that the pandemic has been a dreadful time for many of our listeners.

Radio to care more

Ironically, pre-pandemic, all the talk was about radio being 'in your face', 'loud and proud', and maybe even brash.

But, I think that the pandemic has not only changed all of us, but also how we view our role in the communities in which we operate – and that includes radio stations.

Fortunately, at Hot 102.7FM, making a meaningful difference to the lives of those around us has always been central to what we do, thanks to our relationship with our CSI division, Hot Cares.

“ Greater hunger for human connection ”

So, it's not too much of a stretch for us to work this into our offering. But I think that in 2023, you'll find more radio stations

following suit, particularly as we take stock of what has transpired over the past two years.

It's almost a case of stations waking up to the power of radio and how this power can be harnessed for good.

Radio to get out there

Along similar lines, expect stations to get out into their communities more, shaking hands and 'kissing babies', as politicians like to say.

Take the cynicism out of that and it's about connecting and engaging with your audience, and after the restrictions of the past few years, there's a greater hunger than ever before for that human connection.

Radio stations are perfectly placed to leverage the connection they've already established with their audience over the 'airwaves' and extend that into something even more tangible, through events, activations and promotions.

Bring on 2023!

ABOUT LLOYD MADURAI

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