

Reasons not to 'touch that dial'

 By [Gilda de Araujo](#) 26 Jan 2012

2012 heralds a brand new chapter for radio advertising and, more and more, savvy advertisers are acknowledging that successful campaigns demand the time, effort and nurturing of an involved team and more. [multimedia]



Here's the lowdown on what to expect from radio (advertising) in 2012...

1. Branded content

Programming and advertising are supposed to form a symbiotic relationship. This was demonstrated none more clearly than in 2011 by former 5FM broadcaster and now UK-based radio specialist Mark Gillman.

Brand programming technology as Gillman calls it, is about programming that evokes a feeling. It outlines the fact that, for radio advertising to work, it needs to 'move' or entertain first, and then be skilfully integrated into a station's compelling programming lineup.

Of course, this means that the excuse about radio not being 'visual' simply won't fly in 2012 because Gillman explains, "It doesn't have to be visual. Programming is not creative - it's about being a human being. Someone must cry, laugh, be offended or be moved - something has to happen. Thereafter, it becomes easier to make the brand fit".

Exciting stuff and definitely something to look out for this year.

2. 30-second ads are not the be-all-and-end-all of radio advertising

Without taking credit away from the classic 30-second recorded ad, which has most often been what radio is to the media industry - a firm foundation - more and more advertisers are seeing it as *de rigeur* to go beyond the realm of the generic ad via features such as interviews, drama serials, sponsorship outside broadcasts and generally more innovative programme integration and listener relevance.

3. The idea first, then duration

FNB successfully demonstrated in 2011 with the ["Steve" campaign](#) that the quality of the idea is more

important than media length, and that some ideas need a little more time to come to life.

In 2012, it's the ideas that will dictate how we use the medium. These concepts should have the staying power to work within whatever new timing parameters they're presented with.

As international radio specialist Tony Hertz puts it, "How long should a commercial be? Write the commercial, rewrite it, get it right, then act it out loud. That's how long as it needs to be".

4. In touch with the emotions

Radio's strengths lie in the personal relationship it has with listeners. For the savvy advertiser in 2012 radio will increasingly liberate brands to be more transparent, authentic and create ads that reflect human truths.

5. The return of the jingle

Along with a move towards longer, more emotive radio ads is the return of another firm radio favourite the jingle.

More and more radio ads will include jingles and pneumonics that will instantly trigger brand recognition in the hearts and minds of the listeners, helping brands build firm relationships with listeners and to stand out from the media clutter.

6. Radio drives online

Granted, an ever-growing element of each campaign includes online and the social media space. But have you considered that when new media platforms are used as a sound-bite to spark conversation, where do you expand the conversation to achieve meaningful reach? On radio, of course.

As brands connect more and more with consumers through their social media communities, they will look for radio stations to drive this. Radio has the power to create communities of interest, and to act a focal point for communities to talk about things that are happening around them.

By tapping into its immediacy and power to start, maintain and grow conversations, radio will remain one of the best mass-reach media to boost awareness of brand presence on new media platforms.

7. Station-advertiser 'collabo'

Gone are the days of campaigns or concepts being exclusively station or client driven. Marketers in 2012 will see the need to collaborate with stations, increasingly becoming content generators with the focus of entertaining and engaging listeners.

Considering that radio is set to invest more and more in the creation of content, this synergy can only bode well in creating great entertainment, whatever the commercial message.

Advertisers will, of course, look to stations to develop ways for their brands to be integrated into this ever-expanding content generation. This will also see the audience becoming the source of content/concepts.

8. Power of personality

One of radio's strengths lies in the personal relationship created between listeners and radio personalities. Consider that radio personality Gareth Cliff ([@GarethCliff](#)) currently tops the South African list of key influencers on Twitter, with four more radio presenters holding positions in the top 3 list.

And, with the ever-expanding scope of radio presenters' influence via social media platforms, we'll see more brands matching themselves to a show or host.

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