

Dear SA radio stations

 By [Simon Parkinson](#)

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I've been working in radio for 26 years and I love the medium today as much as I did when I first stumbled across it back in 1990.

In my opinion, radio is the only medium that has actual human contact all the time, real people speaking and interacting with real people in real time. Television, print, outdoor and the new kid on the block digital all interact with their audience in a less intimate conversation, and I don't think they have the power to drive immediate response, emotion and interaction as well as radio. Of course their owners will tell you differently, but radio can very quickly make you feel happy, sad, angry, frustrated and relieved within the space of minutes.



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In 2016 there are two words being used extensively by marketing managers and people within the advertising industry: “content” and “convergence”. Everybody wants to create content for their brand/company and they want to converge it within their advertising campaigns and promotions.

Of course, these briefs are generally followed by “I want a good return on investment” and “I don't have a huge budget”. Radio out of all of the traditional media is best poised to deliver content convergence and return on investment, but the question still remains as to whether the South African radio industry is ready to exploit this opportunity.

Great content

For years commercial radio has offered formulaic in-the-box solutions, however, now is the time to change and merge client and station content to create, wait for it, CONTENT! This can be amplified and converged with digital and other media depending on the creative and overall campaign objectives.

Listeners will listen to great content and if it's good they won't notice the commercial element as it should be a perfect, natural fit. But are radio station programming departments and presenters at that stage where they can start seeing content as one, with the common cause of entertaining the listener, meeting the client brief, writing revenue for the station and delivering a client result?

Smart stations will start engaging in content conversations that will be uncomfortable, but if they open their minds whilst guarding their programming integrity, they will find new ground and new opportunities to create solutions for their clients in a unique radio way. Concepts that live and breathe on a radio station as part of its content, amplified via its audience with social media possibly activations etc., and monitored through a number of tools to prove the return on investment.

Look at the traditional media, newspapers and print are scrambling for new and innovative solutions, television fragmentation is a reality and advertisers are not seeing the same results, outdoor is static and cluttered. Radio is just about holding numbers, listeners and revenue, but for how long? Now is the time to move to the new playing field and it has to be **with your advertisers for your listeners!** Content is still king but the manufacturing process has to be collaborative in order to have a win-win for station, listener and client.

Radio as an opportunity to have more of the advertising spend – is your station going to take advantage?

Regards,
Simon

ABOUT SIMON PARKINSON

Simon Parkinson is a director at Ultimate Media, the radio and audio specialist advertising agency. He is also the current host of The Big Joburg Drive show on Hot 102.7 FM

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