



expressfm
local radio for Portsmouth

Express FM (Portsmouth) Ltd

Style Guide

Express FM is a radio station that's dedicated to Portsmouth, playing a broad selection of familiar adult contemporary music during the day which includes recent and classic chart hits. The music is interspersed with engaging, relevant and often educational speech content from local contributors.

The fact you are on the radio and you remain being on the radio means you are a good radio presenter. But, sometimes our memories need to be refreshed about what makes a good radio programme. Some of the basics are listed here. Firstly, always ask yourself...

Is This Relevant?

- Radio is intimate, Please ensure that when you are talking on air you are addressing an individual. Try and have a clear idea of who that person is. Refer to the listener in the second person singular (you) not the plural (you lot).
 - "How are you today" feels friendly to the listener.
 - "Hello everyone out there" makes the listener feel disassociated with you.
- If you co-present a programme, your job is much more difficult. Not only does it mean you have to consider a conversation with a second physical person, you must ensure that your focus is on the unseen audience member. You may need to do more prep to effectively do this.
- 'In studio' observations should be avoided, as this is not about the listener. Inside jokes may be funny to you and the loyal listeners, but to most are secluding and often annoying.
- You must always respect your listener - talk to them as an individual, an equal, a friend, they should not feel preached to or patronised.

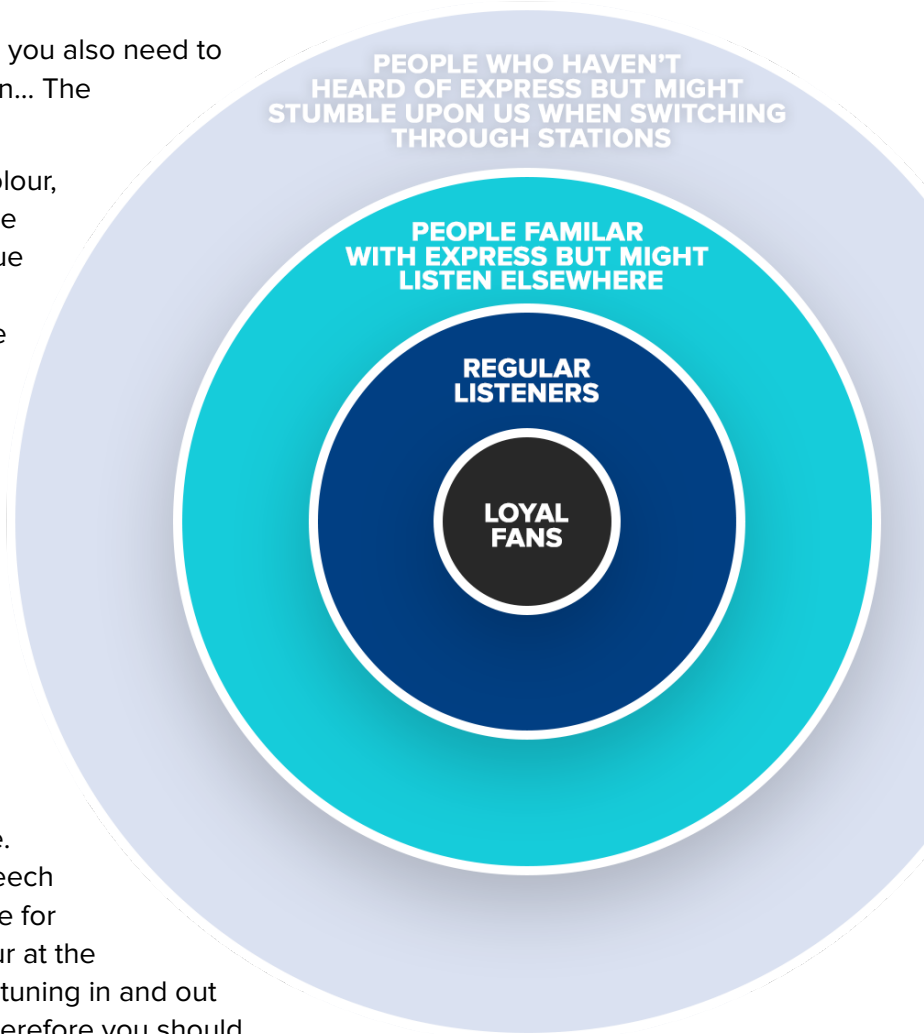
The Hour

- Creating a running order for your programme will allow you to easily forward promote what's happening on your show. This is an integral part of radio presenting, as we want listeners to listen longer. The following should be a standard for inclusion in all radio programmes:
 - **Forward promote what YOU will do in your programme**
 - **Forward promote the NEXT PROGRAMME AND OTHER PROGRAMMES/FEATURES/PROMOTIONS.** An easy way to do this is if you play a rock tune you might want to forward promote one of the upcoming rock shows etc.
- Please use the **PROSPECTS** email system to identify and deliver what interesting content is coming up on other programmes. Or, ask the presenters!
- Although you should plan out your show, you don't need to read out a show 'menu' for your listeners, most won't listen to the entire thing, just keep focusing on the next half hour or so.

The Audience

Our target listener is 30 plus, male, female or other, and of any class.

- Who are you talking to? You should always ask yourself this before every link and show you plan. Always focus your content on what the listener would want to hear, not what you want to talk about.
- As well as their age, gender, class etc. you also need to be targeting a particular type of person... The people who don't normally listen.
- Look at the diagram, the darker the colour, the more loyalty the listener has, notice there's less of them. We of course value their loyalty, but as a station you want to grow your audience so focus on the groups in the lighter colours. To do this...
- Tell people what station they're listening to and what we do.
- Explain clearly what you're doing on your show. As an example, regular listeners might know your 'Beat The Clock' feature but for new people you'll need to explain they need to 'Answer all five questions before the timer runs out'.
- New listeners are tuning in all the time. Unlike television or mixed content Speech radio stations like Radio 4, it's very rare for 'normal' listeners to tune in on the hour at the beginning of the show. People will be tuning in and out of your programme for its duration. Therefore you should be continually trying to keep people tuned in throughout your programme. On average the majority of listeners tune into the radio for 20 to 30 minutes so it's your job to keep them engaged throughout that time and hopefully listening longer.



The Programme

- Planning your programme is critical. An unprepared programme is obvious to spot, it sounds clumsy and lacks direction. You are taking your listener on a journey so ensure that you have a clear map of where you intend to go during your programme and the listener will come with you.
- If you have guests on your programme, ensure you have done your research and can confidently introduce them to your audience, otherwise your listener will immediately recognise that you are unprepared and you will sound ill-informed, lacking in professionalism and ability.

Interviews

- Express FM has many interviewees throughout the week and good interviewing is an art form which seems deceptively simple. In fact, delivering a great interview involves many different skills.
- There is one enormously huge part of a good interview: **DO YOUR RESEARCH**
- If possible try to meet the guest informally before the interview. This will help by making them more relaxed than if the first time they meet you it is with a microphone in hand!
- Try to avoid scripted questions. It will sound like an interrogation. Just make rough notes of the direction you want the interview to go. Guests' answers will often create a new set of questions for you to ask. If you've scripted your questions you run the risk of missing the most important answer to follow up. The most powerful question you can ask someone is "Go on..."
- Ensure your guests are relaxed before and during the show, chat to them when off air.
- Ask beforehand what NOT to ask, some things are too sensitive to share on the radio.
- Use open, not closed questions (eg: How? Why? Tell me about...etc)
- Don't be too formal, try and relax and have a conversation.

The Link

- Don't talk over the vocals at the beginning or the end of a song. Only talk over instrumental parts.
- As stated in our Broadcast Criteria you should try to include something **local in every link**. Whether it's local news or stories, references, comments on Portsmouth history, listeners shout outs, try and include an aspect of localness in everything you do.
- Have a good idea of what you are going to say before you start speaking. You should know why you are saying it and whether it's relevant to your audience. It will stop you from losing your listener's interest and it will showcase you as a professional broadcaster.
- There is no designated length for a link, but like watching someone's wedding speech, listeners will get bored with lengthy, non engaging or irrelevant presentations.
- If you have nothing to say, don't say it. A listener will never judge you for what you don't say. If you really haven't prepared your link or have nothing of value to share, just play the next song.
- One thought per link - Each link should only really deliver one piece of information. If you have too many threads, themes, or subjects each time you open the microphone you are at serious risk of losing your audience.

Tell Them...

Have you noticed that certain commercial radio stations tell listeners the name of the radio station every few minutes? There's a reason. Radio listeners generally don't pay attention. Radio programmes are a mostly passive experience; it's on in the background and to get the message across you need to repeat it.

- **Tell them** you're going to do it
- **Tell them** you're still going to do it
- **Tell them** you're about to do it
- **Tell them** you're doing it
- (Assuming it's appropriate) **Tell them** you've done it

Standard Stuff

- Please ensure you reference the name of the radio station, if people are listening it's because they like what you do and if you want them to listen to you again, you'll want to remind them which station to tune into!
- Follow the link comments in the clock
 - It's good to have songs back to back to allow music to flow, so try to avoid talking after every song, just make sure there is a sweeper/jingle between them.
 - Talk into the breaks (without mentioning them) to tease what's coming up.
 - Don't talk into the news jingle. This is especially important when prerecording shows as this may cause your link to be cut off half way through due to the hard branch, so always end the hour with a song.
- Depending on the time of day, or type of programme it may be appropriate to tell them (usually in the mornings) the time and the weather ahead.
- It's advisable to tell the listener what's coming on your show, or the next show at the beginning of your link. For example, "Travel news on the way... and more details about tomorrow's gig at the Wedgewood Rooms coming up..."

Other Top Tips

- By all means encourage interaction in your programme, but you must give listeners a reason to get in contact. If you are unable to give listeners a genuine reason to call you, send a text, Tweet or message on Facebook, don't bother.
 - **"If you want to get in touch with the programme, send us a text."** is not likely to get a response.
 - **"If you also heard the thunder last night, get in touch and tell us what makes you scared"** is much more likely to illicit a response.
- Never say these terms...
 - **"That wasn't supposed to happen"** Don't draw attention to mistakes. Almost certainly the listener hasn't noticed. We appreciate that it's a natural temptation to apologise for errors, but just move on.
 - **"We'll be right back"** There are two inexcusable phrases that many people attribute to television: *"We'll be back after the break"* and *"Welcome back after the break"* Never use these phrases, not only does it assume that your audience goes away from your programme, it GIVES people a reason to go away. Promote what's coming up instead of saying you're going to the ads.
 - **"Goodbye"** Please, never say "Goodbye" at the end of your programme. Like above It gives listeners a cue to switch off or switch over, as such is it disrespectful to the presenter who follows you. Thanking your listeners for listening, is of course acceptable such as "Thanks for listening today, Paul has a cracking song from Depeche Mode on the way"

We recommend reading David Lloyds 'How To Make Great Radio', it's an insightful look into what makes a good radio show from the perspective of a seasoned professional who works as a consultant for the top radio stations.

Your programme is not about you... it's only ever about the listener.