

# Where Great Local Broadcasters Should Go Now

By Loyd Ford - February 1, 2021



**(By Loyd Ford)** Big national corporate teams have done their best work to manage local markets to do their best practices. There is nothing wrong with that for them. We've seen the magic of scale and debt. We've lived during a pandemic and the continuing adjustments to changes in technology. Where do local broadcasters go to really separate themselves from competitors and use their local nimbleness as a strategic advantage in 2021?

Here come eight (8) places for your focus as we prepare for higher ratings, revenue and ultimately value for our radio brands. That is what you want in 2021, right?

**Make a strategic and focused effort to develop very unique identities for each of your station brands with important multiple 'benefits for listening' to each individual brand.** Nothing against big companies, but often top down corporate management creates bland brands that are more like commodities. Also you do not build a strong brand by copying or being more like another station or leaders already in place in a local market. Those brands already have unique reasons in the minds of listeners

that have made listeners fans; to be a strong and unique brand, you have to have your own attributes for passionate tribe adoption.

**Create a smaller and separate digital sales staff.** *Better than this* is to buy or create a separate digital company that focuses on and is accountable for their own survival and thriving in the local business market. I know, I will get email. The brutal truth is that having a separate company or at least a separate sales team means the focus is on making income and there is more focused and significant accountability. And what do we know about how accountability impacts sales and revenue?

**Embrace what radio is best at doing: Creating results through local connection and frequency.** That means embracing being the champion of local in more than words. Prove it every day. What do you really do that separates you from your cluster competitors in terms of providing local information, tips and opportunities to local clients and potential clients? How is your outreach and evangelism about local radio and connectivity to your core tribes?

**Focus on quality.** Most of the focus at radio today is the holy grail of how to reduce expenses, but times change. It is time to amp quality and focus on gaining share again. More than this, it is essential that the quality focus elevate the creation and support of real local brands. Even your sales department should be known by branding that sets you apart from every Tom, Dick and Harry seller just trying to close another deal. How is the copy in your commercials? What are you doing to promote local radio and your own brands beyond your on-air?

**Develop more direct sales training focused on the value of radio today.** Make certain your sellers have support and tools that make them feel like a winner and help them set themselves apart from competitors. So much focus is on churn and burn of priorities of closing. Coffee might be for closers, but motivated champion servants focused on listening to potential clients, what they want and need and delivering overwhelming value to local business owners is a real winner as much today as ever.

Champions don't just appear. They have models; they've seen skilled practice of the art of their profession. We all stand on the shoulders of those who have taught us. As managers and owners, your investment in training, examples, innovative concepts that motivate and teach will pay off across time and increase the value of your sales team. It's never been more important.

**Catch your people doing something right.** Put this at the head of all things in your management of human assets. People who feel supported and purposeful crush it. Every person on your team wants to win. Everyone is human. They need frequent support, including the feeling that what they are doing is advancing something important. As managers, our number one priority should be focusing on showing sales people, top on-air personalities and others the proof that they are making a difference and they can feel safe to reach for the next level and next goals. This is the magic of your best performing managers

**Digital must be a part of your sales conversation** and you must have it because local business owners not only want it – they will go around you to get it. As always, I highly recommend you focus on innovative digital solutions where you keep an eye on *profit margin*. If you give away all your margins, you are in *someone else's business*.

Don't be afraid of big national competitors. Most of them are giving away their profits by reselling products that send most of the revenue somewhere else. That's not winning. We get paid for our expertise and our innovation and it is equally important to *keep a business eye on profit center* and how to keep your margins higher. Don't lose sight of this *or you will have trouble treading water even in your primary business eventually.*

**Radio and social media are very good synergy brothers.** The same is true for podcasts. Radio is very effective as a generating attention partner for these things. But don't mistake this for saying all content is a winner. Quality and focus on lifestyle and being a specific resource and building tribes is critical. When creating social media content, be visual in execution. However, you are encouraged to have a social media content strategy that takes into heavy consideration the value of your personalities and looking at passionate tribes and values or services that can be created on a local level for the audience you most want to attract to your brand or brands. Building a tribe is a step you don't want to skip. Just posting in social media or launching a podcast is essentially meaningless unless this is done with purposeful planning and thought leadership about how it turns into a growth engine and revenue.

Radio is a powerful way to connect and reach local audience. Our audience is often on the move and they enjoy our delivery system because of our wide distribution. The future is here: It's embracing technology, social media and digital and developing specific strategy that favors your brands and the development of the influence you want and the sales machine that helps your business roar to growth. Don't take this moment for granted: Growth comes from strategy, planning, elevated support and a focus on quality that separates you from commodities in today's busy world. Do those things well and growth will come as this year rolls out into full view.

**Loyd Ford consults radio stations, coaches personalities, and provides behavioral and strategic programming to radio that propel ratings (and revenue) with RPC. Reach him anytime. 864.448.4169 or Ford@RainmakerPathway.com.**



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Loyd Ford is the digital revenue, direct marketing, ratings and social media strategist for Rainmaker Pathway and Americalist Direct Marketing. Loyd has programmed very successful radio brands in markets of all sizes, including KRMD AM & FM in Shreveport, and WSSL and WMYI in Greenville, WKKT in Charlotte and WBEE in Rochester, NY. Get his radio-social media content sent directly to your smart phone or email for free here:  
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