

# Radio Ink Salutes The Best Managers In Radio

This year's list of the Best Managers in Radio — assembled, as always, with input from professionals throughout the industry — covers regulars and new faces, huge groups and family companies, and every radio format there is. This year, with times so challenging, we asked these respected industry vets to answer a serious question for us: How have the economic challenges of this past year changed your management philosophy and practices? And we asked them a not-so-serious question as well: What has been the most amusing moment of your radio career?

## **BEST MANAGERS/REGIONAL MANAGERS**



**DANIEL A. FINN**  
Senior Vice President/Regional  
General Manager  
Greater Media/New Jersey



If I had to choose, it would come down to one of the following: the runaway station blimp, which was last seen over the Atlantic; the ambulance driver who seriously harassed me for a recent format change — while taking the long way to the hospital; or the time I almost fell out of an advertiser's plane when the door blew open.



**KIM GUTHRIE**  
Group Vice President  
Cox Media Group

Companies that adapt the “desperate times call for desperate measures” mentality may lose their direction, their mojo, and their good people. Great people will realize they don't have to put up with oppressive managers, unreasonable demands, pay cuts, etc., and will seek the stronger broadcasters who still provide resources, benefits, incentives, and decent pay.



I hate clowns, and have been the butt of many clown jokes, clown-o-grams, and dirty clowns blowing up suggestive balloon animals over the years. It still skeeves me out.



**VAL MAKI**  
Senior Vice President/Market Manager  
Emmis/Los Angeles

## BEST MANAGERS/MEDIUM MARKET



**STEVE SINICROPI**  
Vice President/  
General Manager  
Cox Radio/Greenville, SC

We've stayed away from slashing rates and panic selling of low-price packages. We continue to deliver great results when we stick with our plan of matching our listeners with the right customers, using the right copy, and running a strong schedule. We don't take low-cost units, unnecessary network units, or last-minute inventory that junks up the stations. That strategy doesn't work for advertisers, has little chance of creating renewals, and produces little revenue. It's pretty basic: We say what we are going to do, we do it, we show we did it, and repeat.



At the first radio stations I managed, we ran an April Fools' promotion in which the "phone company" ran announcements that they were cleaning dirt, dust, and soot out of the phone lines to provide crystal-clean phone reception for the next decade. The promos instructed people to place baggies on the receivers to capture the soot. We made over 100 papers around the world, and TV news showed maintenance people bagging pay phones at the malls. The phones blew up, people talked about it, and the staff had a blast. We need to keep the fun in radio. That has me thinking....

In 2009, we created numerous cluster-wide cause-marketing promotions that are increasing our localism and benefiting our community. Both listeners and local advertisers really gravitate toward that concept and are increasing their advertising with us or are signing on as sponsors of these events. These programs also serve as great platforms for introducing new clients to our medium.

Some examples of our station events:

- Resolution 2009 Blood Drive is the largest media blood drive in Virginia.
- Music for the Military generated over 5,800 CDs for troops.
- Feed Richmond generated over 100,000 meals for the Central Virginia Food Bank.
- Keep Richmond Moving hosts free marketing seminars attended by 300 local businesses.
- Holiday Heroes — greetings that honor local servicemen and -women who are overseas.



**BOB WILLOUGHBY**  
Vice President/  
Market Manager  
Cox Radio/Richmond

## BEST MANAGERS/SMALL MARKET 101-200



**DARRELL C. CALTON**  
Market General Manager  
Impact Radio Group/Boise

Here are a few areas from both sales and programming that have been instrumental in our build-out:

1. Trying to marry every radio schedule with at least one digital element. Multi-touch is becoming the rule, not the exception.
2. Offering satisfaction guarantees with no penalties for early cancellations.
3. Walking on schedules that do not satisfy minimum frequency standards.
4. Insisting on benefit-driven commercial copy over feature-driven.
5. Hiring local LIVE talent for major dayparts to talk about local events and issues, including a return to

community service and fundraising.

6. Complete use of social media and texting platforms to keep the talent engaged with the listeners.
7. Twelve-month outside advertising plan, including television, outdoor, and street-level promotions.
8. Not a day goes by when you cannot hear someone having fun in the building, and we really try to nurture that spirit. It is, after all, why most of us got into the business in the first place.



**KENT DUNN**  
Vice President/  
Market Manager  
Beasley Broadcasting/  
Augusta, GA

We did a campaign call "Absolutely Augusta" that featured local clergy, politicians, and business leaders, all talking about the good things that are happening in the Augusta economy. The campaign won the NAB's What's Working for You? award.



Several years ago we had an inflatable mascot for our Oldies station — a 30-foot gorilla called King Kool. On a Monday following a

remote, I got a call from a new client who said he loved the remote but was sending me a bill for the mess the gorilla made. What mess? Apparently it had been windy that weekend, and the wind carried King Kool across three lanes of a busy intersection. The client claimed King Kool was so scared he made a mess everywhere!