



Radio's Bright Future

The next generation comprises more than today's most savvy media consumers. If they happen to be Bayliss scholarship recipients, they are quite possibly future radio executives as well. Wondering how they would address issues recently posed to this year's "Top 40" industry leaders, I sought out three of over 330 Bayliss scholarship alumni (Bayliss has awarded scholarships for 24 years and placed more than 90 interns at radio stations in the past four years).



Dena-La'uren Drost



Jess East



Jessica Zerillo

Dena-La'uren Drost, a recent graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Communications, recently joined WRMF/West Palm Beach as promotion coordinator. Jess East is set to graduate from Ohio University in August with a bachelor's degree in media management from the Scripps College of Communication. And Jessica Zerillo, a 2009 Ithaca College graduate, will be working at WPST/Princeton, NJ, as a promotions assistant while pursuing further education. Read their words and feel encouraged. The future is in good hands.

If you were in charge of a major radio company today, what initiatives would you pursue to compete for today's tech-savvy consumers?

Dena-La'uren Drost: I would make sure that every

station had an Internet-driven mindset. Podcasts, blogs, webcams — we want everything faster than it happens. Tech-savvy consumers want their stations as savvy as they are, and they want to see the DJs having fun — not just hear them.

Jess East: If we are trying to capture the tech-savvy consumer, our competition not only comes from other radio companies, but other media as well. The iPhone, iPod, satellite, YouTube, etc., are emerging as competition at capturing this demographic. I would try to integrate locality with the always-evolving world of social networks and applications for new technologies. The key to capturing the tech-savvy consumer is having a marketing team that is even more tech-savvy than those consumers.

Jessica Zerillo: Locality and a strong involvement in the community are key factors in keeping radio successful. We need strong radio personalities that our listeners can relate to. We also need to be interactive with our listeners. And record labels, satellite radio, terrestrial/HD Radio, and Internet radio need to work together to compete for a very tech-savvy generation.

If you could change anything about how radio operates to make it more effective, what would that be?

Drost: Radio seems like it has tried to make more money with fewer people. Radio started as a local initiative, but over time we entered this model where people realized you could make more money by getting rid of DJs (and tons of other jobs) and making the computer do everything. A computer is wonderful — it pays my bills for me automatically and makes me sound great via spelling/grammar check — but it's not a person. It can't tell you that there is a fire in your neighborhood, that a hurricane is coming, or that Michael Jackson may have just died.

Radio needs to get back to localized programming

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and focusing on one station at a time, not trying to make 80 stations the same with two employees running each of them.

Zerillo: In the wake of the iPod generation, it seems as though everyone was in a hurry to find a way to “save radio.” What we got, instead, was radio competing with itself. Not only does the radio industry compete with record labels and digital downloads, we are competing between terrestrial/HD Radio, satellite radio, and Internet radio. We should be asking ourselves how to work together to compete together as an industry. Instead of trying to outsource each other, we need to work together to save an industry many claim is dying in this era of new technology.

Beyond the financial aspect, how has Bayliss helped you pursue your dream of entering the broadcasting business?

Drost: The Bayliss Scholarship gave me faith even in such hard times. When everyone was telling us that jobs were not out there and to brace ourselves for the “real world” during a recession, Bayliss came along and said “you’re fine.” It gave me confidence in all of the hard work I had and reminded me how much I want to be in this career. My good friend introduced me to WRMF a few months before I graduated, and I walked into the station with the confidence that Bayliss gave me. Even in these times, Bayliss is instilling faith and confidence in our field.

East: Being a Bayliss Foundation Scholarship recipient has opened so many doors for me. I have been able to engage and maintain relationships with other who are as excited and interested in the industry as I am.

Zerillo: In addition to being the recipient of a Bayliss Scholarship this past academic year, I also participated in the Bayliss Internship Program, which provided me with a paid internship at one of the top radio stations in New York City. The Bayliss organization not only helped me finance this internship, but also broadened my knowledge of the radio business through a sales internship. Prior to this internship, I knew nothing about radio sales, nor did I care to. I was thrown into the business side of radio, as opposed to the programming and production experience I previously possessed. I was able to witness firsthand how the radio business works in today’s largest radio market. By the end of the internship, I was considering a career in radio sales. Without the help of the Bayliss organization, I would not possess the knowledge or experience necessary for a career in radio today. ■■■

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HOW CAN ADVERTISERS GET THROUGH TO TEENS?

The first generation to grow up digital is online nearly all the time.

According to the Teen Advertising Study by Fuse Marketing and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 45% of U.S. teen Internet users were heavy users of the Web.

Thirty-eight percent characterized themselves as average users, and 16% were light users.

Teen Web users were active users of online media — 90% used e-mail, 83% watched online video, and 72% were social networkers.

Authors of the survey wrote that the most effective ad content for reaching teens had “people like me enjoying the product” and humor.

Least effective were ads that caused an emotional response or “personal interaction” with an ad.

Teens’ acceptance of ads varied by media platform.

Sponsorship of live events enjoyed the highest level of ad acceptance among teens, followed by TV, radio, print, and online.

The medium with the lowest teen ad acceptance was text messaging, followed by video games and social networks.

Finally, no matter what product was being advertised, the medium with the highest ad recall was TV.

Source: *eMarketer*, June 30, 2009

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