

JUST FOR PROGRAMMERS

May 14, 2014

Three Things Radio Can Learn From Mom

Last week as the Programming Services Team was planning out our Mother's Day activities for the special women in our lives, we got to thinking about what radio stations could learn from the collective wisdom of moms everywhere.

Those of you that program radio stations across the country may feel like a stressed-out mom some days, handling all of the various challenges and tasks that come from your 'family' (your station crew) each day. Putting those experiences through the lens of dear old mom, here are three things radio can learn from our mothers:

You Never Call: It's been the refrain as long as there have been telephones, "remember to always call your mother." In a broader sense what that really means is to always remember to show your appreciation for the most important person in your life (she did give birth to you, after all!), and the one who has always been your biggest fan. The same sentiment applies to the people who give birth to your ratings.

In the past, when the only feedback loop radio had with listeners was the request line it was hard to show appreciation to your audience. But now with social media providing a variety of ways to interact with listeners, programmers everywhere should be sure to do the equivalent of calling your mother. Respond to Facebook posts and tweets, follow your fans and engage them in conversations. And don't forget to do things the old fashioned way too, get out on the streets, shake hands, kiss babies and thank people for tuning in. It goes a long way, just as the short phone call to mom on Sunday did...you did call, didn't you?

Eat Your Vegetables and Get Some Sleep: Much of the best motherly advice centers around teaching life's most basic lessons like being sure to eat healthy, work hard to get ahead, learn to share and get an education.

And while radio stations don't have actual mothers, perhaps they should, as they could give PDs the radio equivalent of great motherly advice:

- Eat healthy = Play the hits
- Be proud of yourself = Build a strong brand
- Learn to share = Be a part of your community
- Get an education = Understand how ratings work

If programmers took the time to translate motherly advice to our radio stations our brands would be that much more likely to grow up to be productive members of the ratings society.

Every Child is Different: Moms never play favorites amongst their children, because every child is different and requires a unique set of parenting skills that is rarely duplicated within the family. For all of you moms (and parents) out there, you know this from years of watching tricks and motivational tactics that worked with your first child fail miserably with your others!

The same is true of an air staff who can at times seem like a big unruly family themselves. Some will be easy to motivate and others will challenge authority looking to push their boundaries at every opportunity. As the mother/Program Director it's up to you to figure out how to handle each child and to never (openly) play favorites. Learn each staff members hot buttons and what type of motivation they require and apply as necessary.

We're sure there are lots of other ways that being a mother is similar to programming a radio station. Feel free to share any thoughts you have with us at programmingserviceteam@nielsen.com

If we get enough good feedback, we will post a follow-up column sharing our reader's wisdom.

In the meantime, to all of you who have given birth to, or are in charge of the care for a bouncing baby or a radio station, a belated Happy Mother's Day.

