

Does job security exist?

We've all seen it happen. The guy you worked with for the past few years has been told that his services are no longer needed. As Queen so eloquently put it, Another One Bites The Dust.

In the world of radio, the revolving door never stops turning. Does job security even exist?

This is a bit of a loaded question. As with any job, your overall security really depends on your performance. If you meet the expectations and constantly look to improve yourself, you'll likely become an asset to the company.

In radio, however, obtaining job security is a little more complex. As air talent, we have to deal with the ratings game. If the numbers aren't there... well, then, neither are you. In a sense, your ability to maintain employment is out of your hands. Or is it?

Job security is never a guarantee, but you can help solidify your spot on the roster by doing what many announcers have forgotten about. Get out there. As air talent, part of our job is to get out in the community, shake hands and make friends. The more people you meet, the better chance you have of making a positive, personal connection with your demo.

Politicians take the same approach. When it is an election year, it is virtually impossible to avoid seeing or hearing the candidates in your community. Signs pop up all over town, the politicians show up at community events, BBQs, even the local softball tournament. The idea is to meet the people, to show us that they believe and care about the same things

we care about it. The more hands they shake and babies they kiss, the more potential votes they'll get when people go to the polls.

The approach for air talent should be no different. It is up to you to market yourself and get the community interested in you and your show. Volunteer, join a local sports team, get involved, make an impact.

When people know and like you, they in turn want to listen to you and often get others to do the same.

A good example of how making an emotional connection with your audience can turn into job security happened a couple of years back when Vancouver morning show hosts Nat and Drew from Z95 (now Virgin Radio 953) were axed. Eighteen days later they were back on the air in response to "thousands" of e-mails from upset listeners. Letters were sent to the publisher of the local newspaper, a Facebook page was created to support them and people even showed up at the station to protest.

Talk about making an impact. For what is typically out

of the hands of announcers, Nat and Drew were able to gain job security through listener loyalty. Ratings translate into dollars and it was obvious that this morning team had a following that needed to be preserved.

Being visible and active in the community is only part of the job. Air talent must also strive to be creative and unique while on air. Give your listeners something fresh and fun while maintaining a local feel to the show.

When it comes to prepping for your show, it should never stop. Just because it's the weekend and you have two days off does not mean that you can forget about what your demo is doing. In order to be truly successful, you always need to be "on".

You should also be aware of what your competition is doing and have an understanding of what is working at other stations in your market and why. Is there something your competition is doing that you are not? If so,



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what can you do to compete and level the playing field? The format initially attracts the audience, but it is the talent and content that will keep them.

Implementing these suggestions will not necessarily allow you to dodge any potential layoffs or format changes, but it will cause management to think twice before handing you your pink slip. You may not fit in with the new direction of the station, but you will likely gain a great reference and possibly be transferred to another station within the company.

If it is job security you are looking for, part of that falls on your shoulders. Act like a politician and you're sure to garner some votes from your community and your station.

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