



Production

(from RAWIK Radio Aus- und Weiterbildung im Interkulturellen Kontext)

Planning and preparing a show

A radio programme generally comprises several shows, each of which has a particular show format (e.g. magazine show, news, background show, music show, talk show etc.). The format and structure of the show are specified in the show's concept / description, as well as in the show clock. The amount of creative freedom within a show depends on the broadcaster's concept and the show's concept.

Various design elements feature during the course of a radio show. For instance, in a magazine show:

- Jingle (show's acoustic recognition feature)
- Presentation of the show (the presenter guides listeners through the show, announces items and presents the central themes)
- Hourly overview
- Music
- Teaser (for subsequent show elements)
- Trailer (brief preview of a show or item, generally with text, music and excerpts from the item)
- Item (report, interview, comment, etc.)
- Reports on sport, weather, traffic, news...
- Regular items (items which repeat from show to show, usually in a fixed place within the show, e.g. album of the week, quiz with listeners...)

Show structure – with a magazine show as an example

A magazine show generally begins with a greeting and something which sets the tone for the show. This can be a specially produced jingle or a piece of music which suits the mood.

Also at the start, the presenter gives the audience an overview of the planned topics. They should make the start of the show as fascinating and appealing as possible, so as to arouse the audience's interest and to captivate them. They must plan the timing in advance very precisely, so that they can implement the programme within the predefined time frame and so that they can maintain high diversity of content. (An example show rundown sheet is attached at the end of this section).

Checklist for the structure and dramatic composition of the show

- Where do I position serious themes and where lighter themes?
- Which items are particularly interesting and topical? – These should be positioned strategically within the show.

- Are there fixed regular items with predefined broadcast times, e.g. news, tips or comments?
- What rhythm should the show have? What ratio between talk and music?
- When does the audience need concentration breaks and listening breaks?
- Between which items and themes can I make good transitions?

When arranging the timing, it is important to plan sufficient time buffers in order to accommodate unforeseen delays. Anyone presenting in multiple languages needs more time. Also, at least 3, but preferably 5 minutes of music should be scheduled for the end of a show, so as to enable the changeover to the next show's team in the studio.

Show clock and show rundown sheet

The show clock, also referred to simply as the clock, displays all show content in an individual hour and where this content is placed. Shows of several hours in length require just as many show clocks as there are hours in the show. The show clock visualises the arrangement of the design elements, thus aiding balanced show design. On the basis of the show clock, a show rundown sheet is prepared. This lists all show content in chronological order and is the basis for the actual show design. Where are jingles placed? When is there talking over a musical backdrop? Who presents when in which language? And so on...

This, in turn, is the basis for the presenter's script.

Example of a show rundown sheet

Name of show: Politburo							
Show date / time: Sunday, 05/07/2009, 18:00–19:00							
Presenter: Nicole Meier		Music: Nicole Meier				Technician: Detlev Müller	
No.	Content	Artist / author	Sound carrier	Track no.	Time	Length	Remarks
1	Politburo jingle	Politburo	PC	1	18:00:00	00:00:43	
2	Greeting / introduction	Presenter	Live		18:00:43	00:01:00	
3	Cecilia Ann	Pixies	CD	1a	18:01:43	00:02:06	Caution, stops suddenly!
4	Union story	Nicole Meier	Live		18:03:49	00:04:00	
5	Workers' united front song	Tom Schneider	CD	5	18:07:49	00:02:38	Out after 2:38!
6	Intro: Founding of Verdi regional office	Presenter	Live		18:10:27	00:00:30	
7	Founding of Verdi regional office	Detlev Müller	PC	5	18:10:57	00:05:10	
8	Get up, stand up	Bob Marley	PC	3	18:16:07	00:03:12	
9	Intro: Globalisation	Presenter	Live		18:19:19	00:00:30	
10	Globalisation item	Anja Graf	PC	?	18:19:49	00:05:17	
11	Get a move on!	Mr. Scruff	CD	1	18:25:06	00:03:26	(Fade out at 2:30)
12	Intro: Conti works council	Presenter	Live		18:28:32	00:01:00	
13	Conti works council item	Anja Graf	MD		18:29:32	00:04:00	
14	Intro: IGM youth camp	Presenter	Live		18:33:32	00:01:00	
15	IGM youth camp item	Detlev Müller	MD	22	18:34:32	00:03:43	Raise level!!!!
16	Susanne zur Freiheit	Fishmob	CD	2	18:38:15	00:04:12	
17	Intro: Future of IGM	Presenter	Live		18:42:27	00:00:30	
18	Debate on future of IGM	Jo Baumann	MD		18:42:57	00:02:40	
19	One by one	Chumbawamba	CD	6	18:45:37	00:05:45	Out earlier!
20	Intro: Köter interview	Presenter	Live		18:51:22	00:00:30	
21	Köter item	Detlev Müller	PC		18:51:52	00:04:35	
22	Closing remarks over 45 sec. ramp of Bachelorette	Björk	CD	7a	18:56:26	00:03:33	
					19:00:00		

The most important of all devices: the ear

In radio, the key factor is how things sound. And for things to sound good, the equipment must be right. Here, the most important "device" is the human ear. It enables us to determine what sounds good: whether original sound (an original recording of an interview, noises etc.) is quieter or louder than the music, whether a little more bass would make the voice sound more friendly, or whether reverb would be a good effect. Also rhythmically, where the right place is to fade out the music, whether the rhythm of the music suits the tempo of the voice etc.

Only our hearing can reliably tell us whether the technical devices used are set correctly and are functional. Thus, listening carefully is essential in radio work. We can train our hearing and over time we develop a sense of what sounds good.