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You Have 30 Seconds To Read This...

Life is funny, isn't it? You were hired to program a troubled radio station (or you were hired to take the heritage station to the "next level"). There have been meetings with the consultant, the regional or national programming guy, cluster manager, market manager, or strategy team. You have had conversations about how your station fits into the current cluster concept. If you are lucky, the company and your team have set some very clear goals for the station and given you some resources to propel the station in the general direction of the goal line!

Now the "Spring Book" is here. Everyone is keyed up. Programming is under the microscope. All eyes are on how the station will fit into the strategy with the new PD at the helm. Even those people who will not say it are thinking, How will our brand (remember when we used to call it what listeners call it a station) do in the spring? It is totally up to you to set the events in motion that will bring more success to your radio station.

Now what?

Here's a thought. Step back. Take some advice from Bill Gates who has a "Think Week" twice a year. Get out of the building. Listen to the station. Make sure you have the opportunity to hear your radio station **without** cell phones, e-mails or meetings. Hear if it **sounds right**. It is amazing how programmers make less and less time for this concept. We all get caught up in the quick, liquid time escaping from our day. While you can't make more time, you can make better use of it. You don't have to take a week, but it would be beneficial for you to take an entire day. Time is the power resource of any manager. Once time is gone "poof" it's **gone**. You are the product manager. Taking time to listen to and really hear the product you are creating should be at the top of your list.

Bill Gates takes a week twice a year to think about the future. This allows him to think about how Microsoft products can shape the lives of hungry consumers over the next six months or even years to come. It allows him to get away from all of the noise so he can focus on his products. What products will help Microsoft bend and make the company's own future more successful in the next six months and beyond? These are the real questions for Bill Gates and Microsoft and you and your station for Spring '05.

I urge you to take time away from the station to focus on **how the station sounds** and how your most important listeners will experience and use the station. Once you have taken a day to listen, ask yourself this important question: Have I done all that I can to give my people and our strategies the opportunity to succeed? That is a broad question and one that should be answered right now as the spring book begins.

Are you using all of your resources? It is essential that you walk in the door like a brand new PD looking for untapped resources. Make sure you are maximizing all you can achieve from the resources you have today.

There are more ways than one to skin a cat. As you roll into spring, you should be thinking about your resources and people like myself. Perhaps there is one more trick to help expand your spring results. Maybe that one conversation or one single idea will change the way you see the competition or your way to climb faster in the ratings. The successful PDs find those little tricks and maximize their results against the competition and against time itself.