



# Flipping Out



Cumulus Media's KDBN/Dallas has flipped formats twice this year — from classic rock to triple A in April and to Top 40 last month. Flip master Jan Jeffries says, "From countdown to flip, the whole idea is to continue building intrigue for what is coming soon."

## How do you introduce the idea of a flip to the staff, the clients, and the market?

Flips are generally welcomed by staff and clients, sometimes due to a previous format not getting its fair share of ratings and revenue or a gaping format hole in the market.

Format flips are most times played close to the programming vest to help assure growing anticipation with the staff and clients and, most importantly, the cume that comes through the "search portal" of the broadcast band.

Before the flip, all parties are informed of the change, either with full disclosure of the new direction or an added tier of information beyond what's been heard on the air in countdown mode.

## How do you implement the change, from design of the logo to production of on-air and outside promotional teasers and copy?

Format flips signal an entire change of programming, so the design of the logo is best when it completely jettisons the previous

image in terms of style and imagery. The whole purpose of a flip is to change totally and boldly. Keeping any element of the previous format would send mixed signals and weaken the re-entry into the market.

Production on a station in flip mode should be representative of things to come.

Teaser copy can range from a direct approach, with what is coming and how to use the station, to mysterious and suspenseful, creating a theater of the mind regarding what's on the launch horizon.

## Can you give some insight about the first day?

On the first day, the new station is making a first impression. The best programming skills should be in place, sharply focused on the station's differentiation and new relevance in the market.

## Do you ordinarily hire new staff?

We always look inside before going outside to find the right fit of skills and experience to fill newly created opportunities. ■■■

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## MAKING THE MOVE FROM TALENT TO PD

By Rob Redding

Programming KMLB-AM/Monroe, LA, these first two months has been trying. I have to learn the automated systems, clean up gaps in programming, handle employees, deal with being understaffed, and live within the budget constraints that all programmers are coping with in this horrendous economy.

As I celebrate 15 years in radio in November, I have never made the mistake of thinking that programming would be easy. Still, when KMLB owner Bob Holladay offered me the PD job at this heritage station of 79 years, I could not turn down the opportunity. I was aware that few blacks, if any, hold the position at a mainstream conservative talk radio station. I also knew that he was entrusting me with his station because I have been able to build a nationally syndicated show, *Redding News Review*, which we started nearly two years ago in March.

Since taking the PD job, I have learned that my station is the hardest in the building to program because, like most talk stations, it is just about all automated. To do this job, you cannot be scared of computers. You must make fast friends with tech-

savvy people who can help you out of tight spots. You will also appear sensitive to budget restrictions if you treat the station and its budget like it's your own.

As a general rule, I try to treat everyone down to the janitor nicely because you never know when you will need to get into a locked office. Treating employees like they are invaluable to the company and meaning what you say is key to winning them over. But just in case I could not win my existing employees over, one of the first things I did was make sure that I had fresh talent to pick from. I created staff backups by running a very generic spot on my station and all the other stations the company owns. The spot helped me get around an incestuous market where everyone has worked for and with each other at least once, largely because it is a small town. The addition of interns and inexperienced talent has also helped to keep expenses down. Although you have to really work with this new talent, you are bringing more people into the wonderful business of radio.

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