

JUST FOR PROGRAMMERS

February 5, 2014

Three Things Radio Can Learn From the Grammy Awards

According to all of the media chatter recently, a lot of Americans found the Grammy Awards on CBS pretty entertaining. According to reports the show attracted more than 28 million viewers, the second biggest audience for the Grammys since 1993 (yeah, Nielsen TV stats!).

The success of the broadcast is most likely due to a growing tradition of musical surprises and unique artist pairings that helps make the evening pretty special as well as an ability to span generations and appeal to audiences of all ages.

If you were watching you may have noticed a few consistent themes that can also be thought of as opportunities radio stations could take a cue from.

- 1) **Create Unique Moments:** Whether it was Imagine Dragons dramatic performance with Kendrick Lamar, Madonna joining Macklemore and Ryan Lewis on “Same Love” as Queen Latifah wed 30 couples or the surprise on-stage reunion of Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, the Grammy Awards created a number of noteworthy moments that people were talking about the next day.

What didn't stand out were the solo performances. Other than Taylor Swift's brain-rattling hair flip, an artist alone performing just their song simply wasn't as memorable. This is something radio stations should keep in mind. Programmers and talent need to look for opportunities to create pop culture moments that will get your audience buzzing. In today's crowded media landscape it's important to find ways to stand out and attract attention. It may not be easy to combine unlikely superstar performers but there must be an equivalent for your station.

- 2) **Create Conversation:** Beyond the unique performances the most stunning thing about the Grammys, or any awards show, are the winners, losers and snubs. People love to talk about who got the award, who deserved the award more and who wasn't even nominated. Just ask Macklemore and Ryan Lewis.

Don't underestimate what this can do to stimulate your listeners. Create topics for debate and watch people weigh in. Take polls, give out your own awards, talk about other people's lists; whatever it takes to get people engaged in the conversation and intrigued by your station.

3) Be In the Moment: The Grammy's generated 15.2 million tweets in the eastern and central time zones alone according to CNN.com. Add in Facebook and other social media and the number of people commenting on the show in real time is exponentially larger. If your station didn't have someone watching the show and participating in the event online (and in real time) with social media you missed a chance to bond with other music fans who might already be listeners, or better yet could be potential new listeners.

Finally, we'll share a fourth observation for at no extra charge. Radio needs marketing. Seeing CBS' pro-radio spot with artists talking about the first time they heard their song on the radio reminded us just how powerful our medium really is and the effect it can have on performers and listeners. Too often it seems we take radio's giant reach for granted and don't market our product or remind listeners just how much passion and heart there is in what we do every day.

