

JUDY ELLIS

Senior Vice President of Emmis Broadcasting, New York

JUDY, WHAT IS YOUR EXACT TITLE AT THE RADIO STATION?

Senior Vice President of Emmis Broadcasting, New York. I oversee KISS-FM and HOT97.

THIS WEEK HAS GOT TO BE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR YOU. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT A BROADCASTING COMPANY HAS OWNED THE NUMBER ONE AND NUMBER TWO RADIO STATIONS IN THE NUMBER ONE MARKET IN THE WORLD.

Yes, it's a dream come true on many levels. That's one of them. The other one is that we work with a staff of the hardest working, most talented people in radio, and now they get to see the results of all their hard work and all their talent.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS ABOUT ALL OF THEIR HARD WORK AND TALENT THAT HAS BROUGHT THEM TO THE FOREFRONT IN TERMS OF AUDIENCE SHARE IN NEW YORK CITY?

I think it's their ability to focus and to understand the audience that we're trying to reach.

FOCUS IS AN INTERESTING WORD. WE'VE USED IT A LOT AT THE HITMAKERS SEMINARS, AND YOU ALWAYS HEAR FOCUS USED BY MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO FOCUS IN RADIO, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN? HOW DO YOU FOCUS IN RADIO?

Each department in the radio station comes at it from the direction of their jobs. So the program director's focus has a lot to do with the music that's played and the on-air presentation. The marketing director has to do with how the radio station is imaged both inside and outside the radio station. The jocks have to focus on the presentation they're doing at that exact moment in time.

GIVE US THE BACKGROUND OF THE RADIO STATION.

The radio station was bought by Emmis Broadcasting in August of 1986. It was called HOT103 because its dial position was 103.5. In 1988 Emmis Broadcasting bought all the NBC radio stations and that included two in New York, an AM and an FM. The FM was 97.1 and had a better signal than 103.5. At that point in time you could only own one AM and one FM so they flipped the dial

position and sold off 103.5. So we then went in in September of 1988, and we went from HOT103 to HOT97.

TELL US ABOUT THE TRANSITION ON HOT97 FROM WHEN YOU WENT ON THE AIR IN 1986, IN TERMS OF THE KIND OF MUSIC YOU PLAYED AND THE AUDIENCE YOU WERE GOING AFTER UNTIL NOW.

The tradition in terms of the music changed from being a dance station then to being a hip hop station now. In terms of the focus of the audience, that's remained the same. We have been focused on reaching the 18-24 year old rhythmic-radio listener.

DO YOU FEEL AT THIS POINT, ESPECIALLY WITH THE RATINGS THAT HAVE JUST COME IN, THAT YOU OWN THAT LISTENER?

Yes.

IS IT POSSIBLE IN TODAY'S FICKLE WORLD TO ACTUALLY HAVE LISTENERS OWNED?

To own is a funny word. I think they love our radio station.

ARE THEY LOYAL TO YOUR

"We've got Spinderella on the air, we have missjones, Monie Love, Ed and Dre have their own album out, we have Evil D, Funkmaster Flex, Red Alert. Not only are they living the lifestyle, but they're creating the music the listeners are listening to."

RADIO STATION?

Yes. I think they love listening to our radio station. I think it becomes a real important part of their entertainment and of their day and of their lives.

Steve: Our time spent listening is now up to eight hours and 45 minutes, which is a real strong signal that the people that listen to HOT97 listen to HOT97 all the time. Our TSL is tremendous so we really believe in programming narrow for broad results. We focus in on the 18-24 audience and we really, really try to be their radio station. As a result of that, and owning hip hop and targeting and focusing and owning hip hop, we feel that we'll own every hip hop listener in every other demo around 18-24. So in essence we perform better in all the other

demographics because we are targeting narrowly to own hip hop.

Judy: Again, one of those words, but we're *superserving* the 18-24 and that's giving us everything around it.

Steve: So a 28 year old hip hop listener is going to listen to HOT97 all the time.

JUDY, DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR LISTENERS BELIEVE THAT THE JOCKS THEY HEAR ON THE AIR LIVE THE LIFESTYLE?

Yes. And there's even more to that question. Not only do they live the lifestyle, in the case of HOT97, they're producing the music. We've got Spinderella on the air, we have missjones, Monie Love, Ed and Dre have their own album out, we have Evil D, Funkmaster Flex, Red Alert. Not only are they living the lifestyle, but they're creating the music the listeners are listening to.

Steve: These are the artists. A lot of the people on staff here are the artists. They're in the hip hop community. They're part of the hip hop community so they're creating the music along with presenting it.

THIS IS A TOUGH QUESTION. MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME WORK THROUGH THIS QUESTION. THE SOCIO-GRAPHICS OF THE BIG URBAN



represents the multi-cultural diversity of New York better than HOT97.

WHAT WAS THE BIG DIFFERENCE?

It was very Hispanic. The market at the time was 13% Hispanic and KTU was probably 50% Hispanic.

RIGHT. THE PHRASE WE USED IN THOSE DAYS TO DESCRIBE THE MUSIC PROGRAMMED TO SERVE THAT DEMO WAS "DISCO."

Yes, it was. At the time it was called disco and today we call it dance.

DO YOU, AS A GM OF HOT97, LOOK AT HOT97 AS AN EXTENSION OF WHAT PEOPLE ARE HEARING IN THE CLUBS IN NEW YORK CITY?

No.

SO THAT DOESN'T PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN YOUR PROGRAMMING DECISIONS?

Not like it once did.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT MUSICAL ELEMENTS ON HOT97 RIGHT NOW? IN OTHER WORDS, IN DECIDING WHAT MUSIC YOU'RE PROGRAMMING?...DECIDING WHAT TO PLAY?

Steve: Hip Hop is more a culture than it is a musical style. There's a culture and a lifestyle here in New York that we're now calling hip hop. You get out on the streets when you talk with the 18-24 year old audience. A great percentage of them are living that lifestyle. We create music for that lifestyle.

Judy: We play the music that is that lifestyle.

Steve: The clubs have a little bit of a different vibe in New York. They tend to be a little bit underground, a