

Black Radio



WALT LOVE

- A black executive at a general market station stresses professionalism
- Taking the color line out of selling your station
- A Washington, DC radio pioneer retires

A Positive Approach To Broadcasting

Realizing exactly what it takes not just to make it in this business, but what it takes to survive as a professional, has led me to Frank Woodbeck. Mr. Woodbeck is the Vice President and General Manager of WKBW/Bufalo. I realize that WKBW is not a Black radio station but I also realize that its VP/GM has knowledge that we all can benefit from. Following, Mr. Woodbeck shares that knowledge, tells us his thoughts on upward mobility, and provides some tips on marketing your product — your radio station.

I think most of us agree that Black radio has come "a long way baby" professionally, but it still has a long way to go at some stations. I asked Mr. Woodbeck what he thought we as working professionals could give to Black radio, whether we're working in it or not. "First of all, don't pigeonhole yourself if you want to improve. Don't think

of yourself as being in a type of radio, but think of yourself as being in radio, and being a professional business person. If you become an efficient professional, you can do a lot for yourself and for radio in general. For example, if we (blacks) want to get into ownership of radio stations, we should, but we should not limit ourselves to Black radio only. If we want to be owners, we should own all types of differently-formatted stations; that in itself would help Black radio by giving others the opportunities to participate. Broadcasting can be a profitable business, and if we want to own and program Black radio stations there's nothing wrong with that, but one of the most positive contributions we could make is to operate and program those radio stations in an uplifting manner. Programming is a good positive example for our youngsters and our community. We can give some people a positive basis from which to work by answering questions, giving help when needed, and by giving leadership when needed. That way, we've helped ourselves."



Frank Woodbeck

Early in our interview, Mr. Woodbeck expressed an uneasiness about being singled out as a black VP/GM of a general market radio station. I asked him to comment on that aspect of his professional life. "I'll tell you, I will be extremely happy when publications call me one day to interview me as a General Manager of one of America's greatest radio stations, which this is, rather than the black General Manager of one of America's greatest radio stations. I am a professional, a businessman, that's essentially it. I happen to be a GM of a radio station within a company that makes a profit for the parent company. I stress that point very heavily."

Chronicling his background, Mr. Woodbeck said, "I've been in the industry for 13 years — starting off as a film technician at a television station here in Buffalo. I've been with WKBW radio for nine and a half years starting as a sales trainee in 1972. In 1977 I became the Local Sales Manager, General Sales Manager in '79, and General Manager in 1980. Born and raised in Buffalo, I attended the University of Buffalo and have a BA in Business."

How and why do you think you were able to accomplish the track record you possess? "My predecessor, the gentleman that hired me, had confidence in me. The company gave me the training first and then the opportunity to sell. Quite frankly, when I got into the sales end of the business I was not sure of myself and I really had to

learn how to have fun selling. Essentially, that's the key ingredient — you have to have some fun in selling. No matter what type of station you're selling, that station is your product and you're looking at that product as being an intangible product. Consequently, you must make sure that you learn a little bit about your client and your client's business, at which point you can fit your station's situation into the client's situation to make it beneficial to them. That's really where the fun comes in."

Try The Sales Route

Do you think more young people should try entering the industry by way of sales? "Yes, if they really want to get into what I feel is the fast-moving end of the business, more individuals should look into what I call the base of the business. Some young people only know of the on-air side of the industry; they should take the time to talk to someone in sales and find out what it has to offer."

What would you suggest to general managers of Black radio stations who are trying to sell their product to a client who's reluctant to buy time on an ethnic station? "First I would suggest that they might want to analyze their audience to find out exactly who listens to their station. In Buffalo, for example, we have two radio stations that cater to the black community — one AM and one FM. They supposedly cater only to the black community, when in fact if you analyze their audience you will find that it is not an all-black listenership. I would doubt that there are many ethnic stations in the United States that have only one ethnic group that listen to their radio station. Consequently, I think that's what has to be imparted to the potential advertiser. Clients that we deal with want to sell their product — consequently the only generic color involved in this entire ballgame is 'green'... money, and that's what makes us all work."

"Whether it's general market radio, Black, Polish or whatever, all radio stations exist by making a profit. All we should think about is presenting our product, which is our radio station, in the most positive manner possible. If we can sell the client's merchandise and do them some good, I don't care what kind of station it is, the client will continue to buy. We all must remember that radio stations are selling people, and one hundred percent listenership of any radio station is not one particular ethnic group. Black radio plays R&B music but that does not mean that only blacks like and listen to that type of music. General managers and sales managers must realize they are selling to people and we are selling a share of the marketplace that our stations have to offer to an advertiser. Sometimes we make this business a little more difficult than it really is."

Earlier you mentioned that one should not pigeonhole themselves within the industry — how do you think that can be accomplished? "As I stated before — don't think of yourself as a black star, but as a professional who can get the job done. Don't look for a crutch because there are plenty of people who want to give you a crutch, and then hope you fail. We need to get away from any negatives. But I'm not confusing the word crutch with 'help.' Anyone can look for help, and there are a lot of people within this industry that will give you help and they're not all black. If you deal with the folks who are willing to help you and accept you as a professional, you don't have to prove anything to the other element, thank God. Believe in yourself, your talent, and you can accomplish anything."

It was a real positive to interview Mr. Woodbeck, and I truly wish that we lived in a society that didn't put so much emphasis on race, color, etc. Maybe if we would get rid of the labels, radio could be business... and a fun business at that.

ACTION

Radio's Jumping In Jacksonville

Jacksonville, FL isn't that large but it appears that a great medium market radio battle is beginning to shape up in that Southern city. All of a sudden there are two Black radio stations (WPDQ & WKUE) and Urban Contemporary WJAX-FM (95X), all after the black listening audience.

WPDQ continues its changes. Maxx St. Claire will be doing the 2-6pm airshift and has resigned his Music Director position. His replacement in the music chair will be Earl James. Mr. James and new Program Director Marc Little can be reached at (904) 642-0530.

Program Director Mike Moore of WKUE, FM 93 in the Jacksonville area, needs record service for his new format. Mike can be serviced through the following address: WKUE, 2837 Park Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204.

WYLD-FM/New Orleans has announced the appointment of Tony Brown to the position of Music Director. Tony is presently on vacation and will assume his new duties when he returns. Next week we hope to be able to tell you where current Music Director James Alexander is headed for.

This is just for our female readership. KJOP radio in Central California asked me to put out the word that it's looking for an experienced female newscaster with an energetic voice who's not afraid to editorialize. The person must be able to work under pressure, coordinate recorded materials, and be compassionate toward the needs of the black community. If interested contact: Jamal Wells, KJOP, 15279 Hanford-Armona Road, Lemoore, CA 93245.

Program Director Fred Moore of WLTH/Gary, IN announced the appointment of Ron Rogers as Production Director and announcer. Ron has been a veteran of the Chicago radio market for ten years.

The Music Section

Black Radio's Most Accurate Music Information

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Black Radio Pioneer Retires

What can you say when a legend retires? A simple statement is best, "I'm going to miss him." The man making the statement is E. Carlton "Bud" Myers, Vice President and General Manager of WOOK-FM (FM-100), United Broadcasting's Washington outlet. The man he's talking about is Cliff Holland, Vice President of Public Affairs for WOOK and one of the first, if not the first, black radio announcer in a major U.S. city.

Today Mr. Holland brings down the curtain on an illustrious 35-year career with WOOK. Who would have thought that this man, who started as a part-time announcer in 1946, would one day be named a VP in a major broadcast group, possibly the first black to be so appointed. Truly a radio pioneer, Mr. Holland's contributions as a performer, administrator, and teacher are well documented.



Cliff Holland

Mr. Myers recalls, "In the late 40's, Cliff set this town on its ear with a program from 2-6pm called the 'Afternoon Dance Party.'" The phenomenal success of this show was only one in a succession of professional accomplishments for Mr. Holland.

He served as Music Director and then as Program Director of WOOK for more

than a decade. Washington, D.C. television viewers may remember him as a news anchor on the city's old Channel 14. Mr. Holland also has been coordinator of the broadcast of United Broadcasting's "Message Of Hope" program, which was originally fed daily on a network line from Washington to all the United Radio stations. "He was the backbone of Black radio in Washington," remarked Mr. Myers. Mr. Holland shouldered the responsibility of directing and training many successful radio announcers, including some who went on to work on Voice Of America broadcasts.

The culmination of this broadcasting journey was celebrated at a gala dinner in Mr. Holland's honor on December 30 in Washington. Among the presentations were a mayoral proclamation signed by Washington Mayor Marion Barry, recognition by the District Of Columbia City Council, and honors from the Washington Area Broadcasters Association.

From all of us who have followed you Mr. Holland, thank you and Godspeed.