

New Year's Checklist

RadioMusic.com

I used to look forward to January's of New Years as a chance to slow down a bit and regroup for the coming year. The Holidays, Major Promotions and Budgets were all in the rear-view mirror and the all-important "Spring Book" was far enough away that I didn't require my full focus just yet. That gave me the opportunity to exhale and coast for a bit. Maybe.

In today's world, with most programmers dealing with multiple stations, air shifts across their clusters, social media demands, and increased interaction with sales and clients, that downtime is a bit shorter than it used to be if it exists at all.

Having said that, January still has some "Housekeeping" that needs to be done while you have a little extra time to make sure the **music on hard drive** and imaging on your radio station is on target.

- 1) Go through and clean up your Music Scheduler. Check for typos, improper coding, missing artist groups, duplicate cuts, and songs that were being rested that should go back into rotation and vice versa. If this is your database, you probably don't have that much work to do. If you inherited it from a previous programmer or programmers, now is the time to fix those problems that were passed on to you and you've been working around. Purge what you don't need.
- 2) Reexamine the list of stations you look at every week. If you have access to Mediabase or BDS, you've probably put together a panel of stations that you monitor. Do they still meet the criteria that put them on your list? Great Ratings, Similar Market Makeup and Format Positioning? If you're using them as a benchmark to make programming decisions, you need to make sure the reasons that they were placed on your panel are still valid.
- 3) Examine and Freshen your imaging. If you're rotating your imaging in your Scheduler, you should check history, plays, projected rotations. Add rules for minimum separation, tempo, sound codes, anything you can do with a song. You go to great pains to make sure your **radio station music** rotates properly through all hours and a certain number of day parts and that one song doesn't play in the same hour (or quarter hour) day after day. You should do the same with your imaging. Properly rotated imaging keeps your station sounding a lot fresher.
- 4) Clean up your automation. I'm still surprised at the number of radio stations who are playing mp3's or compressed wavs. Back in the day, the cost of hard drives made this an economical choice, plus analog processing was rather forgiving. With today's digital processing and the much lower price of hard drives, it's no longer necessary to sacrifice quality for space. Make sure you have the **best quality WAVE's**. Purge music and other elements that are no longer used or at least back them up to a flash drive.
- 5) Back up everything. You should be backing up your music scheduler after each day is scheduled. Back up your **music on hard drive**, imaging, and any other "mission critical" files on an external hard drive and keep it in a safe place. If you get your **radio music libraries** from a source like **RadioMusic.com** (formally **UncompressedMusic.com**) make sure you backup your downloads. Hardware failures, file corruption and ransomware attacks happen. It's much easier to restore a back up than to scramble to rebuild your **radio station music** library, imaging, etc. Don't rely on an "automatic backup system". Most will sense a change in your files and automatically back up your system. If that change was caused by a ransomware or virus attack, your cloud backup becomes nothing more than a copy of your corruption. You can buy a 4TB external hard drive for under a hundred dollars. 1TB drives are under \$50. Not a lot of money when you consider the alternatives. Happy New Year!