



QUICKREAD >> Deregulation and consolidation led to a new brand of owner: speculators with no personal interest in radio >> There are signs that consolidation is de-consolidating, and the many uses of radio have made it advertising's "Multimedia Personal Contact Media" >> Continued that radio is running out of decent companies to work for, Giff surveyed industry people for a list of radio companies that make good employers >> Are you "résumé ready"?

Radio Companies Worth Working For!

Radio Past Tense:

Once upon a time, the FCC had a "Three Year Rule," requiring radio owners to provide evidence why their licenses should be renewed based on how well they served their respective communities ("in the public interest") during the previous three years.

Radio 1980:

Deregulation led to the emergence of a new brand of owner: primarily speculators with no personal interest in radio. Their game was to buy stations, build them up quickly and "spin" them. Because these speculators had no long-term commitment to ownership, radio became a commodity. Result? As stations sold and re-sold like used cars, career broadcasters faced working for a succession of new owners.

Radio 1996:

Consolidation, a marketplace in which fewer and fewer large companies ended up owning damn near everything, provided critical-mass radio companies the opportunity to dominate more markets with more radio stations per market. Result? Radio transformed completely from a career-broadcaster industry to a business choreographed by CEOs, CFOs, investment bankers, brokers, FCC attorneys and Wall Street analysts.

Now, if you're one of the above and you prefer to propagandize today as the new "Golden Age of Radio," I have a suggestion. Engage brain before opening mouth! In the early 1980s, radio virtually abandoned its news coverage. In the late 1990s, radio reneged on its commitment to local programming; and today, the two oldest radio stations in my market have **unlisted** telephone numbers! "In the public interest" — who are you trying to kid?

Now, there are signs that consolidation is de-consolidating. Sumner Redstone's decision to split Viacom into two entities and Liberty Media's possible sale of its 50-percent stake in Discovery Communication, as intimated recently in *Ad Age*, "could spark a wave of de-consolidation at other media companies."

Radio 2005:

Cry me a river for terrestrial radio? Never! Terrestrial radio is "Apocalypse Radio"? **Not!** Terrestrial radio, Web radio, digital radio, HD Radio, cell-phone radio and iPod radio — which offer advertisers "personal contact" opportunities via color, video, animation, photos, graphics, illustrations, tables, text, numbers, graphs, and coupons in addition to sound and word-of-mouth "buzz" — are advertising's "Multimedia Personal Contact Media"!

Radio Tomorrow?

Whatever is technologically possible will happen, and in time, Radio 2005 will convert to "once upon a time" radio as well!

Point:

Having analyzed the past, present and future of radio, and having been convinced that radio is running out of decent companies to work for, I surveyed industry people I most respect, asking one very off-the-record question: "What radio companies are worth working for?" No, you wouldn't want your latest Arbitron ratings based on the sample size of this particular survey, but even CEOs of companies excluded from this list will find little quarrel with the companies I have included.

If every day is "Groundhog Day" for you, working for a company that doesn't meet the following criteria, perhaps I can point you toward better companies to work for — companies that:

1. Are ethical and integrity-based,
2. Treat employees with respect,
3. Train their employees,
4. Are committed to employees' growth,
5. Provide benefits for employees' future financial security.

Here are the companies (all size markets) with nearly universal positive feedback. For the record, only a half dozen or more are my clients.

United States — Allegheny Mountain Network, Amaturio Group, Bonneville, CBS (All News radio stations), Clear Channel ("25th Best Service Company To Sell For" by Selling Power magazine), Cox Radio, Cromwell Group, Eagle Communications, Emmis (Fortune's "27th Best Midsize Company To Work For in 2005"), Fairfield Broadcasting, Federated Media, Forever/Keymarket, Georgia-Carolina Broadcasters, Greater Media, Fisher Communications, Hall Communications, Jefferson-Pilot, Journal Group Broadcast, Mad Dog Wireless, Midwest Communication, Mid-West Family, Nicolet Broadcasting, Redwood Empire Stereocasters, Saga, Sarkes Tarzian, Shamrock, Sorenson, Susquehanna, West Virginia Radio and Zimmer Radio

United Kingdom — CN Group, The Guardian Media Group, and UKRD Group

New Zealand — MORE-FM

Offended that your company wasn't included? Guess what: Chances are that your company was eliminated on the testimony of your own employees! Quotable Quote: "Giff, we're one of the biggest and fastest-growing radio companies in the business, yet our salespeople are busier looking for jobs than they are selling, and I'm not sure we've got six working photocopiers in the entire company!"

Are you "résumé ready"? ☞

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