

## PRESENTER TIPS & TECHNIQUES

### JUNE 2017

*In collaboration with Maxine Mallen, BBC Radio Stoke Radio Presenter*

As Presenters, we represent the local:

- community
- people
- voice

We must be:

- entertaining
- connected with the audience
- good company
- empathic to our listeners

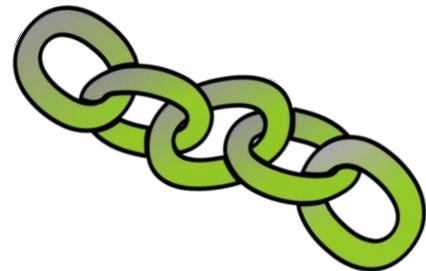
### THE OPENING LINK

Your opening link should:

- Be 30 seconds maximum.
- Be spoken straight away at the top of the hour (so listeners are aware the show isn't Jukebox).
- Give the presenter's name.
- Mention RedShift.
- Give the location (Nantwich, Cheshire, England).
- Outline key point(s) of show – main topic.

Don't:

- Use unnecessary words – keep it brief.
- Include your guest speaking/introducing themselves.
- Give too much information.



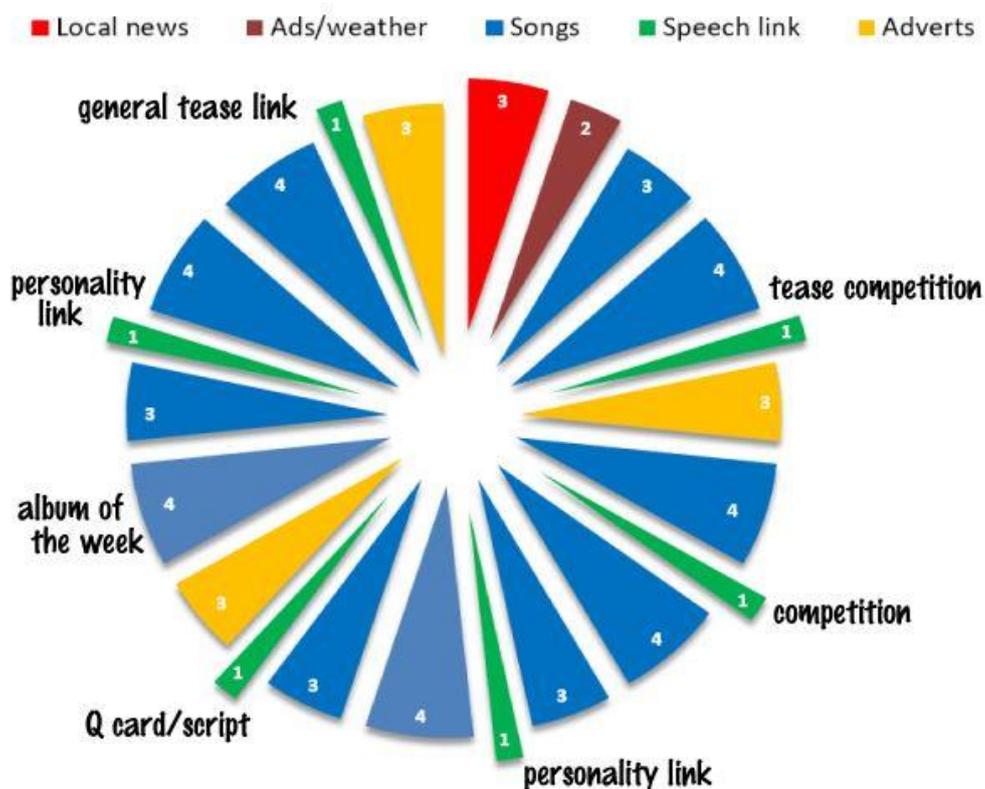
### SUBSEQUENT LINKS

- Reinforce “RedShift” in each and every link. 
- Listeners join and leave your show all the time and will probably not have been there from the beginning. Think about new listeners who might be joining for the first time on your next link.
- Reset by saying: “We were talking earlier on about ...”; “If you’re just tuning in, we’re talking about ...”so that they can instantly join in and won’t feel left out trying to work out what’s going on.
- Never assume that listeners know what you’re talking about.
- Promote ahead  and sell the next feature, competition, song, presenter or whatever it may be. You should always be looking to the next 15 minutes to keep your audience listening just that little bit longer.
- Listeners’ attention span is around 20 mins so don’t talk about anything beyond the next 20 minutes at most. The only exception to this rule is when promoting other shows.

- Never be afraid to change the show – focus on where the interest lies.
- Don't be afraid to revisit a popular topic.
- Don't give the audience too much choice - tell them what you want them to do “don't miss my guest (name) at twenty past” ... “keep listening to hear my (regular feature)”.
- Shrink Your Link! Don't waffle. Think about who you are aiming each link at, plan ahead and if you have nothing to say then just play the music. Your audience will love you for it.
- Make sure your content is trivial, topical or relevant (or all three!). If not, then you're not making engaging radio.

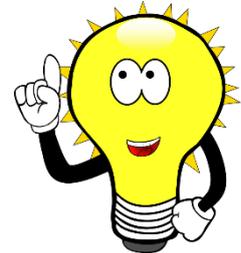
## PLANNING YOUR SHOW

- Use a Showclock to divide up your show into sections. After you have added in ads, community news and your regular features, you'll be surprised how full it can get. A clear plan helps keep it all under control and keeps the show running consistently.



- Plan your Opening Link – introducing your main topic (no detail). See “The Opening Link” on Page 1.
- Use Teasers throughout: “Have you ever wondered what ratatouille is? Find out at (time) when we visit the RedShift Kitchen”.

- Only mention one idea or thought per link. Listeners can only take in so much information in one go - hit them with three different items and by the time they've heard the third, they will probably have forgotten what the first was.
- Use Benchmarks – have regular features at set times during your show.
- Never talk out of breaks. Play a station ID and straight to music. The listener may have just had to endure several minutes of ads and doesn't want another few minutes of presenter waffle.
- Be consistent. Changing features every show confuses listeners who won't recognise the show and you run the risk of alienating them.
- Maintain transparency and fairness throughout - especially when interviewing or mentioning subjects which may divide people.
- Ensure you use plenty of light and shade – lighthearted ... serious ... lighthearted.
- Always promote other shows.



## LOCAL CONTENT

- RedShift is the voice of the local community: we are at the heart of Crewe and Nantwich and so we're ideally positioned to talk about local issues, events, people and places.
- Learn about this area and sound knowledgeable about it. Be sociable: meet and engage with your listeners; treat them like friends.
- ***Always look for opportunities to record soundbites.*** Use your smartphone to record clips to use in your shows. Remember to tell people you've interviewed when they're going to be on air so they can listen and spread the word. Get their Twitter and Facebook handles and tag them.
- If you record something that may not be right for your show, email the link to [hello@redshiftonline.org](mailto:hello@redshiftonline.org) so it can be used in other shows.



## GUESTS

- We have compiled a [resource of potential guests](#) for all Presenters to access. Some of these have already been guests but are happy to come on air again, maybe on different shows. Some have not been on air but are keen to be featured; and some we have identified as being potential guests but they have not yet been contacted.
- Please feel free to invite anyone from this list on your shows but please update the list so that other presenters know when the person was last on air.

- Ensure you use the **pro forma email** available on the Facebook Presenters Page to confirm the booking with your guest and ensure the **Top Tips and AudioCast Booking Form** are attached to the email (see Files on the left of the Facebook page).
- **Encourage your guests to purchase an AudioCast** - revenue from these helps to keep our cogs turning!
- If you know someone who would like to be on air, please add them to the list.

## INTERVIEWING GUESTS



Historically on RedShift, we have had guests on our shows for the full hour - or, in the past, 2 hours! Often this is unnecessary: from the presenter's point of view it can feel like pulling teeth when you are scrabbling around for something else to ask.

More importantly, from a listener's point of view, it can quickly become boring to listen to the same guest for a long period.

To get the most out of your guest's "appearance", remember the following:

- What is the point of them being there? Cut to the chase quickly!
- What is the **one question** you want them to answer? Be hard-hitting if necessary!
- Find out interesting facts – unusual facts if possible.
- Don't drag it out for the sake of it!
- Don't feel bad about only interviewing them for a few minutes – quality counts!
- Listen carefully – don't ask the guest a question they've already answered.
- Ask open questions - Who, What, Where, When, Why and How - not closed questions where they can only answer yes or no.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Every single guest, feature and item should be on social media 24 hours prior to the show.
- After your show, share your Mixcloud/Soundcloud uploaded show on your social media channels.
- Aim to post on facebook (and other platforms) at least once per day: comment on the RedShift page, tag RedShift, share something from the main page. "Every little helps"!

### Twitter

- Open a Twitter account if you haven't already got one and tweet about your show, tagging @RedShiftRadioUK.
- Find out if your guest has Twitter and tag them in your tweets.



### Facebook

- Put your show details on your Facebook page and ensure it's public.
- Then go onto the Presenters' Page and ask for your post to be shared by tagging RedShift Admin @Liz Southall, @Steve Bebe and @Helen Gregory.
- Note that Facebook algorithms have changed (again) and if you mention the word "share" in the post on your own page it will be deemed as spam.



## Mixcloud/Soundcloud

- Get show onto Mixcloud/Soundcloud immediately after the show.
- Download Audacity software (free) to do it at home if you prefer.
- Ask us for Audacity training if you need it.



## Facebook Live & Periscope

These channels are fantastic ways of promoting both RedShift and yourselves as radio presenters. It's now possible to have a video banner on your Facebook page. To get the most out of this form of media remember to:



- Enable screen rotation and use your phone landscape.
- In selfie mode, don't look at yourself, look at the camera.
- If you use either of these methods, do not have music in the background (copyright issues).
- Only video for a very short time – seconds/minutes. Don't do the whole show!
- Make individual posts public if possible (it doesn't affect your other posts), then RedShift can share on its own page. Again, tag RedShift Admin so that we know to share it!

## TECHNICALITIES

We've invested a great deal of money in the studio equipment here at RedShift so please respect it and treat it with care. If you're not sure how to use something, please ask Liz Southall, Steve Bebe or Helen Gregory. Mic checks should be done for yourself and your guest(s) before each show. Check your faders are up or down at the correct times. Learn how to use the phone system so you can have phone-in guests.

Training is available from **Steve Bebe** on Audacity, Mixcloud and Soundcloud. Please email [steve@redshiftradio.co.uk](mailto:steve@redshiftradio.co.uk) if you would like to learn how to upload your shows.

## EVENTS

Making ourselves known in the community is the most effective way of promoting ourselves. Help from RedShift volunteers with leafleting and event attendance is key.



There are various roles available. We will be creating a central resource for volunteers to sign up and listing on Facebook all events for which we need support.

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Make sure we in the studio know what's happening on your show so that we can help to promote it and make it as vibrant and engaging as possible. Post on Facebook in advance of your shows and ask us in the studio to share and promote. Let us know if you need help with your shows, with technical issues or with anything else.

Keep up-to-date with what's happening on the Presenters' Group on Facebook as that's where we can all share things that affect us all.

## SELF IMPROVEMENT

Use the “Self Snoop - Did I?” checklist after EVERY show. Be honest with yourself - there is usually something you can improve. The checklists are for your personal use only, to help you improve your presenting skills and therefore your show.

It takes a lot to be a great radio personality, but if you keep in mind these traits you should easily be on your way to improving your shows and engaging with your audience. Remember: presenting is an art form, not a science!

Here is some additional detail on how you can improve your presenting skills. Use this in conjunction with your “Self Snoop - Did I?” checklist.

### **Talk to One Person, Not the Entire Audience**



If you address your audience as a group, eg “Hi folks” or “Hello everyone”, it doesn’t feel personal and may lead to listeners switching off. Frame what you’re saying as if you’re talking to one person like a friend. Try something like: “Hope your weekend was great, we’ve got some fantastic tracks coming your way soon, so stay tuned”.

### **Respect the Music**

Never criticise the music because as far as the listener is concerned, all the songs were chosen by you. If you don’t like a particular song, just ignore it. If you really like a particular piece of music then say so.

If a song has a proper end, let it finish before talking. If a song fades, still remember that it’s someone’s favourite song before you destroy it! Don’t talk over the beginning or end of a song as it really annoys listeners. Don’t back announce every song you play, especially if it’s really well known. Sometimes throw ahead to a song coming up - not always the next one.



### **Share Your Life On Air**

Put your personality into your links: talk about yourself and things that have happened to you. Sprinkling personal stories in your shows gives them flavour and makes them feel real and engaging for your listeners. You are the listeners’ friend and they like to know how you are and what you’ve been doing. Building a relationship with them will give them a reason to tune in and listen to you.

### **Know Your Audience, Live Their Life**



The old saying goes: “walk a mile in my shoes”. It means that to get a better understanding of someone, you need to do what they do, talk to the people that they talk to, and so on.

It’s really important to get to know your audience. If your audience is into the latest TV show - watch it. If they’re complaining about traffic in the town centre - find out more about it. Read a magazine that you’ve never read before. The point is to understand and relate to your listeners, even if that means doing things you wouldn’t normally do.

### **Promote Everything Local**

RedShift is the voice of the local community, which gives us a unique selling point. Other radio stations may touch on Crewe and Nantwich but no-one is at the heart of it like we are. Talk about local issues, events, other RedShift shows and RedShift presenters as often as you can and feature local people in your shows.



Learn about the area and sound knowledgeable about it. Check pronunciation of place names if you're unsure (Cholmondeley, Wybunbury, Shavington for example!). Look at local landmarks so that when you mention them you know what you're talking about. Keep yourself informed, read the newspaper, always be listening. Be topical, trivial or relevant - or all three!

### **Promote RedShift**



Mention **RedShift** in *every single link*. If you're playing two songs back to back then ensure a sweeper ID is played between each song. Towards the end of your show, trail the next show. If appropriate during your show, mention what else is happening in that day's schedule.

Always make the station sound big, authoritative and friendly.

### **Preparing Your Shows**

Use the outlines on pages 1 and 2 to prepare and structure your shows. Good preparation really is evident to listeners so make sure you're well rehearsed. There are many Showprep sites available which can give you ideas for show content but don't just read it off the page: build upon it and craft it in your own style. Take a look at these pages for starters: [Paul Denton](#), [Preplinks](#), [AllAccess](#), [Flashnews](#), [MorningSkoop](#), [FreeShowPrep](#).



Arrive at the studio in good time. You should start your show feeling happy and relaxed. Focus fully whilst you're presenting so that you enjoy it and you're not stressed. Your listeners will hear that you're enjoying it! Complete any paperwork afterwards (timesheet, self-snoop) and upload to Soundcloud or Mixcloud.

### **Always Pre-Read Information**

Pre-reading messages, emails, texts etc gives you ground to stand on so you know exactly what you're going to say and are well prepared in advance. Finding mistakes or problems whilst on air interrupts your flow and makes you - and RedShift - look unprofessional.

Be prepared: keep a notepad with you at all times during your show - you may need to scribble down a question for your guest or something may pop into your mind that you want to mention in your next link.

### **Social Media Savvy**

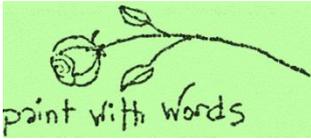
During your show, remember to check social media and emails. One of your listeners or contacts could have a new original angle or update that you could use during your broadcast. Or it could be you who is the first to broadcast a major story or humorous item!



### **Go Out in the Community**

Don't just talk about it, do it! Get outside in the community and interact with your audience. It's a perfect way to get to know your audience and it allows you to make strong connections with locals. Use smartphones to record clips then tell people when they're going to be on air so they can listen and spread the word.

### **Paint Pictures With Words**



Radio is unique, it's the only medium where you paint pictures with words and it has boundless possibilities that are only limited to the listener's imagination. Bring your shows to life with the power of story-telling, to engage and inspire your audience.

### **Have Something to Say**

Who wants to listen to a boring person? Radio personalities should have something to say and be passionate when saying it as it makes for great radio content, above all else it's fun to hear someone who genuinely has interesting stuff to say live on air.

### **Be Well Read and Authentic**

People like to listen to presenters who know what they're talking about, so it's important to find time to research topics for upcoming shows or guests you've invited along.

One thing you want to avoid is coming across as false, for instance reading an article on Wikipedia right before a show is apparent, so ensure you set a chunk of time aside to read up on what you're going to discuss.



### **Always be Hometown Proud**

Always be proud of who you are and where you come from as audiences love authentic and genuine people.

### **Never be Racist, Sexist or Bigoted**

This is a given, but it's always worth noting as a presenter you should be courteous and polite to make your audience feel welcomed.

### **Listen to the Rest of the Radio Station**



It's really important that you listen to other people's shows – all of them if possible. Not only may you learn from them, but getting to know your colleagues and understanding what they are doing will build a closer, tight knit community of presenters where we all feed off of one another.

### **Promote Fellow Presenters**

If you have listened to other presenters' shows (see above), you will be in a much better position to talk about other shows and promote them. Every presenter should give shout outs and show their support for other shows whenever they can. It not only helps promote RedShift Radio, and other shows, but it helps to bring everyone together to work as a team.

### **Smile Whilst Presenting and Laugh at Yourself**

Smile whilst you're talking on air. It's been proven that smiling makes you sound happy - nobody likes listening to someone who sounds bored! Never take yourself too seriously laugh at yourself as it's fun for everyone.



## **Control Stress and Moods**



You never know what's going to happen live on air, whether it's an angry listener relentlessly shouting at you or one of your shows goes haywire during a broadcast. Whatever the case, it's your responsibility to get a handle on the mood of the station to turn negatives into positives, essentially being the hero in a crisis.

It goes without saying that you should go on air in a positive frame of mind, leaving at the studio door whatever stresses or crises you've had before your show.

## **Air Check Your Shows**

When you think shows have gone well, but later on you realise didn't, is something you really want to improve, which is rather easy to air checking shows.

Once you've finished a broadcast, go back and listen to what you've said. Think of what went well and what didn't, then see how you address these issues the next time you're on air.

Never be too satisfied: there is always something you can work on to improve. Work hard to be the best presenter you can be.

© RedShift June 2017