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Giving radio a face: social meets broadcast in MTG's new radio app

The concept

How does a commercial radio group address the challenges of a difficult market with strong competition from a dominant public broadcaster and an exceptionally large Spotify user base? This week's egtabite looks at the efforts by MTG Radio and the innovations division MTGx to change the game and strengthen the link between radio and its listeners. This initiative was presented by MTG Radio's CEO Christer Modig in egta's radio meeting in Dublin in March 2014.



The challenge

Commercial radio in Sweden is a difficult environment in which to thrive, with a restricted share of listening, high licence costs, falling listening time and declining advertising revenues. It was within this context that Spotify was launched on the market, quickly gaining 2 million users and adding additional pressure on the radio industry. MTG, one of the two major private radio groups in Sweden, looked to address these issues by innovating in the online space and developing an integrated platform across its radio stations, including a number of digital-only destinations.

MTG initially looked at creating an on-demand music platform, but they realised that this was not a viable proposition, and in any case a catalogue of millions of songs was not required to build a relevant product. The vast majority of music listened to on Spotify in a given week comes from a tiny proportion of the available catalogue, and radio does a great job at curating playlists for people. Additionally, radio offers personalities, hosts and content, providing companionship and guiding people to the content they want.

The solution

Having researched listening habits, MTGx – the division that develops MTG's online properties – developed an app for social radio, which includes several new radio stations as extensions of the broadcaster's brands. The key feature is a timeline based on the playlist that brings social media, interviews, audio and video into the mix, with the possibility to swipe to left or right within the app. Whereas many radio apps focus on interactions purely with the audience, the MTG app brings the artists'



social media content into line with the music played on the radio, giving the radio stations greater depth and a real face to their listeners.

Listener engagement is enhanced through the integration of a voting mechanism, courtesy of LDR Interactive, which allows listeners to influence the music played out on their favourite stations.

Within a month of launching, the app had 600,000 downloads, many of them updates of the existing earlier generation apps already in use by listeners. With a relatively high reach within the population, the platform presents a considerable additional opportunity for brands to connect with consumers in an interactive and engaging environment. There is much interest from advertisers to be present in the digital experience, and MTG projects a very positive impact on their revenues over the course of 2014.

Why this matters for egta radio members

Radio faces stiff competition for attention and ear-time, and innovations are needed to position radio as an engaging destination for listeners and, by consequence, for advertisers. There is an appetite for platforms that deliver a more interactive and sophisticated communication route for brands to reach their consumers, and the MTGx-developed radio app is a great example of how to deliver this.



Photos courtesy of apegroup Stockholm



What they said



"Radio can't let itself become another Kodak. We have to realise that audio consumption is changing fast - and both music and editorial content are affected. Everything has to be relevant to the listener, whether it's the music, talk, or commercials. Mobile innovations can be the solution for radio to add additional compelling content on-line, as a strong complement to its terrestrial broadcast."

- Christer Modig, CEO MTG Radio and Strategic Advisor



Background information

Please click on the links below to access the relevant documents:

Please click on the links below to access the relevant information:

- » **Download the app (RIX FM version) for iPhone** [here](#)
- » **Download the app (RIX FM version) for Android** [here](#)