

COLUMNS

## Why a streaming app is not enough for radio

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By [Sara Sisenwein](#)

Give us real numbers, results and ROI or we will move our dollars to someone who can. This is the challenge that all agencies and media outlets are presented with by advertisers and businesses.

The radio industry understands this struggle all too well. For years, they have fought to keep advertisers from defecting to various digital media that can provide solid metrics on their campaigns while at the same time trying to keep listeners from jumping ship for services such as Pandora, Spotify or iTunes Radio. As a result, the industry is constantly looking for new ways to engage with its audience and better entice advertisers.

While nearly every station has a mobile application that offers the user the ability to listen to the live broadcast stream, most are failing to optimize this mobile experience for either the listener or advertiser.

### Why a streaming app is not enough

In today's world, most consumers are accustomed to engaging with media beyond its traditional role, whether it is tweeting while watching a television show, scanning a QR code in a magazine or clicking on a digital ad while reading a blog.

A streaming app for radio does not offer that additional engagement. Users have to go to a Web site or social channel to connect and engage with radio.

However, evidence provided from other mobile and digital media channels has shown that people want to engage and will when given the means to do so.

Since terrestrial radio has 243 million listeners, and many DJs and radio shows stand as a staple of their communities, radio continues to be a strong competitor for advertising dollars. But the industry needs to diversify.

Traditional radio advertising and simply streaming the live broadcast is not enough to compete with the hyper-targeted social media and app advertising.

### How can radio do mobile better?

Add engagement: While opening the app and pressing play on a stream is technically engaging, there is little interaction after that.

Popular functionality such as downloading songs, entering contests, accessing local deals and learning additional information about the broadcast can increase listener engagement and provide solid metrics for advertisers and agencies.

For listeners, radio can offer a unique experience where they can hear something on the radio whether it is a song, contest or ad and engage with it immediately through their mobile device. This creates a powerful connection between the radio stations and their listeners as well as tangible metrics with their advertisers.

Provide notifications: Adding more comprehensive functions to a radio app beyond streaming can help the radio station and advertiser proactively reach out to the listener.

Currently, radio stations wait for the user to come to them for entertainment, but by taking advantage of technologies such as geo-location check-ins and push notifications, stations can reach the consumer to offer deals or promote content even when they are not listening to the station.

Because listeners are already engaged with and trust the local content of the radio station, they are more likely to embrace the information provided through the app and take the desired action.

Deliver real numbers: Impressions, number of listeners and station rankings are not the only metrics that most advertisers look for these days. They want to see click-throughs, downloads and purchases. Bricks-and-mortar businesses want to know how many people visited their business as a result of the campaign.

Integrating more interactive features into a radio station mobile app gives the station the ability to show performance and prove once and for all that radio is a valuable advertising medium.

Next step for radio

By 2017, mobile ad spending is predicted to increase to more than \$31 billion.

As these marketing funds once allocated to radio placements are being relocated to other digital mediums, it is time for radio to emerge with a mobile solution that provides advertisers with options that were formerly only available through digital media.

Web site advertising and streaming mobile apps are not enough to keep up with the demand of the new advertiser. It is time to reach out to the consumer through their mobile devices, offer them more benefits and, in turn, provide more value to the advertiser.

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