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Client: Phantom By RDS

Project: Case Study

Objective: Create a compelling case study highlighting how WDRC improved the sound of their radio station by using The Phantom's automation system.

Portfolio

WDRC Dramatically Improves The Sound Of Their Radio Station With The Phantom By RDS.

Dead air, missed satellite recordings, sloppy network rejoins after local breaks, and some very quirky operating procedures. These are just some of the problems that radio stations that air satellite-delivered programming face.

Bill Simpson, General Manager of radio station WDRC, will never forget the day he realized that he needed to change the way his station operated. "The makeshift timer we used to automatically record programs off satellite into a mini-disk sometimes failed to record. By the time we noticed that the program didn't record, it was too late sometimes to catch another feed of the same program. So we had to air an old program in its place."

Simpson added, "The transitions between programs to commercials and back to the programs were sometimes very sloppy. There would be gaps of three to five seconds between carts while we were in commercial breaks. Sometimes the dead air between programs would last even longer. Something had to change to make our on-air sound tighter during commercial breaks between live satellite programs."

Determined To Fix The Problem

Simpson realized that the best way to improve the sound quality of his station was to get a computer automation system. So he began his journey looking for an automation system that would automatically run his radio programming. The automation system he eventually selected was The Phantom by RDS.

Simpson looked at other automation systems, but most of them were not very user friendly. He gave a close look at Google Automation. "Google seemed to have more features than I needed. Plus it looked like it would take several weeks just to learn how to effectively operate the equipment. I was looking for something a little simpler. My format is Christian Talk and Information. All of our programs come either from satellite, the internet or from local ministries

who bring cassettes or CD's for us to air. We don't do any live broadcasts from our studio.   All our programming is pre-recorded. I just wanted an automation system that was easy for a limited computer person such as myself to use."

While attending the 2007 NRB convention in Orlando Florida, Simpson came to the RDS booth. That's where he saw a demonstration of the Phantom at work.

The Solution To On-Air Glitches

The Phantom provides all the tools required to manage, integrate, and air local and satellite-delivered programming in a tight seamless and live-sounding manner.

Before the Phantom was developed, stations wanting to take advantage of satellite-delivered programming to augment or replace local programming had to accept all the disadvantages: Sloppy network rejoins after local breaks, limitations in scheduling, and some very quirky operating procedures.

Since its introduction, The Phantom has improved the sound of hundreds of radio stations in the U.S. by providing a rock-solid, easy-to-use, radio-friendly package.

The System Was Quickly Up And Running

Simpson ordered a Phantom for his station right at the NRB. That was on a Friday. The Phantom arrived at his station the following Wednesday. He wanted to have it operational as quickly as possible. "I planned to have the Phantom up and running by Friday afternoon," said Simpson. "We had the Phantom hooked up to our board and our satellite receiver by 2 pm that Friday afternoon. However, my engineer had trouble getting the Phantom to network with our studio PC. We needed the computers to network with each other so that we could download programs off the internet with our PC, and then upload them to the Phantom. We also needed to have the capabilities to export logs and programs from the Phantom to the PC." This part took a little bit longer than he had hoped for.

"After trying to figure out how to network the two computers on his own, my engineer finally called the tech support people at RDS.   The person he talked to at RDS was very helpful. It took an extra hour and a half but with the help of the RDS tech support person we got the Phantom to network with our PC. By Friday evening we were fully operational."

Once implemented, the Phantom improved the quality of WDRC. Dead air was virtually eliminated. The transition between commercial breaks and programs was tighter. Network rejoins after local breaks sounded smoother. Simpson was very impressed with how his station now sounded. "We no longer sound like amateur hour here. We now sound like a professional broadcast operation."

Increased Quality And Efficiency

The Phantom has been running all of WDRC's programs for over a year now, and they've been reaping the benefits:

- Retimed spots that fit cleanly into a satellite break window without running late or rejoining the network too soon.
- Filling incomplete satellite breaks with spots from a specified list, so that you'll never rejoin the network in the middle of its closed-circuit feed.
- It can overlap spots to maintain a live sound.
- Can record audio into the system while completely functional on the air.

Overall, the Phantom has improved the sound of WDRC by providing a user-friendly automation system. The owners of WDRC were so impressed with The Phantom's capabilities they're planning on buying Phantoms for their other stations.

"If you want an easy to use automation system to run your radio station, then you need to invest in a Phantom," says Simpson.   "It will make your job a whole lot easier."

A Note About the Phantom

The Phantom was developed by Register Data Systems, a company with lengthy experience in developing traffic and billing software and decades of experience in radio broadcasting.

For more information about the Phantom call 1-800-521-5222 or go to www.registerdata.com.

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This copy was not from an actual assignment. It was written to show that I understand the best practices of case study writing.