

THE R&R INTERVIEW:

Meet DAN MASON

PD, WPGC/WASHINGTON D.C.

by J.J. Jordan



R&R: Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I'm from Kentucky, and they told me at WKLO that I'd never get off of the all-nite show so I decided I better fire out a couple of tapes. I sent one to Z93/Atlanta in which Mike Scott who was National PD at the time hired me to do evenings. From there I went to Ass't Program Director, this is still back in 1974, and then the PD in '75. First Media bought Z93 in January of '77, they obtained control of it in January '77 and then the situation up here I was transferred to WPGC just recently.

R&R: Was Z93 in Atlanta your first FM operation?

Mason: No, I was one of the original staff members that went into KBEQ/Kansas City back when Chris Bailey was Program Director and the station was consulted by George Wilson. So KBEQ was my first FM and that was back in '73 when they first changed format.

R&R: And your first programming position was at Z93.

Mason: I moved up to Ass't. PD there and took over PD in '75.

R&R: When you were at Z93 the station was very successful under your reign as Program Director, what do you attribute your success to in that market?

Mason: Just humanizing a radio station and adapting that station to the market. In other words it's marrying the station to the people. Doing promotions that were people promotions, keeping up the give-away promotions and all that, but taking it one step further and doing a human promotion that somebody else would be afraid to touch.

R&R: When you were in Atlanta you had a Top 40 station on the AM dial in the market, but in Washington, you have really no Top 40 competition. So what's the difference for a programmer going into a market where all of a sudden there is no direct Top 40 competition? Do you program the same way as if you had another Top 40 in the market?

Mason: I like to think, even in Atlanta, when there's two different types of programming there's defensive programming and there's offensive programming. Defensive programming is the kind that a PD will structure himself with promo's like "We've given away the most money, more than any other Atlanta radio station's put together", that to me is defensive programming. Offensive programming is where you say, you take the winning attitude, you do your own thing and you never look over your shoulders. That's exactly what we've done in Atlanta and that's exactly what we want to do here.

R&R: What makes a good Program Director?

Mason: The ability to be a businessman. If you're not a businessman capable of handling a sales department, capable of dealing with management, capable of dealing with egos, then it won't work, you just have to get in there and roll with the punches.

R&R: Why do you think the role of the PD has changed over the past couple of years?

Mason: Because the Program Directors for years have begged to be management, they've begged to say I should be management, why aren't I treated like one. Now they are treated like one and now they're expected to act like it.

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