

Statement of Intent

The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in communication and entertainment throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. The dramatic improvements in the technology of the phonograph and the wireless receiver have created a world in which the broadcaster has a power to reach the general populous with an immediacy and clarity beyond the wildest dreams of those pioneers of the radio age.

There is growing danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word radio with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of entertainment, education and communication in the Twentieth Century. The mistakes of the past must not be allowed to re-occur. The Smith debacle of 1924, which resulted in the deaths of so many listeners, and the fiasco surrounding MacKinley's new years eve broadcast a year later are but two reminders of the many great dangers inherent in the power of the radio.

We, as broadcasters, must strive to understand this power.

We, as broadcasters, must not abuse this power.

We, as broadcasters, must broadcast according to the responsibilities of this power.

There is a great danger. Like the child, allowed to roam free in the sweet shop, the undisciplined and unscrupulous broadcaster may become overwhelmed by the extravagant wealth of the possibilities of radio and descend into the casual and self-obsessed style characteristic of so many of our nation's second class mid-west college professors. We must not allow this to occur. Indeed, it is the duty of every upstanding broadcaster both of this nation and of our friends in those nations over the seas to lead the way through a consistent and professional approach to the transmission of sounds across the airwaves. Let us not descend back into the darkness of the worst excesses of broadcasting that characterised so much of its early history, and which ultimately resulted in the financial collapse of our great nation and the continuing problems we face on a day by day basis. Only through great broadcasting can this nation heal its wounds. We, the undersigned, standby the statute of broadcasting standards outlined forthwith.

Dr Charles Fitzgerald
Mr George Dzaniger
Mr Rudy Vallee
Comedian, Eddie Cantor

March 13th 1931

Broadcast manifesto – 1931

The Principles of clear and graceful Broadcast.

We here record our principles of broadcasting. They are concerned partly with the secure conveyance of information and partly with the matter of its decent or elegant conveyance. These principles have been suggested by our recent analysis of a great mass of miscellaneous broadcasts. Our practice was to listen to each and every broadcast possible and, whenever our enjoyment or comprehension was checked by some difficulty of expression or technique, to note the cause. Eventually we formulated our principles after cataloguing the difficulties under seven headings:

1. Structure – concerned with the organisation of content
2. Content – concerned with the nature of the matter the of broadcast
3. Presentation – concerned with the manner of delivery of content
4. Preparation – concerned with the organisation of resources

5. Matters of Courtesy – Concerned with ethical and moral issues

1. Structure

- 1.2 Deviations from a logical structure should never be made purely for the sake of elegance.
- 1.3 There should never be any doubt as to the nature of the content of the broadcast. The disciplined broadcaster will always employ a general common theme that is announced at an early stage in the proceedings.
- 1.4 It should always be made clear to whom and to what the audience is listening. The disciplined broadcaster will employ the regular use of musical and spoken announcements.
- 1.5 There should never be any doubt as to when a broadcast has formally begun. It is advisable always to commence proceedings with the broadcast of a passage of music of an introductory nature.
- 1.6 There should never be any doubt as to when a broadcast is approaching its conclusion. It is advisable to approach the culmination of proceedings with the broadcast of a passage of music of a conclusive nature.
- 1.7 Persons who have significantly contributed to the broadcast should be gratefully acknowledged. The responsible broadcaster will refer to such individuals with a note of gratitude for their contributions.
- 1.8 There should always be sufficient time made available for the broadcaster of the following show to assume control of the broadcast studio. This is best achieved through the transmission of a phonograph recording of sufficient length to allow the broadcaster to prepare.
- 1.9 The phonograph recording used to achieve the effect described in principle 1.8 should not be of such a nature as to distract the broadcaster from his endeavours. The practice, that is becoming increasingly popular amongst younger broadcasters, of deliberately unsettling the broadcaster of the following show by the transmission of provocatively inappropriate music, will not be tolerated.

2. Content

- 2.1 All content should be expressed concisely, but without discourteous abruptness.
- 2.2 All information should be given in a manner which is logical and intelligible.
- 2.3 Features of a predominately entertaining nature should not challenge the generally accepted norms of good taste and decency.
- 2.4 Deviations from the rules and traditions of common game-play should not be made purely for the sake of elegance.
- 2.3 Opportunities for the broadcast of the ideas and opinions of the listener should be made available. This is best achieved through the use of
 - a. The telegram
 - b. The postal service
 - c. The telephone
- 2.4 Broadcast of the ideas and opinions of the listener may only occur when the logical sequence of the broadcast demands it.
- 2.5 It should always be made clear for what purpose the ideas and opinions of the listener are being canvassed. The following purposes are appropriate:
 - i. In the event of competition
 - ii. When canvassing opinion on:
 - a. matters relating to the quality of the broadcast
 - b. other matters relating to the broadcast
 - d. other matters of a serious nature
 - e. matters of whimsical note
 - iii. In the event of appeals for information on matters of either a serious nature or whimsical note.
- 2.6 Opportunities for the broadcast of the ideas and opinions of the listener should not be sought purely for the sake of elegance.
- 2.7 Features of a predominately educational nature should not put unnecessary strain on a listener's memory. It should be remembered that listening to the radio is different to reading an article in a

newspaper. Whereas the newspaper reader has the luxury of being able to assimilate information at his own speed and to review passages as and when he desires, the radio listener is granted no such luxury and must assimilate information at the bequest of the broadcaster.

- 2.8 Deviations from a traditional content should never be made purely for the titillation of the listener.
- 2.9 Broadcast of the opinions of the broadcaster of a personal or political nature should be avoided.
- 2.10 No reference should be unnecessarily obscure.
- 2.11 Alliteration should be sparingly used.

3. Presentation

- 3.1 Deviations from a restrained and cautious style of presentation should not be made.
- 3.2 The broadcaster should effect a demeanour that is courteous and polite.
- 3.3 The manner of presentation should be economical and logical.
- 3.4 The broadcaster must never allow unplanned occurrences disrupt a calm and collected persona.
- 3.5 In all matters, the broadcaster must display the utmost characteristics of punctuality.
- 3.6 The broadcaster must dress in attire appropriate for any public speaking engagement. Usually a shirt and tie will be required, although a jacket may temporarily be discarded on a humid day granting the proviso that no guests are present in the studio.
- 3.7 The broadcaster should be clean-shaven although the wearing of moustaches maybe permitted in those counties in which there is no consequent conflict with the local customs or law.

4. Preparation

- 4.1 Preparation for the broadcast must be carried out in an economical and logical manner. Although the time required for the preparation of content will vary according to the both the nature novelty of the content, a period of eight hours preparation should be allowed for each hour of broadcast.
- 4.2 Information pertaining to resources that are to be referred to during the broadcast should be catalogued in a logical and consistent manner thereby allowing for efficient and logical access.
- 4.3 Information pertaining to recordings that are to be broadcast (Vitrolac, acetate, wire and other recordings) should be made readily available to the broadcaster through the use of broadcast cards.
- 4.4 Information pertaining to entertainers and other "guests" that are to feature in the broadcast should be made readily available to the broadcaster through the use of efficiently and logically organised broadcast notes.
- 4.5 Information and material additional to that directly broadcast must be made readily available for the listener. This material should be communicated via the postal service.

5. Matters of Courtesy

- 5.1 The broadcast must at all times be produced according to generally accepted notions of good taste and decency.
- 5.2 The broadcaster must avoid casual reference to persons of celebrity for the mere titillation of the listener or amusement of the listener.
- 5.3 The broadcaster must avoid casual reference to commercial organisations or business ventures with the exception of those directly involved with the sponsorship or with the organisational matters of the broadcast. In such cases, the name of the sponsor may be transmitted only during the introduction and the conclusion to the broadcast.
- 5.4 The broadcaster must not regard the listener merely as a passive recipient of information. Any broadcast must strive to challenge and stimulate its audience.
- 5.5 There should never be any issue of national security raised as a result or consequence of the broadcast.
- 5.6 The broadcast should not stimulate or promote any public concerns regarding matters of health and well being.
- 5.7 No harm should come to the listener as a direct consequence of the broadcast or activities undertaken as a consequence of the broadcast.